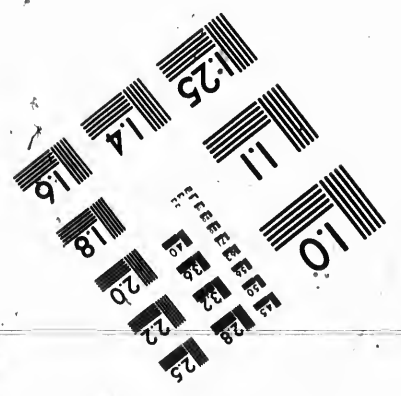
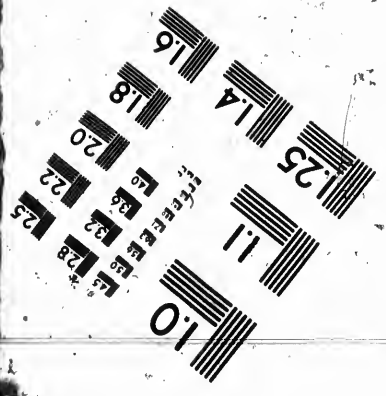
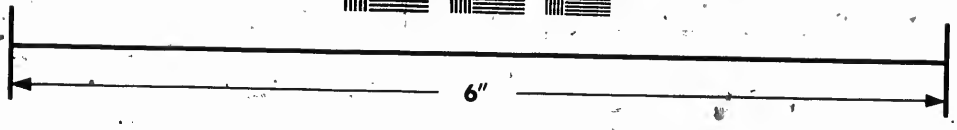
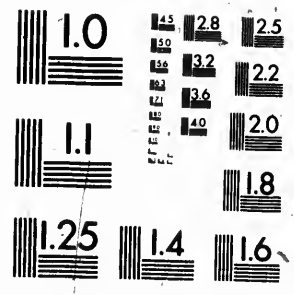


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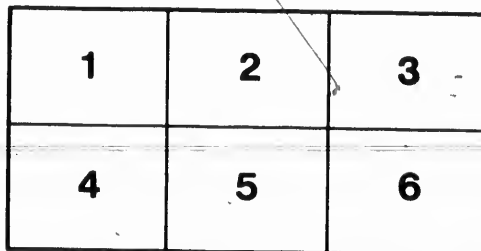
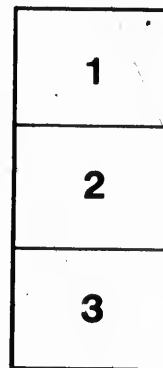
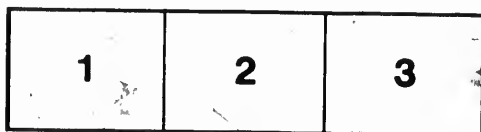
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The finding of the treasure.—Page 8.

# AN OPEN QUESTION.

*A NOVEL.*

BY

JAMES DE MILLE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE LADY OF THE ICE," "THE AMERICAN BARON," ETC., ETC.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED FREDERICKS.*

NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,

549 & 551 BROADWAY.

1873.



The finding of the treasure.—Page 6.

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## AN OPEN QUESTION.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE MONK ALOYSIUS.

DR. BASIL BLAKE had plain but comfortable apartments in Paris, on the third story, overlooking the busy Rue St. Honoré. A balcony ran in front of his windows, upon which he could step out, whenever he felt inclined, to watch the crowds in the street below. On the present occasion, however, the balcony was deserted, the windows were closed, and Dr. Blake was seated in an arm-chair, with a friend opposite in another. It was now midnight, but, late as it was, this friend had only come in a few minutes before; and, by the attitude, the actions, and the words of both, it was evident that they were intending to make a night of it. Bottles, decanters, glasses, cigars, pipes, and tobacco, lay or stood upon the table; and Dr. Blake was even now offering a glass of Burgundy to his visitor.

Dr. Basil Blake was a young man, with a frank face, clear eyes, open and pleasing expression. His friend was a fellow-physician.—Dr. Phelim O'Rourke—with whom Blake had become acquainted in the course of his studies in Paris, and who, in every respect, presented a totally different aspect from his own. He was much older, being apparently between forty and fifty years of age. His frame showed great muscular strength and powers of endurance. His hair was curling and sprinkled with gray. His nose was straight and thin. He wore a heavy beard and mustache, which was not so gray as his hair, but dark, shaggy, and somewhat neg-

lected. His eyes were small, dark, keen, and penetrating.

"I wouldn't have bothered yees at this unseasonable hour," said O'Rourke, who spoke with a slight Irish accent, "but the disclosures that I have to make require perfect freedom from interruption, and ye see ye're all the time with yer friend Hellmuth through the day, and so I have to content myself with the night, ayvin if I were not busy myself all through the day. But the fact is, the matter is one of the most imminse importance, and so ye'll see yerself as soon as ye're infarramed of what I have to tell. Ye know I've alriddy mentioned, in a casual way, that my secret concern runs money. Yis, money! gold! trisure!—and trisure, too, beyond all calculation. Basil Blake, me boy! d'ye want to be as rich as an imperor? Do ye want to have a rivinue shuparior to Rothschild's? Have ye ivir a wish to sittle yerself for life? Answer me that, will ye?"

Saying this, O'Rourke slapped the palm of his hand emphatically upon the table, and fixed his small, piercing black eyes intently upon Blake.

"Oh, by Jove!" said Blake, with a laugh, "you're going too far, you know. Don't exaggerate, old fellow—it isn't necessary, I assure you. Money, by Jove! I'd like to see the fellow that needs it more than I do. I'm hard up. You know that, don't you? Don't I owe you five pounds—which, by-the-way, old chap, I shall be able to—"

"Tare an agos!" interrupted O'Rourke, "don't be affther talking about such a paltry matter as five pounds. By the powers, but I expect, if I can only injuce ye to give me a lift in

my interprise, that before long ye'll look upon five pounds as no more than five pence, so ye will, and there ye have it."

"Go ahead, then, old fellow; for, by Jove! do you know, ye make me wild with curiosity by all this mixture of illimitable treasure and impetrable mystery."

"Mind, me boy," said O'Rourke, "I ask nothing of ye—only yer bilp."

"And that I'll give, ye may be sure. As for any thing else, I'm afraid ye can't get it—not money, at any rate; blood out of a stone, ye know—that's about it with me."

O'Rourke bent his head forward, and once more fixed his keen gaze upon the frank, honest eyes of Blake.

"It's in Rome—that it is," said he.

"Rome?" said Blake.

"Yis—the trisure—"

"Rome? ah! Well—it's very convenient. I was afraid it would involve a voyage to California. Rome—well, that's a good beginning at any rate."

"It is—it's mighty convenient," said O'Rourke. "Well, ye know, I've been in Rome over and over, and know it like me native town. I've been there sometimes on professional juries, sometimes on archayological interprises, and sometimes on occasion of any shuperimint ayclisiasical ayvint. I may mention also that I've got a rilate living there—he's dead now—but that's nothing; he was second cousin to me first wife, and, of course, in a forryn country, such a near relationship as that brought us very close together, and I attendid him professionally, free of charge, on his dying-bed. It was from this rilate—Malachi McFee, by name—that I obtained the infurmentation that I'm going to convey to you! The poor divvle was a monk in the monastery of San Antonio. I saw a good deal of him, off and on; and one day he had a fall in the vaults of the monastery—he had a very bad conclusion; mortification set in, gangrane, and so forruth—so he died, poor divvle. It was on the death-bed of poor Malachi that I heard that same; and ye'll understand from that what credibility there is in the story, for a man on his death-bed wouldn't be afther speakin' any thing but the truth, unless he could get some real future binifit of some sort out of it, pecuniarily, afther he was dead, or before, but that's neither here nor there."

O'Rourke paused here, and looked sharply at Blake.

"D'ys care to hear it now?" said he.

"Care to hear it? of course. Don't ye see that I'm all ears?"

"Very well," said O'Rourke, "so here goes."

As he spoke, the deep toll of a neighboring bell sounded out as it began to strike the hour of midnight. O'Rourke paused again, and listened silently to the solomon sound, as one after the other the twelve strokes rang deeply out upon the still night air, and, even after the full number had sounded, he sat as though listening for more. At length he drew a long breath, which sounded like a deep sigh.

"I don't know how it is," said he, "but there's nothing in all the wide wurruld that affects me like the toll of a bell at midnigh. I moind me, it was in such a night as this, and the bell was tolling just this way, when poor Malachi died. Well—well—he's dead and gone. *Regueteac in pace*—"

"That same Malachi," continued O'Rourke, "was, as I said, a monk in the monastery of San Antonio, at Rome. Have ye iver been in Rome? No? Thin there's no use for me to tell ye the situation of the monastery, as ye wouldn't understand. It's enough to say that Malachi was a monk there. Now, ye must know that San Antonio, like many other monasteries, has a divvle of a lot of old manuscripts in the library—some copies of classics, some thalological, and some original—the work of the monks. This Malachi was one of the most erudite and profound scholars that I iver saw. He had all them old manuscripts at his fingers' ends—ivery one of them. Now, what I have to tell ye refers to one of these manuscripts, that was hauled forth by poor Malachi out of a forgotten chist, and studied by him till he began to think there was in it the rivilation of some schoopindous secret. It was written in Latin, of course. Ye know Latin, I suppose—a little. Yis—yis. I know what the ordinary education amounts to, but could ye read a manuscript written in Latin, in a crabbed hand, full of contractions and corrections? I don't think it. I have that manuscript, and I've read it; and I know that the number of m'n who could take up that and read it as it stands is not Lagion by any means. I haven't the manuscript here. It's home, with my valuables. It isn't a thing

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I'd carry about, but I've got the substance of it in me mind. It's a modern manuscript, bound up like a book, not much larger than what we call juodecimo size, of about a hundred pages of the writing I've mentioned. Now, the manuscript purported to have been written in the year sixteen hundred and tin, and by all appearances had never been touched by any hand since it left the author's, till poor Malachi drew it out of the chest, but lay there among piles of others, neglected and unknown. It purported to be an account of certain adventures and discoveries of one Aloysius, a monk of San Antonio, some twenty years before, which he had committed to writing, and deposited in the library of the monastery, so as to transmit to the future some memorial of things that he did not wish to have altogether forgotten. Me cousin Malachi studied it all over and over, and he gave me the book on his death-bed, and told me the whole contents juring my attendance there before I had ever read a line meself. Now I'll just tell you the story of the monk Aloysius, fust of all, as it was told me by me cousin Malachi, and as I read it meself, and then ye'll begin to comprehend what I'm driving at.

"Well, now, this Aloysius was a monk of San Antonio, as I said. He was a quiet, sober, religious, contentid soul, according to his own showing; a good, average Christian monk, with all his wants confined to his own cloisters, and no desires beyant. Now underneath the monastery there were thins, and there are still at this day, vast and intricate vaults, stritching underneath the whole idifice, and, in some places, they are two stories deep. Here, in these places, they seem cut out of some rocky substratum—the rock is soft sandstone, and must have been worked easy enough—aft; moreover, it was the opinion of me cousin Malachi, who was, poor fellow, as I ariddy said, a divvie of an archayologist, that these double-storied excavations were the work of the ancient Romans. Now it is with the mntion of these vaults that the manuscript of Aloysius begins.

"It seems that he was sint down to the lowermost vaults one day, in company with another monk—Onofrio by name—to remove some wine-casks, or overhaul thim, or something, whin, juring the course of their labors, they reached the rock forming the extreme west end of the vaults; and here, to the surprise of both, they saw an archway, which had

been walled up so as to prevent any passing through. The sight excited both of thim immensely, and they stopped short in their work, and engaged in some prolonged argumentation as to the probable use of such a passage-way. They differred in their opinions: Aloysius holding that it once was a subterranean passage-way to the outside of the city, made in former ages, to be used in case of need; while Onofrio continded that it was nothing more than a recess, closed up because it was no longer needed; or becaug, perhaps, some one may have formerly been buried there. This discussion excited thim both to such a degree that at length nothing would satisfy either of thim but an examination. Onofrio was at first opposed to this, from the belief that some one had been buried there, and he abrank from the discovery of some possible horror committed in the course of those maydajyal ages, when min were burnt alive, or buried alive, to any tintin, and all ad *majorem Dei gloriam*. It was the way of the wurruld in those ages, and a way that Onofrio did not wish to be reminded of.

"Well, at length they decided to examine it at once. Aloysius was the one who did the business. They had a bit of a crowbar with thim, which they had brougt down to move the bars, and with this he wint at the wall. The stones were small, and were mixed with brick; the mortar had become rotten and disintegrated with the damp of cinterries; and so it was aisy enough work for a brisk young lad, like Aloysius seems to have been thim. They had a couple of good-sized lamps with them all the time, to give light for their work in the vaults, ye know; and so, as there was plinty of oil in thim, they had plinty of leisure for their work. Well, Aloysius says that he worked away, and at last had a hole made big enough to see through. The wall had not been more than six inches thioik, and crumbling at that; and, whin this hole was made, the reat followed quick enough, I'll be bound. Well, the ind of it all was, that the wall at length lay there, a heap of rubbish, at their feet; and there was the open archway full before thim, inviting thim to enter."

O'Rourke now poured out a glass of wine for himself, and looked inquiringly at Blake, to see how he felt. One look was enough to show him that Blake was deeply interested, and was waiting very anxiously for the remainder of the story. O'Rourke smacked his

lips approvingly, set down the empty glass upon the table, and continued:

"Onofrio shrank back. Aloysius sprang through. Thin Onofrio followed, somewhat timidly. Both of them held their lights before them, to see the size of the interior. It was a passage-way about four feet wide and six feet high, but the length of it they were unable to see. Walking forward a few paces, they still found no ind visible as yet. Suddenly Aloysius saw something which excited his attention. It was a slab of marble about six feet long and a foot in width, fastened in the side of the passage-way. There were letters on it. Beyond this he saw others, and, as he stared around in amazement, he saw that these slabs were arranged on both sides, reaching from the floor to the top of the passage, one above another, three deep, and in some places four. Upon this he turned to his companion, and said: 'You're right, Onofrio. This is some ancient burial-place of the monks of San Antonio.' Onofrio said nothing, but, holding his lamp eagerly forward, tried to make out an inscription that was cut on the marble slab. The slab was much discolored, but the lettering was quite visible. These letters, however, were apparently a mixture of different characters; for, though he could make out here and there one, yet others occurred in the midst of them with which he was not familiar. The Latin word IN could be made out, and, on another slab, he made out IN PACE. On all the slabs there was a peculiar monogram which was unintelligible to them.

"These were all good Christians," said Onofrio; "for no others would have *in pace*" over their graves."

"They must have lived long ago," said Aloysius. "And they had a fashion of writing that is different from ours."

"They walked on some distance farther. The graves continued. They were very much amazed, and, in fact, quite stupefied at the immense number which they passed, all cut in the walls of this vault, all covered over with marble slabs. At length, Aloysius, who was going first, uttered a cry; and Onofrio, who had paused to try and make out an inscription, hurried up. He found Aloysius at a place where their passage-way was crossed by another passage-way, which was like it in every respect—the same niches on the walls, the same marble slabs, the same kind of inscriptions. In addition to this they saw that

their own passage-way still ran on, and was lost in the darkness. They both saw that it was far more intricate than they had imagined.

"'You were right,' said Onofrio, 'such a long passage as this must be more than a burial-place.'

"Do the powers, then," cries Aloysius, 'we're both right, for it is a burial-place, and if it don't go all the way out of the city, then I'm a haythen.'

"Well, they walked on some distance farther, and then they came to three passage-ways—in all respects the same—no one could have told any difference—and it was this that made them stop in this first expedition.

"Sure to glory," says Onofrio, 'it's lost we'll be, if we go any farther, for sorra the bit of differ I see betune this passage we're in, and the rest of them; so don't let us go any farther, but get back as quick as we can, while we know our way.'

"At this Aloysius tried to laugh away his fears, but without success. Onofrio was afraid of being lost—moreover, Onofrio was superstitious—and had got it into his head that the place was no other than the general burying-ground of pagan Rome. He didn't know but that the pagans buried their dead like Christians; he wasn't enough of an archæologist to decipher the inscriptions around him; and he was terrified at the spectacle of so many pagan graves. Besides, in addition to what they had seen, the passages leading away seemed to give evidence, or, at least, indications, of an ixtin that was simply schupidous! So, Onofrio was bent on going back, and there was no hilp for it but for Aloysius to follow. But he swore to himself all the same, that he'd go again if he had to do it alone.

"So back they wint, and Onofrio wouldn't hear of stopping till they had got back behind the fust crossing, and then he felt out of danger. So here the two of them, having nothing else to do, rayzhumed their efforts to decipher the inscriptions. At length, Onofrio called to Aloysius. Aloysius went to where he was standing. He saw there a slab cut in letters which were all Roman, without any mixture of those strange characters—Greek, no doubt—that had puzzled them before—he knew the monks in those days often knew a little Latin—Latin being the language of the Church, and widely used for colloquial pur-

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## CHAPTER II.

## THE CATACOMBS.

posse even outside of the Church, at least in Rome, by foreigners and pilgrims—and so ye see the two of thim put their heads together, and made it out. I remember the whole of it. It waan't long—it was simple enough—and it told its own story. Let me see."

O'Rourke bent his head, and seemed to be recalling the words of which he spoke.

"First, there was a monogram which nather of thim understood. It's this—ye know it well enough."

Stepping forward, O'Rourke dipped his finger in his winglass, and traced on the mahogany table this monogram:



"Ye know that," said he; "it stands for Christ, being the two Greek initial letters 'Ch' and 'R.' It was marked by the early Christians on their tombs. Ye see, also, it makes the sign of the cross. As for the inscription, it ran this way somehow, as near as I can remember:

"*In Christo. Paz. Antonino Imperatore, Marius miles sanguinem effudit pro Christo. Dormit in pace.*"

"So ye see by that," continued O'Rourke, after a pause, during which he looked with his usual searching glance at Blake, "that the place was full of Christian tombs. Ye've heard of the Roman Catacombs. Well, that's the place where these two were, and didn't know it, for the reason that they niver heard of such a place.

"Sure to glory!" cried Onofrio. "It's no pagan burying-ground at all, at all. It's Christian, and we're surrounded by the blessed relics of martyrs and saints. Oh, but won't the abbot be the proud man this day when we tell him this!"

"Tarp an ages, man!" cried Aloysius, "ye won't be ather tellin' him yit; wait till we find out more. Let's come again; we'll bring a bit of a string with us, and unroll it as we go on, so as not to lose our way."

"Well, with this agreement they left the Catacombs, got back into the vaults of San Antonio, and, as it was vesper-time, they rowled the bars against the opening so as to hide it, and went away to rezhume their explorations on the following day."

"So ye see," continued Dr. O'Rourke, "what sort of a place it was they had stumbled upon. It was the most sacred spot on earth. It was the burial-place of the saints and martyrs that had suffered at the hands of the bloody pagans—a holy place—a place of pilgrimage!"

At this, he crossed himself devoutly, and took a glass of wine.

"Well, the next day the two of thim wint once more, and this time Onofrio was as eager as Aloysius. The manuscript doesn't say what either of them wished or expected to find; it simply states that they were eager, and that they took with thim several balls of string, to unwind so as to keep their course. Well, this time they wint on and came to the place which they had reached on the previous day. They unwound the string as they wint; and, thus letting it out, they passed boldly and confidently beyant the place where they had turrned back before. Going on, they came to passage after passage, and there was not a pin's difference between any one of thim and any other. Well, at last, they came to a place where there was a cross-passage, and here an excavation had been made, circular in shape, and about twelve feet in diameter. This place had a more cheerful aspect than any thing that they had yet seen, if any-thing can be called cheerful in such a place. The walls had been covered with stucco, which still remained; though down about a foot from the floor it had crumbled off. Over the walls they saw pictures which had been made ages before, and still kept their colors. These were all pictures of things as familiar to thim as the streets of Rome. There was Adam and Eve plucking the forbidden fruit; Noah and his ark; Abraham offering up Isaac; Jonah and his whale; and iver so many more of a similar character. Of course, all this only showed still more clearly that the place was a Christian cinotaph, and it was with something like riverinco that they gazed upon these pictures, made by the hands of saints. Well, then they started to go on, when they suddenly discovered, yawning before them, a wide opening in the flure, or pavement. It was fower feet wide, and six long. Beneath all,

was darkness. Aloysius tuk his string and lowered his lamp. About twelve or fifteen feet below he saw a flure like the one where ho was standing, and a passage-way like those around him. He also saw slabs with inscriptions. By thia he knew that there were ranges of passage-ways filled with tombs amazingly beneath, no doubt as ixtinsive as these upper ones. The sight filled him with schupsefaction. This was the limit of their second attmp. The other passages leading away from what he calls the "painted chamber," were narrow and uninvitin'; the lower passage-way, however, was broad and high, and gave promise of leading to a place of shuprior impertinence. By this time Onofrio was as full of eagerness as Aloysius, and it didn't need any persuasin to injuice him to make a further tower through these vaults on another day. This time they brought with thim, in addition to their lamps and string, a couple of bits of ladders that Aloysius had knocked up for the occasion.

"Well, now came the time of their third exploration. They tuk their ladders, and descended into the lower passage-way." Down here they found ivery thing just as it had been up above. In one or two places they saw, in side-passages, other openings in the flure, which gava ividence of another story beneath this again, containing, no doubt, the same tombs ranged in the same way. Such an apparently indless ixtint almost overwhelmed them. Well, at last, whin they had spun out nearly all their string, they saw before them an opening, wide and dark, into which their passage-way ran. They interred this place.

"Now listen," said O'Rourke, impressively. "This place is described in the manuscript of Aloysius in the most minute manner, just as if he was writing it down for the binift of posterity. It was a vaulted chamber, like the one which they had found before. The walls were stuccoed and covered with painted pictures—the dove with the olive-branch; the mystio fish, the 'Ichthus,' the letters of whose name are so mysteriously symbolical; and the portrayal of sacred scenes drawn from Holy Writ; all these were of the walls. Now, this chamber was fower times bigger than the other one.

"You remember that thus far they had found nothing loose or movable. What may have been in the tombs, of course they could

not see. But here all was different. The very first glance they threw around showed them a great heap of things, piled up high in the far corroner. Onofrio hesitated—for he was always superstitious—but Aloysius bounded forward, and at once began to examine the things.

"Now, Blake, me boy, by the powers but it's me that don't know how to begin to tell you this that they found! Whin I read about this in the manuscript—when I saw it, there in black and white—tars an ages!—but I fairly lost me breath. What d'ye think it was, man? What? Why, a trisure incalculable, piled up tin feet high from flure to vaulted ceiling; there was gold, and silver, and gims, and golden urruns, and goblets, and perrils, and rubles, and imeralds; there was jools beyond all price, and tripods, and censers, and statuettes; and oh, sure to glory! but it's meself that'll fairly break down in the attmp to give you the faintest concipion of a trisure so schupindous; candelabras, and snuffer-trays, and lamps, and lavers, and braziers, and crowns, and coronits, and bracelets, and chains—all of them put down in that manuscript, in black and white, as I said—coolly enumerated by that owid gaudher of an Aloysius, who misseed his chance thin, as I'll tell you. But there they were, as I'm telling ye, and I'd jist requist ye to let yer fancy play around this description; call up before yer mind's eye the trisure there—the trisure that the worruld has niver seen the like of before nor since, saving only once, whin the gowid of Peru was piled up for Pizarro's greedy eyes by the unfortunate Atahualpa; but no wonder, for what he saw there was no less a thing than the *trisure of the Cæsars!*"

At this, O'Rourke stopped and looked at his companion. Blake by this time showed evidence of the most intense and breathless excitement.

"By the Lord!" he exclaimed, "O'Rourke, what do you mean by all this? It is incredible. It sounds like some madman's dream!" O'Rourke smiled.

"Wait," said he—"wait till ye hear the whole of the story, and then we'll be able to discuss the probabilities. I'm not done just yet—I'll hurry on. I can't stand the thought of the glories of that unparalleled scene.

"Well, Aloysius was already taking up the things one by one in amazement, whin Onofrio

all was different. They threw around showed things, piled up high in Onofrio hesitated—for he was cautious—but Aloysius did at once begin to ex-

boy, by the powers but how to begin to tell and! Whin I read about it—when I saw it there are an ages!—but I . . . What d'ye think it . . . Why, a treasure incalculable high from fure to was gold, and silver, and rubrins, and goblits, and diamonds; there was and candelabras, and censers, and tripods, and censers, and oh, sure to glory! fairly break down in you the faintest concipitous; candelabras, lamps, and lavers, and coronets, and bracelets of them put down in black and white, as I . . . that would gain . . . no missed his chance at there they were, as . . . just request ye to let this description; call to the treasure there—wuld has niver seen ce, saving only once, . . . u was piled up for by the unfortunate er, for what he saw r than the *treasure* of

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came up. Onofrio gave a cry of wonder, and caught up several small statuette, but, after a brief examination, he threw them back with a gesture and a cry of abhorrence.

"Come away!" says he—"come away!" "What do you mean?" says Aloysius, grabbing up a heap of perrils and diamond jools.

"They're the divvle's own work, sure enough," says Onofrio, all of a tremble. "Sure he's put it all here as a bait for our sows."

"Whist then, Onofrio darlint," says Aloysius. "What's the harrum of whipping off a bit of a diamond or iversal for San Antonio?"

"Oh, sure to glory!" cries Onofrio, "but we'll be lost and kilt intirely, and we'll niver get home again. Down with them!" says he. "Fling them back, Aloysius jool," says he. "They're the work, and the trap, and the device of Satan," says he, "an' nothin' 'll iver come of it but blue roon to both of us."

"Sure, an' how could Satan get in here wid the saints and martyrs, ye ould spalpeen!" says Aloysius.

"At this Onofrio declared that this chamber had no tombs, and was thus unguarded, so that thereby the powers of Darkness were able to inter and lay their snares—

"But," says Aloysius—and oh, but it's the clear head that same had on his shoulders—"how," says he, "would Satan," says he, "be after laying his snares down here where no mortal iver comes?"

"Oh, sure, and that's just it," says Onofrio; "didn't he see us comin'—didn't he just throw these things in here for us to grab at them? Oh, come back, Aloysius darlint!—drop ivery thing—back to the protection of the saints and martyrs, and out of this!"

"Well, just at this moment several of the gowlden braziers and tripods, which had been loosened on the pile by Aloysius pulling away some of the gowlden candelabra and diamond bracelets from under them, gave a slide, and fell with a great clatter to the fure. At this Onofrio gave a yell, dropped his lamp, and ran. Aloysius was for the moment frightened almost as much, and followed Onofrio, both of them with not the least doubt in life but that the *Ould Boy* was after them. So they ran, an' they didn't stop till they reached the ladder, when they scrambled up, and pulled the ladder up after them. They now felt safe,

and waited here awhile to take breath. Now, mind you, Aloysius had been frightened, but there was an iversal bracelet that he'd slipped on his arm, and a diamond ring that he'd stuck on his finger, and these two remained on as he ran, and when he felt himself safe he didn't feel inclined to throw them away. But he could not keep them concealed from Onofrio, who detected them by the flash of the gems that outshone the lamp and dazzled him. Upon this he set up a great outcry that they were lost, and would niver see the wurruld agin, and implored Aloysius to tear the Satanic traps off, and throw them behind him. But Aloysius refused.

"Whist," says he, "do ye know where ye are?" says he. "Arn't these the saints and martyrs? Would they allow any blackguard imp to show as much as the tip of his tail? Not they. Niver." But Onofrio wouldn't be consoled at all, at all, and all the way back went on lamenting that one or the other would have to pay dear for stealing Satan's jools. So at last they got back safe into the vaults of the monastery, and thim—partly to console, Onofrio, and partly out of a ginurious filial similitud and loyal regyard to San Antonio and his monastery—Aloysius towld Onofrio that it would be best to let the abbot know; and this consoled Onofrio, for he saw that he could get the abbot's help against Satan. And so the two of thim, without any more delay, walked off and towld the abbot the whole story.

"And oh, but wasn't the abbot the happy man that day! He quistoned thim over and over. He bound thim by a solemn promise niver to breathe a word of it to another soul. He thim infarramed thim that he would visit the place himself, and told thim that they both would have to go with him. Well, Aloysius was glad enough, and poor Onofrio was badly soared; but the abbot, the dear man, had his own projects, and wasn't going to lose the chance of such a treasure as this, especially whin, as ye may say, it might be called San Antonio's own gold and jools.

"Sure to glory!" cried the holy abbot in rapture; "don't I know all about it? There's been a tradition here for ages. It's the treasure of the Cæsars. Whin Alario came before Rome, the sint and people of Rome tried to save something, so they implored the imperial palace—the *Aurea Domus Neronis*—me boys, of all its treasures—its gold, its gems, its jools,



its kyarbuncles, its imiralds, and pricious stones—and where in the wide wurruld they put thim nobody Iver knew till this day. Alario was fairly heart-broke with disappointment. They were niver tuk up, for Rome was no longer safe. Genseric came ravagin', and missed thim. They escaped the grasp of Odoacer, of Theodoric, of Vitiges, of Totila, and of Belisarius; of the Normans, of the robber barons, of Rienzi, and of the Constable Bourbon; and have been kept till this day, through the ispicial protection and gyardianship of holy Anthony—may glory be with him!—and now he's handin' it over to us, for the honor and glory of his monastery. Look at this,' says he, whippin' on his own arrum the bracelet that Aloysius had found, and putting the diamond ring on his own finger, and howldin' arrum and hand up to the light. 'Tare an ages! boys, but did ye iver see any gims like thim?'

"So the holy abbot wint off, escorted by the two monks; and ye may be sure they kept that same expedition a saycret from all the rest of the monks. It was night whin they wint down—as the manuscript says. The prinsince of the blissid abbot gave the two boys a sence of protection, and even Onofrio seemed to have lost his fears. He grew bolder, and peered curiously into those darker side-passages which crossed the main pathway. The clew lay along the 'flure all the way, so that there was no trouble. Well, they wint on an' reached the painted chamber, and found the ladders lying where they had left thim. They wint down. Each one had his own lamp. They walked on for about fifty paces; alriddy Aloysius was reaching forward his hand to show the holy abbot how near the trisure-room was, whin suddenly there was a noise—'a noise,' says the manuscript, 'like rushing footsteps.'

"At that moment Onofrio gave a terrible cry. Again, as before, the lamp fell from his hands, and was dashed to pieces. With yell afther yell, and shriek afther shriek, he darted back, and bounded along the passage-ways. The abbot and Aloysius heard the noise, too; but of itself, says the manuscript, that noise might not have driven them away, for the holy abbot was riddy with no ind of exorcisms and spells to lay the biggest imp that might appear. But the yell, and the sudden flight of Onofrio, filled thim with uncontrollable horror. The abbot, in an instant, lost all his

prinsince of mind. He turned and ran back at the top of his speed. Aloysius followed, and could scarcely keep up with him. Aloysius declares that, as he ran, he still heard the sound of rushing footsteps behind him, and was filled with the darkest fear. *'Ingens terror,'* he says, *'implebat nos; membra rigebant; cor stupebat; horror ineffabilis undique circumstabat; et a tergo videbantur quasi calvæ horribiles ex abyamo, surgentes, sequentes atque fugantes. Nos ita inter mortuos, semimortuos; inter fugantes fugientes erepti sumus necivo quomodo ex illo abyamo; et ad cryptum monasterii viz semianimi tandem advenimus.'*

"Well," continued O'Rourke, after pausing, perhaps to take breath after the Latin which he had quoted from the old manuscript, "whin they got to the vaults of the monastery, they recovered from their terror, but only to experience a new alarm. For there, on looking around, they could see nothing of Onofrio. They searched all through the vaults. He was not there. They had locked the monastery door, which led into the vaults, on the inside, and it had not been opened. If he was not in the vaults, he must yit be in that horrible place from which they had fled. But they had seen nothing of him since his first flight. They had not overtaken him. The abbot had a vague reminbrance of a figure before him vanishing in the gloom of the passage-way, but no more.

"They waited for a long time, but Onofrio did not make his appearance. Thin they shouted at the top of their voices, but the sounds died away down the long, vaulted passage without bringing any risonsee icript what the manuscript vaguely and mysteriously calls a *'concentus quidam susurrorum levium, ut videbatur, sonorumque obscurorum, qua commixta reverberationibus tristibus ac ægribus, volebant quasi suspiria de profundis.'* . . .

"At last their anxiety about their companion proved stronger thin the horrors of shuperstition, and they ventured back, growing boulder as they wint, and they wint as far as the fast passage-way." Thin they called and halloed. But no risonsee came. Thin they wint as far as the painted chamber, the holy abbot howldin' before him the sacred symbol of the cross, and muttering prayers, while Aloysius did the shouting. And the manuscript says that they remained there for hours. The opening into the regions below lay within sight, but they didn't dare so much

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turned and ran back at Aloysius followed, and with him. Aloysius then, he still heard the steps behind him, and great fear. *Ingens terrores; membra rigebant; Fabulis undique circumstantur quasi calervae horrea, sequentes atque funemortuos, semimortuos; repti sumus nescio quoad cryptum monasterii venimus.*

O'Rourke, after pausing beneath after the Latin in the old manuscript, the fate of the monastery, the terror, but only to tremble. For there, on the wall, he could see nothing of all through the vaults. They had locked the door, and had led into the vaults, and had not been opened. But, he must yet be in which they had fled. The thought of him since his death not overtaken him. The remembrance of a figure in the gloom of the

at that time, but Onofrio's presence. Then they heard their voices, but the long, vaulted passage by response in cryptic and mysterious. *In susurrorum levitate obscurorum, qua tristibus ac segni de profundis.* . . . about their combat in the horrors of tortured back, grow, and they went as far as they could. Then they called once came. Then entered chamber, the door to him the sacred uttering prayers, and shouting. And the remained there for the regions below. He didn't dare so much

as to think of going down there again. They saw the projection of the ladder above the opening, but dared not go nearer. At last it became evident that there was no further hope just then. They went up and found it daylight above-ground. The abbot was wild with anxiety. He gathered all the monks, got strophes, and crosses, and torches, and down again he went with them. This time, emboldened by the presence of numbers, he descended the ladder and stood at the foot. He didn't dare, though, to venture any further. He didn't tell the monks any thing except that Brother Onofrio was lost. Nothing was said about the treasure. The most awful warnings were held out to the monks against wandering off. Small need was there for warning them, however, for they were all half dead with fear. There they stood and sang chants. They did this three days running. The monk Aloysius distinctly affirms that nothing kept away the mischievous demons but the sacred chants and the prayers of the holy abbot.

"Well, nothing was ever heard of Onofrio. After three days they gave up. The abbot had the opening walled up, and then, overwhelmed by grief, he took to his bed. The damp of the vaults had also affected his lungs. He died in about six weeks. He left directions for perpetual masses to be said for the repose of the soul of Brother Onofrio. As for Aloysius, his grief and remorse were deep and permanent. He never ceased to reproach himself with being the cause of the terrible fate of poor Onofrio. He never attempted to get the treasure which he now and ever afterwards most firmly believed to be all that Onofrio had said. Still there was the secret on his soul, and so he wrote this story of his, and put his manuscript in the library of the monastery. And there ye have it."

With these words Dr. O'Rourke concluded his story, and, turning toward the table, refreshed himself with another glass of wine.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE TREASURE OF THE CÆSARS.

DR. O'Rourke swallowed a glass of wine, and then proceeded to light a cigar with the air of one who felt that he had done enough, and was desirous of resting from his labors, and of leaving to his companion the task of making further remarks. So he lighted his

cigar, leaned back in his chair, and turned his eyes toward the ceiling.

Basil Blake, for his part, had been a listener of the most attentive kind, and O'Rourke could not have wished for any more absorbed, or earnest, or thoughtful hearer. Now that the story was ended, he remained in the same position, and, like our first parents with the affable archangel, "still stood attentive, still stood fixed to hear."

At length he roused himself from his abstraction, and, drawing a long breath, looked fixedly at O'Rourke.

"Well, old chap," said he, "all that I can say is that, for a story, this is the most extraordinary that I have ever actually listened to, and, in order to find a parallel, I have to refer to the story-books of my boyhood—the 'Arabian Nights,' 'Tales from the German,' and 'Fairy Lore.' I see you are expecting me to give an opinion about this, but it is difficult to do so; for, in the first place, I don't know whether I'm to regard it as mere fiction or actual fact."

O'Rourke laid down his cigar upon the table.

"That's the very remark I expected you to make, so it is," said he, "and so, sure enough, there rises before us at the outset the great question of the authenticity of the manuscript and the credibility of the narrative. You see, then, that this question is twofold, and should be considered as such."

Blake nodded.

"Now, first," said O'Rourke, "as to the authenticity of the manuscript—there can be no doubt about that whatever. My own cousin, poor Malachi, a dying man, gave it to me with his dying hands. He was a monk in the monastery of San Antonio, and in the library of that same he found the manuscript, written, as the date informs us, centuries ago. So, you see, the genealogy is straight and certain. Howandiver, this is only external evidence. What about the internal evidence? The handwriting of itself is sufficient proof that it was written when it says, together with the faded ink, the peculiar vellum, and the general aspect. Internal evidence of a still stronger kind may be found in the sentiments, the expressions, and the jargon of the writer; but these all inter into the discussion under the second head—namely, the honesty, the credibility, the veracity, of the author.

"Now, with reference to this, I will make a few observations:

"First, the writer could have had no motive whatever in writing down any thing but what he believed to be true. Remember, he speaks as an eye-witness—nay, more, an actor in the events which he narrates. To a man in his position and calling, a work of fiction would have been impossible. He was not a sensation novelist. He was a man of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—a monk, a recluse, a man near his end. He had no audience; no reading public; he wrote his work, and consigned it to the oblivion of the library. Under such circumstances, no man could write any thing but what he believed true.

"But, secondly, there are other things which tend to sustain his entire credibility. These are the circumstances mentioned in the book, the feelings, the words, and the deeds of the actors. First among these things described is the place itself, now famous as the Roman Catacombs. The mention of this place is enough for me. In the time when Aloysius lived, the Catacombs were unknown. They had been forgotten for ages. Their very existence was not suspected. The labors and explorations of Bosio, Arringhi, and others, had not yet taken place. Aloysius thus stands alone among his contemporaries in this knowledge of the existence and the appearance of the Catacombs. He saw them as they appeared to Bosio, with the slabs untouched, the pictures fresh-colored, the inscriptions undeciphered, and, I may add, the graves unvisited.

"Now, you must not only appreciate the full force of this most significant fact, but you must also bear in mind that all the descriptions of Aloysius are as vivid and as accurate as possible. I have been in those Catacombs which are now open to visitors, and can answer for the truth of the manuscript. There are the passages, the tiers of graves, the chambers, the walls covered with stucco, with pictures of Scripture scenes, the stupendous multitudes of Christian dead. The arrangement of the excavations in different stories, the superior, and mezzanine, and inferior; the openings in the paths, the peep down into the abyss of darkness beneath—all these are wonderfully accurate, and are the description of an eye-witness.

"Again, there are those vivid descriptions

of human life and emotion; of exultation, curiosity, triumph, sudden fright, deep horror, succeeded by grief and despair. Recall the horror of Onofrio, the anguish of the abbot. I wish you could only read that crumpled manuscript for yourself, so as to see with what vivid simplicity these terrible things are told.

"There's not the least doubt in life, then, that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, or the end of the sixteenth, the man that wrote this was down in the Catacombs, and that his companion perished there, as he narrates. There's not the least doubt in life that those multitudinous minute details are all correct, and actually happened as set forth.

"Still one fact remains, and this is, after all, the preliminary fact for us now. It is the assertion of the discovery of a Great Treasure. With regard to this, we ask ourselves two questions:

"First—Is it possible?

"Secondly—Is it probable?

"Now, the question of its possibility is easily disposed of. Of course, it's possible, and more unlikely things than that have taken place. So the other question remains—Is it probable?

"Now let us turn our attention to this for a few moments:

"When you think of it, you must see that nothing is more probable than that, in the course of ages, in the history of a great city like ancient Rome, treasure has been concealed to a vast extent. Think of the numerous sieges and sacks that have taken place since the days of Alaric the Goth. The sacks of Rome began with Alaric. The spell of Roman security was broken when the Goths mined the Aeternum City. In the short space that was left between his arrival and the capture of the city an immense amount must have been hastily concealed. At that time the existence of the Catacombs was known. It had, at what might be termed a comparatively recent period, been a hiding-place for persecuted Christians. It was then a sacred place, as St. Jerome says, and was believed to be hallowed by the bones of the martyrs. 'Deed, St. Jerome himself went down to inspect their graves, and tells his emotions.

"There is no doubt, then, I may resume, that an incalculable amount of treasure must have been hid away in Rome during centuries of warfare and tumult; and it is equally evi-

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dint that at certain times the Catacombs must have been foremost in the thoughts of those who wished to hide money—as prayiminitly, if not exclusively, the best place for such concealment. The question, therefore, that now comes forth is, which, out of all the centuries in the life of the Aytterrual City, is the most likely one in which a great trisuro might be hid in the Catacombe?

"In order to answer this, let us cast our eyes over the sackings of Rome. The great sack by the Constable Bourbon was ividintly not the time that'll shoot our purposes, for the reason that the ixistence of the Catacombs was not even suspected. The same thing may be said of the various sieges or sackings that occurred juring the middle ages—undher the Hohenstaufen Imperors, whither Rome was misaced by a Ghibelline arrumy, or captured and plundered by the Norramans. So, ye see, we've got to go back still further till we come to the days of Belisarius, and the warrafare of that fminint ginerar against the Goths. One answer meets us here, and that is, that in his days there was scarcely enough trisuro in Rome to be worth concealmint. We know that fact by the state of Rome at the acission of Grigory the Great, at the ind of that same cintury. Whin that pope ascended the chair of Saint Peter—glory to his name!—he found Rome a city of paupers. If it hadn't been for him, Rome would not have been in ixistence now. He was a second Romulus—he saved Rome—he created it anew. But, by this simple fact, we see that in his days there was no trisuro to conceal.

"It is ividint, therefore, that we are pushed further back.

"Now, the conditions that we have seen both ixist side by side in the greatest degree at the time of the first sack of Rome by Alaric. What do we find then? Wilth incalculable; the accumulated trisures of the ages; the stored-up plunder of cinturies—all piled up in Rome! Not yet had any hand of violence been laid upon the imparial possessions. True it is that the Imperor Constantine had taken away some trisures of art—some rilics, perhaps, and coined money, together with what things he could conveniently appropriate; but such saquistations as these were but a fee-bite, and made no perceptible dimintion in the hoarded wilth of the cinturies of domination and shuprimacy. It excited no alarrum. Rome stood untroubled. Time

rowled on. The gowld, and the gims, and the jools, and the trisures of the ancient pagan temples were perhaps transferred to Christian Idifices; but they still remained in Rome. No one thought as yit of concealmint—at least, not on any grand scale. In those days the House of Nero was yit the Golden—the Palatine stood up one of the wondhers of the wurruidd.

"Now at this time—Imagme the approach of Alaric—what would be the fust act of the Romans? those let us say who were gyarding the mighty trisures of the imparial palace? Most ividintly their fust impulse would be to hurry away every movable thing of value into a place of concealmint. And into what place of concealmint? In that age there would be nicissarily but one place thought of—the Catacombs. There their Christian fathers had hid from a mightler than Alaric, in the days whin a Roman imperor was at the shuprame zaynith of his power; there, in that same place, it would be easy to hide min or trisuro from the grasp of a barbaric raid.

"Now I contind," continued O'Rourke in a calmer tone—"I contind that all this is iminintly probable, and, more than this, I contind that it is also probable that it may be there yit; but we'll see about that praintly. I may minton one other theory that has suggested itself to my mind, and that is, that the pagan priests may have concealed their temple trisures from the Christians some time between the reigns of Constantine and Theodosius. This I thought of for the reason that Aloysius says so much about tripods, statuettes, censers, braziers, and so forth. But the answer to this, and the objction, is this, that pagan priests, even allowing that they might have concealed their temple trisures out of dread of aggressive Christians, would never have vintured into a place like the Catacombs—a place in its origin, its use, its associations, prayiminitly Christian. To do so would have been to vinture into invilible discovery and capture. At the same time," continued O'Rourke, elevating his eyebrows and giving a thoughtful glance at his cigar, now utterly extinguished—"at the same time this opin before us an intresting field of inquiry, and much may be said on both sides.

"As for Aloysius," continued O'Rourke, "it is ividint from the tone of his writing that he considered the trisuro as altogether pagan, and therefore Satanic. Onofrio seems to have

recognized their pagan characters at a glance. He flung down with horror the statuette, and looked with equal horror on the jewels that Aloysius had taken. Both of those men were superstitious; it was of course the characteristic of their age. Even after the lapse of twenty years Aloysius still thinks the noises which he heard Satanic; and it never seems to have entered the dear man's head that the rattle among the gold and silver vessels may have been the result of the action of the ordinary laws of gravitation; while those terrible sounds—'as of rushing footsteps'—of which he speaks, he seems incapable, from his nature and from his age, of attributing to such humble and commonplace agencies as rats, or bats, or both. Rats—or bats—those were the imps, the demons of the poor monk's fancy—that drove poor Onofrio to a hideous death in the interminable passages, the endless labyrinths, and the impenetrable gloom of the Catacombs.

"One more thing I may say which has just occurred to me. Ye don't know Rome, and so ye can't understand the position of the monastery of San Antonio. Well, ye can understand me when I say that it is situated on a street that begins not far from the Corso, and that the Palatine Hill is not an extravagant distance off. Now, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that the subterranean passage led in that direction; and I've made maps according to my own fancy, which shows how those two explorers may have wandered along till they were standing beneath the Palatine. Now, on that Palatine stood the Golden House of Nero—the imperial palace—now a heap of ruins. But that palace was distinguished for the vast depth of its foundations, and the immense extent of its vaults beneath. There are some archaeologists who have suggested that there were actual openings or communications with the Catacombs themselves—

"If so, how easy it was for the gyarjians of the imperial treasures to carry them all down below! It was merely going downstairs. This chamber, then, may have been immediately beneath the imperial vaults—the cellars or dungeons of the palace—and thus the chamber upon which Aloysius and Onofrio stumbled would be the very chamber where once was concealed the treasure of the Cæsars. Moreover, if it once was concealed there, it is easy to account for the fact of its remain-

ing there. The terror of Gothic arrums; the names of Alaric, Attila, Genseric; the enormous assemblages outside and inside the city; the puppet emperors put up and overthrown by barbarian soldiers—all these things would have induced the gyarjians of the imperial treasure to suffer it to be there unremoved. And thin generations would pass; and the gyarjians would die out; and the secret, transmitted from father to son, would at last be lost. The gyarjians, or their descendants, would be driven away from the palace; their places would be occupied by Gothic servitors; the palace itself would go to decay, the vaults fall in; the subterranean passages would sink in ruin; and so, at last, even if the secret was known, the path that led to the treasure-chamber would be no longer discoverable."

Dr. O'Rourke had spoken rapidly and vehemently, and in the tone, not merely of one who believed all that he was saying, but of one who was a positive enthusiast in that belief. This enthusiasm, more than even the arguments themselves, produced a strong effect upon Blake, in spite of the utter incredulity which he had felt at first; and he now found himself at length swept onward, by O'Rourke's vehemence and enthusiasm, to the conclusion that, after all, the probabilities in favor of the truth of this wild idea were of a highly-respectable character."

"You have said nothing about your cousin—Malachi."

"No," said O'Rourke. "I am not quite through yet; I am coming to him. I confess that, without poor Malachi's own story, I would not have the least idea in life that there was any prospect of doing any thing now—in short, I would have regarded the story of Aloysius as a species of modified fiction. But my cousin Malachi had his own story to tell, which, though not conclusive, is still important enough to make the story of Aloysius seem like a living fact."

"It seems, then, that poor Malachi, as I said, stumbled upon this manuscript, and read it through. It produced such an effect upon him that he could not have any rest until he had tested the truth of it to some extent, however slight. So, what did he do but he determined to make a slight exploration on his own hook! He was afraid, though, to take any companion, for fear that he would meet with the fate of poor Onofrio.

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"Well, first of all, he went down into the very same vaults where Aloysius and his friend had gone; and there, sure enough, he found the very opening mentioned in the manuscript, which opening was thin just as it had been walled up after the search for Onofrio had ended. So poor Malachi took a crowbar, and did as Aloysius had done before him. He knocked down the wall without difficulty, and there, sure enough, he saw the passage-way and the tiers of tombs.

"He didn't go far that day, but waited for a time. The next time he brought down a ball of twine and some lanterns; and, armed with these, he wint in, and wint along, unrolling the twine for a clew.

"Well, all was as the manuscript said. He came to the first crossing, and wint on beyond this.

"He says he never felt comfortable there. He always felt as if the ghost of poor Onofrio was watching him; but poor Malachi was a very resolute boy, and he kept at it. He went in several times, and at last ventured as far as the painted chamber.

"Beyond this he saw the opening in the floor. He looked down, and saw all the darkness beneath. He never wint any farther.

"There were two reasons for this: First, he hadn't the nerve to do it; he felt uncomfortable enough where he was, but down below he didn't dare to go, and scarcely dared to look; for there, he fully believed, the ghost of Onofrio was wandering, confined to that lower story, and haunting it. You and I may smile at poor Malachi's superstition, but a monk leads a ghostly sort of life, and it was no joke to go alone as he wint, right after reading such a manuscript as that of Aloysius.

"The other reason why he didn't go any farther was, that he had no motive. He was utterly and sublimely destitute of any desire for money. All his wants were supplied; he was content. Why should he bother his head?

"Still he thought it his duty, for the sake of the monastery, and out of loyal regard to San Antonió, to tell the abbot. This he did in the most effective way by reading the manuscript to him. The abbot listened with deep and painful feelings. He was not a strong-minded man, nor was he avaricious. Moreover, he was superstitious. He would not have gone below in search of that treasure, as

his predecessor had done, for all the world. In fact, he charged me cousin Malachi to wall the passage-way up as he had found it, and never to mention the subject to any of the other monks. This me cousin Malachi did. He walled it up again as he had found it; and, as he didn't wish the monks to get into any trouble through him, he kept his secret till his death, and then confided it to me."

## CHAPTER IV.

## A STROKE FOR FORTUNE.

Some further conversation followed upon the story of Aloysius, and Blake asked sundry questions of a character which showed that he had not lost a single word. Blake conceded the possibility, nay, even the probability, of a treasure having once been concealed in the catacombs; but was inclined to think that, in the course of ages, it must have been discovered. O'Rourke; on the other hand, reminded him of the nature of the Catacombs, the utter ignorance about them which existed through many centuries; their comparatively recent rediscovery, and the small extent that had been explored in comparison with what yet remained to be investigated. He insisted that there were portions or districts of these vast subterranean realms which must have been for ages untrudged by the foot of man; and that any being once placed there, no matter how long ago, had most probably been unseen and untouched ever since. He laid great stress upon the fact mentioned by Aloysius—that all the slabs were on their tombs; that no grave was open—a circumstance which, in O'Rourke's view, proved beyond a doubt that they had never been profaned by the presence of robbers or plunderers. No graves are sacred from the thief, and the undisturbed condition of these graves proved that their existence had been unknown.

"And no wonder," said he. "Have you any idea of the extent of the Roman Catacombs? Did ye ever pay any attention to the subject, or begin to farrum any conception about them? The Catacombs have an extent that I can scarce give any idea of. They exist beneath all that surface which once forruemed the site of ancient Rome; and not only so, but all that surface which was covered by the

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suburbs. These suburbs, as we know, were vast, and perhaps contained a population as great as the city itself; for, as was said, one could not tell where the city ended, and the country began. More than this, the Catacombs have been found near Ostia, and passages have been discovered which seem to go under the Tiber, anticepting the Thames Tunnel by eighteen centuries. The vulgar idea of the Catacombs is, that they were made for the purpose of obtaining Roman cement for building-purposes. This is now exploded. The catacombs are excavated in a rock that cannot be used for cement of any kind. The latest researches have shown that they were undoubtedly made for burial-purposes; and the only question is whether they were originally Christian or not. That they were eventually Christian is evident. For myself, I have no doubt as to their Christian origin.

"Another misconception about them is as to their farum. There has been a prevalent opinion that they extended uninterruptedly in innumerable passages. It is now known, however, that they only exist where there is that peculiar soft sandstone in which they are excavated. As this only exists in certain places, so the Catacombs form distinct quarters, or districts. These are all excavated in stories, one above the other—sometimes as many as four or five are found—but many are disconnected altogether with any other district. The whole of the ground under Rome is not all honeycombed, therefore, but only certain portions over an immense extent of country. Now, the place which we are considering seems to me to be one of these isolated districts, the very existence of which is unsuspected. No explorers have troubled it thus far. My cousin Malachi found the tombs undisturbed. We may call them the Palatine Catacombs—since they certainly seem to run under the Palatine—and, if this is so, I can only say that the Palatine Catacombs are worthy of being explored—and soon, too—before any of these blackguard archaeologists get wind of their existence."

"But allowing that the treasure was once put there," said Blake, "and even allowing that it may be there yet, do you think that there is any possibility of any one getting at it?"

"Do I think that? And, if I didn't think that, what d'ye suppose I'd be talking myself hoarse for? It's not for idle intertainment

I'm talking now. It's business I mean. Don't ye see that? Am I not earnest enough to show ye how risolute I am? But as to getting at it, I can answer that. I believe it to be possible, but I haven't yet actually tested it. Still, I haven't the smallest doubt in life. Listen, now:

"The monastery of San Antonio is in the Via San Antonio, that begins near the Corso, and runs toward the Palatine and the Forum. It is thickly built up with houses. These houses are, without exception, all very old, and strongly built; they look like houses that have deep vaults beneath. The people living along here belong to the poorer classes. Now what is there to prevent any one from rindng one of these houses, or the lower part of one? If I were to rind one, I'll tell ye what I'd do. I'd begin an excavation on a small scale, so as to try to feel my way toward the passages of the Palatine Catacombs. I feel confident that a moderate excavation would lead me into some passage. In the Catacombs, or in any of their districts or divisions, the passages are numerous, and lie close together. I believe, thin, that any one, by digging from the cellar of one of these houses, would reach before long the very passage of Aloysius itself. That passage runs in a direction which ought to make it nearly parallel with the Via di San Antonio; and the only trouble would be to know how to dig, and in what direction. This is the only trouble, and it is one that would, of course, be rimided by time and perseverance.

"It's true the vaults of San Antonio must be deeper by at least one story than the cellars of the adjoining houses; but, in that case, the explorer would have to arrange his course with rirfrance to that, and aim at a lower livel. One advantage I have is, that I have so accurate a description from me cousin Malachi of the starting-point of the passage of Aloysius, and of its direction, that I'm confident I could hit it without any trouble or disappointment whatever. Howandiver, I'll find out for myself before long, and know exactly what the probabilities are. Of course, when once inside the Catacombs, one can find the passage of Aloysius, which must still be recognizable by the ind being walled up. Once find that, and thin all that there is to do is to follow the course mentioned in the manuscript. Any one can do it, provided he has the requisite knowledge, and is distichute of shuperstition, and

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is not afraid of the ghost of Onofrio, like me  
poor Cousin Malachi.

"Well, now, me boy, the question is this:  
do you feel inclined to accompany me on  
this exploration? Ye know the whole now.  
The fact is, one can't do much alone. Things  
must be taken down—ladders and lumps, and  
perhaps pickaxes and spades. We must ex-  
pect some ravages to be made by time. The  
passage may have fallen in, and may have to  
be cleared away. All this may be so difficult  
for one man to do alone, that the obstacles  
may utterly defeat his attempt."

"Oh, by Jove!" cried Blake, "as for  
that, if there's even a ghost of a chance of  
success, I'd go—like a shot."

"Didn't I know it? Sure I did," ex-  
claimed O'Rourke, with genuine satisfaction  
in his tone. He thereupon poured out another  
glass of wine, and slowly quaffed it.

"Any thing that may better my circum-  
stances is welcome to me," said Blake. "I  
can't lose any money, for I have none to lose.  
I can only lose time—and, unfortunately, that  
is a commodity of very little value to me just  
now, or to anybody else. It may be a wild-  
goose chase, but I'm willing to try it."

"Sure, and ain't that the true spirit of  
a man, a Christian, and a bayro?" cried  
O'Rourke. "Ye're sure to be successful—  
but it's just as well for ye not to feel sure—  
if it's only to keep yer head cool, and yer  
hand stiddy."

"Oh, I'm not at all sanguine," said Blake,  
with a laugh. "I go in merely for a specu-  
lation."

"The fact is," said O'Rourke, "it's now  
over two years since me cousin Malachi  
died, and since thin I've been reading the  
manuscript over and over, and brooding  
over it, and arranging some plan. But I  
soon found that I couldn't do any thing 'till I  
could get the proper associate. I wanted a  
man of pluck, and honor, and resolution, and  
nerve, and hardihood. All these qualities it  
is difficult to find combined in the same man  
—and in my case I wanted a man whom I  
could rely on as a frind—one who would  
stand by me in sickness, and not leave me in  
the lurch. Now, me boy, I've only known  
you for a year, but you come nearer to the  
standard than any man I know, and this is  
the reason why I've taken you into my confi-  
dence, and asked you to come with me into  
this interprise. If it is successful the half is

yours; if not—why, thin—sure to glory—  
there's no harrum done—and nothing lost but  
a few months' time."

"Well, old fellow," said Blake, in a frank  
and cordial tone, "I thank you for the com-  
pliment you pay me, in taking me into your  
confidence, and, whether we succeed or not, I  
shall feel just the same sort of—a—gratitude,  
you know, and all that sort of thing. As  
to standing by you, I assure you, my dear  
fellow, you may count on me to any extent,  
and under any circumstances. I can do a  
good day's work—if it comes to that—I'm  
not superstitious—I don't believe in ghosts  
of any sort or kind; and if there's any gold  
down there, I tell you what it is, that gold will  
have to show itself to the light of day, for  
I'll have it up, or else I'll leave my bones in  
the Catacombs along with those of our mu-  
tual friend Onofrio!"

O'Rourke smiled blandly.

"Sure, and if it comes to leaving your  
bones—or my bones," said he, "we couldn't  
find a better, a quieter, or a more respectable  
and altogether unexceptional place, than thin  
same Catacombs."

"Well," said Blake, cheerily, "what? do  
you propose to begin?"

"As soon as possible, if you consent," said  
O'Rourke.

"Of course I consent. . . I have no choice.  
I'm a hard-up man. In those few words you  
may read a melancholy story."

"Sure and the wisest and the best of the  
human race are in the same fix, as a general  
thing," responded O'Rourke. "Well—as to  
our work—I propose, as I said, to begin as  
soon as possible. Now, my intintion is to  
set out for Rome to-morrow—since you have  
decided in favor of this interprise—and thin  
I intend to indivor to rint one of thim houses  
along the Via San Antonio, as nigh to the  
monastery as possible. Sure and there can't  
be any doubt; but I'll be able to rint some one  
among them; and my opinion is that if I offer  
rint high enough I'll be able to git the  
house that stands next door. If I do so, I  
can hit the passage of Aloysius in one night's  
work. But, be that as it may, whatever  
house I git, I mean to go to work at once,  
alone, and see what I can do. I think it's  
better for me to attend to the preliminaries  
alone. It's quieter, safer, and less auspicious.  
I don't want to indanger my projit by hoi-  
ting attention of any kind if I can help it."



"But you surely don't intend to do all that digging yourself?" cried Blake.

"Sure and I do."

"Oh, but I ought to help you to some extent."

"So you may."

"How?" asked Blake.

"Why, by not saying one word about this to any living soul."

"Oh, I'll keep dark."

"Yis, but you mustn't even hint at it—not to any living soul, male or female, man or child, friend or rival. No one must have the least suspicion. If you do, you'll endanger it all. It's so strange and unusual a thing, that the very mention of it would sit the mind agog, and it would git sprid abroad."

"Oh, well, as to that, it's easy enough for me to keep secret. I've no relative in the world except my poor dear old mother, and I should not feel inclined to bother and worry her by making her the confidante of any such plan as this. She'd be worried out of her life, poor old lady. And then as to friends, I have only one besides yourself—Hellmuth, you know—and he's not a fellow that I should choose to talk to about a thing like this. He'd scorn the whole thing—treasure and all. Oh, no, I value Hellmuth's good opinion too much to say any thing to him about this. So you see the secret is inviolable, from the very nature of the case, and of my circumstances."

"Well, it's just as well to have it so," said O'Rourke, pleasantly. "There's no harrum done by keeping this a secret, but if it is not kept secret, it may lead to all the harrum in the worruld."

"Well," said Blake, "those are the only ones that I should mention any of my affairs to; my other friends are not at all on an intimate footing; they are merely acquaintances, and, in fact, I see very little of anybody here in Paris, except Hellmuth and yourself."

"I've niver had the pleasure," said O'Rourke, "of meeting with your friend Hellmuth."

"No," said Blake. "The fact is, you both keep so much by yourselves that it is next to an impossibility that you should ever cross one another's paths. Still I wonder that you haven't sometimes stumbled upon one another here. He comes here a good deal—and so do you."

"Yis," said O'Rourke; "but I'm so busy

all day that, when I do come here, it's generally late—"

"Well, I hope you'll both meet some day; and I'm sure you'd like him—he's a man of no common kind. If you'd known him, you'd not have chosen me—though I don't know, either—for Hellmuth has such a scorn of money that I don't believe even the treasure of the Cesars could induce him to swerve one hair's-breadth from the line of life that he has marked out for himself."

"Sure; in that case," said O'Rourke, "he'd niver do for me at all, at all. I'm an impecunious man, and I love impecunious men. The man that has no need of money is too prosperous to shut me. He is an alien to me, and with such I have no sympathy."

"Well," said Blake, "and so you intend to go at once to Rome?"

"Yis."

"And how long may it be before I may hear from you?"

"That depends upon circumstances of course. I may be through in a week, and I may be detained longer. On the whole, it is best to fix the outside limit."

"Well, what is that? I intend leaving Paris shortly myself—to recruit for a time—and will not come back, if I can help it, for some weeks."

"Sure, and while yer about it ye can give yerself months if ye choose," said O'Rourke. "The outside limit which I should fix would be at least three months."

"Three months? Oh, that will suit me capitally."

"Ye see, I have to rent the house, and thin work to git to the Catacombs. I'll have to work slowly and cautiously, so as not to be suspectid. But in three months, at the very farthest, I ought to do all that I can expect to do, and if I don't do it in that time, it'll be because I can't do it alone, in which case I'll have to git you to help me."

"Well, you know, I'd help you at the very first if you'd let me."

"Yis, but I don't want ye—at the first. So we'll say three months."

"Very well."

"Are ye going any distance?"

"No—I don't intend to go out of France. I'm simply going to recruit, and I haven't made up my mind yet where I shall go."

"Well, that's about the best way to recruit. Wander off. Let yerself drift. That's

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"Oh, yes, and probably in three weeks."

"Very well, thin. I'll know where to find ye—and to write to ye if I can't come me-  
self—"

O'Rourke now rose.

"Well," said he, "me boy, it's glad I am to git ye for an assistant, and, still better, a friend. Ye'll allow me to say though,—that in this case, as I ferrumly believe, it'll be the very best stroke of work that ye iver turruned yer arrum to. I'll make ivery thing riddy, and, at the shupreme momint I'll call on you to accompany me on a promenade along the passage of Aloyaius. Ye may be sanguine or dispondint, whichever ye choose, only mind ye keep the secret—that's all—and thin ye'll find yerself—with me—the heir of the *treasure of the Cæsars!*"

"I swear, old fellow," said Blake, suddenly, "if you could never guess what an odd idea struck my mind just now."

"An odd idea?" said O'Rourke; "such as what—for instance?"

"Why—this. You've read the 'Arabian Nights'?"

"Sure, and I have, but what of them?"

"Do you remember the immortal story of 'Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp'?"

"Meself does—of course. But what thin?"

"Nothing—only it was such an absurd fancy. You looked to me just then exactly like the musician who came to Aladdin, and persuaded him to accompany him to the cave where the magic lamp was kept, you know."

Blake said this in a careless and lively tone, with a bright gleam in his clear and pleasant eyes, and a joyous smile on his frank and open face. It was a passing remark, thrown off with the utmost nonchalance; but as O'Rourke heard it there came over his face a sudden change—and a total one. His complexion changed to one of a sickly pallor; his brow was darkened with a frown; his piercing eyes rested gloomily upon the face of his companion; his hands clutched one another behind his back. But this was only for a moment. Blake had not time to notice it. In another moment it had passed away, and O'Rourke's face was as before.

He laughed boisterously.

"Well—well," he said, "I hope it may be so, and for my part I believe—though you don't—that it will be so—so I do; for, as I've

been saying, I believe that in those Palatine Catacombs there is the treasure of the Cæsars, and, if I'm right—why thin, sure—and it's meself that'll be the majician that'll put in your hands a walth in comparison with which even the fabulous riches of Aladdin would be paltry and contimplible. Well, we won't indulge just—now in visions like these. We'll defer all this till we find the reality. It's late, and I must be off; and so, Blake, me boy, good-night, and good-by."

He held out his hand. Blake took it, and they shook hands cordially. O'Rourke then took his departure.

## CHAPTER V.

### VILLENUEVE.

THE Lake of Geneva is one of the most attractive places in the world, and to the grace of natural beauty is added the more subtle charm that arises from the closeness with which its scenes have become blended with the great events of history, and the majestic names of men of genius. The memories of Rousseau, Voltaire, Gibbon, Byron, and many more, are inseparably connected with it; but among all it is to the two Englishmen that its fame owes most, for they surely loved it best. The shade of the great historian seems still to haunt the gardens of Lausanne; while all the surrounding scenes still wear those epithets with which the mighty poet endowed them. There is clear, placid Leman; the Alps, the pyramids of Nature; Jura, with her misty shroud; there too under the shadowy mountains rises the Castle of Chillon, sombre and melancholy, once the scene of wrong and cruel oppression, but now a place of pilgrimage:

Until his very steps have left a trace  
Worn, as if the cold pavement were a sod,  
By Bonivard!—May none those marks efface!  
For they appeal from tyranny to God."

It was early morning, and the sun was just rising, when two young ladies left the hotel at Villeneuve, and walked slowly along in the direction of the Castle of Chillon. Both of them were young, and each was beautiful in her way, though they were utterly unlike and dissimilar in features, expression, manner, and tone. One had clear, calm blue eyes; golden hair, which flowed down

"But as O'Rourke heard it there came over his face a sudden change."—Page 17.



from a chignon of very moderate dimensions, in a rippling tide of frizzled glory; dimpled cheeks; and small mouth, the lines of which were of such a nature that they formed the impress of a perpetual smile. Her companion had a delicate and ethereal face, over which there was an air of quiet thoughtfulness; her eyes were soft, dark, liquid, and lustrous, with a peculiar expression in them that a superficial glance would regard as savoring of melancholy, but which to a closer observer would indicate less of sadness than of earnestness. Her hair also floated behind, after the same fashion as her companion's; but, while the one owed its beauty to the crimping-irons, the dark masses of the other curled lustrously in the graceful negligence of Nature.

They walked slowly, and noticed the successive features of the surrounding scenery, which they spoke of with great animation. At length a turn in the road brought them in sight of the castle.

"O Inez!" said the lady with the golden hair, "what a darling old castle! Look!—did you ever see any thing like it in all your life? and isn't it perfectly lovely?"

The one called Inez said nothing for some time, but stood looking at the sombre pile in quiet admiration.

"It must be Chillon," said she, at length.

"Chil—what, Inez dear?" asked the other.

"Chillon," said Inez. "You've read Byron's 'Prisoner of Chillon,' you know, haven't you, Bessie?"

Bessie shook her head with a doleful expression.

"Well, Inez dear," said she, "really you know poetry is so stupid, but I dare say, after all, I have read it, only I don't remember one word about it; I never do, you know, dear. You see I always skim it all over. I skim Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Gibbon, and Sir Isaac Newton, and all the rest of those stupid writers. They make my head ache always."

Inez smiled.

"Well, I'm sure, Bessie," said she, "if you try Newton and Bacon, I don't wonder that you find it rather difficult to read them. I should skim them myself."

"Oh, you know it's all very well for you, Inez dear, when you've got so much intellect,

but for poor me! At any rate, what is there about this Chip—Chil—how is it?"

"Chillon," said Inez.

"Chillon, then. Tell me the story, Inez dear, for you know I'm awfully fond of stories, and you tell them so deliciously. I only wish I was so clever."

"Nonsense, Bessie!" said Inez; and, after this disclaimer of Bessie's too open flattery, she proceeded to give her companion the substance of Byron's poem.

"Well now, really, Inez dear," said Bessie, as her companion finished her story, "what was the use of it all? Why did that poor, silly creature go to prison at all? Sure its mad he was."

At this, Inez looked at her friend with sad, reproachful eyes. Bessie's intonation and accent were somewhat peculiar; for, though she was perfectly well bred and lady-like in her tone, there was, however, in her voice a slight Hibernian flavor, originally caught, perhaps, from some Irish nurse, and never altogether lost. There was an oddity about this which was decidedly attractive, and the "laste taste in life av the brogue," which was thus noticeable in Bessie, gave to that young person a wonderful witchery, and suggested infinite possibilities in her of drollery or archness.

"People often have to suffer for their principles, of course," said Inez, gravely.

"But I don't see why he should bother about his principles," persisted Bessie. "No one thanked him for it, at all at all."

"He had to. He believed in them, and of course could not give up his belief."

"But he needn't have gone so far, you know, Inez dear. Why couldn't he have made it up with the count or the juke, or whoever it was?"

"Why, Bessie, how absurd! A man can't give up his belief so easily. Some things people must suffer. You and I are Catholics, and if we were ordered to change our religion we couldn't do it. We should have to suffer."

Bessie shook her pretty little head.

"Well, I'm sure I really don't see how I could stand being put in a dungeon with rats and things, and so dark too; and besides it was different with this man. It wasn't his religion, but some absurd bother about politics. I'm sure there's no danger of my ever getting into trouble about politics. But, oh, Inez dear, there he is—I knew it—look!"

any rate, what is there—how is it?"

"I'll tell me the story, Inez awfully fond of stories, especially. I only wish

" said Inez; and, after Inez's too open flattery, her companion the sub-

"Inez dear," said Bessie, finished her story, "at all? Why did that prison at all? Sure

at her friend with Bessie's intonation what peculiar; for, well bred and lady-like, however, in her own flavor, originally an Irish nurse, and there was an oddity decidedly attractive, life as the brogue," she in Bessie, gave to her wonderful witchery, and her titles in her of droll-

to suffer for their Inez, gravely. "He should bother Bessie. "No all at all."

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"I don't see how I uncheon with rats ; and besides it . It wasn't his ther about poli- nger of my ever dices. But, oh, w it—look!"

The sudden change in Bessie's remarks was caused by some one whom she happened to see coming up the road behind them as she casually looked back. Whoever it was, however, Inez did not deign to look, as Bessie told her. On the contrary, she seemed to feel know perfectly well who it was, and to feel some slight embarrassment, for a flush came over her face, and she looked straight before her without saying a word.

"Now, I think it's a great shame," said Bessie, after a moment's pause, in a fretful tone.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, Dr. Blake, since he's joined us, I never see any thing of you."

"Why, Bessie, what perfect nonsense! You are with me all the time."

"Oh, but I mean I never have you to myself now at all. It's nothing but Dr. Blake all the time. He is always with you. Your papa and you are fairly bound up in him. And it's a great shame entirely, so it is. And he is so awfully devoted—why, he worships the ground you tread on!"

At this, the cheeks of Inez blushed like flame.

"I wish you wouldn't be so absurd," said she. "You are talking nothing but the most perfect nonsense. Papa and I, of course, both esteem Dr. Blake, and he is of great use to poor papa in his illness, and I'm sure I don't know what papa would ever have done without him."

"Well, I'm sure," continued Bessie, in a plaintive voice; "of all stupid people, the very worst in the world are two devoted lovers."

"You absurd, silly child!" exclaimed Inez, turning away.

"Why, I'm sure I do not know what else to call you. Doesn't he give you flowers all the time? Doesn't he sit and fasten his eyes on you, and look as though he longed to eat you up? Doesn't he always look at me, whenever he condescends to notice poor me at all, as though he thinks I am always in the way? Don't I have to bear the painful consciousness in my unhappy breast that I am *de trop*?"

"Hush, you silly little goose!" cried Inez, hurriedly, as she heard the sound of footsteps close behind her, fearful that Bessie's words would be overheard. Bessie, however, stopped short, and demurely moved away

from Inez, as though she wished to allow the new-comer every chance with his innamorata—a movement which the other noticed, and tried to baffle by keeping close to her. But this little by-play was now interrupted by clear, manly voice, which sounded close beside Inez.

"Good-morning, Miss Wyverne. I had no idea that you would be out so early after your fatigues of yesterday."

Inez turned with a smile of pleasure, and the face which met the new-comer's eyes, still wearing the flush which Bessie had called up, seemed to him to be inexpressibly lovely. He was a tall young fellow, with a fine, fresh, frank, open face; short, crisp hair; whiskers of the English cut, and a joyous light in his eyes, that spoke of bounding youth and the bloom of perfect health, and of something more, too, that might have been due to the present meeting. He stood with his hat off, and hand extended. Inez accepted his greeting, and said simply:

"Good-morning, Dr. Blake."

"Miss Mordaunt," continued Dr. Blake, addressing Bessie, who was on the other side of Inez, "good morning. What do you think of Villeneuve now? Will you ever dare to abuse it again? Confess, now, did you ever see such a lovely sight? For my part, I think it's far and away the prettiest place I ever saw, and for invalids it is perfect. But, by-the-way, Miss Wyverne, have you seen your father this morning? How is he?"

"Oh, thanks, he is much better," said Inez. "He was up and dressed before I left. He had slept better than usual, he said, though, of course, he never sleeps much now—poor papa!"

"Oh, well, we must be patient," said Blake. "We cannot expect any very rapid improvement, you know. This is the place where he can find just what he needs. It is so quiet, and so mild and beautiful. And there is the castle. I suppose you intend to visit it as soon as possible?"

"It is not open so early as this, is it?" asked Inez.

"Well, no; this is a little too early," said Blake. "For the present we must content ourselves with an outside view. But the castle itself and its surroundings will be enough for a first visit. There are the battlements from which the sounding-line was

cast a thousand feet into the waters below; and there is the 'little isle,' which is mentioned in the poem:

" . . . a little isle  
Which in my very face did smile,  
The only one in view—  
A small green isle it seemed no more  
Scarce broader than my dungeon-floor,  
But in it there were three tall trees,  
And o'er it blew the mountain-breeze,  
And by it there were waters flowing,  
And on it there were young flowers growing  
Of gentle breath and hue." "

Blake was full of the enthusiasm of youth, and inspired by the scene around him, and the companionship which he had. He talked eloquently, and showed so wonderfully intimate an acquaintance with the scene before him, that it seemed as though he must have made Lake Leman a specialty, or at least have read up very lately.

They sauntered along thus, and at length sat down upon a grassy knoll by the roadside, while the whole prospect spread itself magnificently before them.

Bessie's remarks were justified by the present appearance of things. It was as she said. It was the old, old story of two lovers. The doctor had no words or looks or thoughts for any one but Inez; and the joy that was in his face, the animation of his manner, the eloquence of his words, were all due to the intoxication of her presence. However all this may have seemed to Inez, it is not to be expected that it would be altogether pleasant to Bessie; but Miss Bessie was not one who would allow herself to be imposed upon, and so she proceeded to solace herself for the neglect which she supposed to be shown her, by entering upon a deliberate and elaborate system of teasing, which was directed against Inez. After what she had already said, Inez could not allow herself to be absorbed so fully by Blake as she had formerly done; and there was now in her mind a sense of great uneasiness as to what Bessie might do, which feeling was by no means lessened by her friend's actions.

Soon after they had seated themselves, Bessie began to move away from Inez as far as possible, thus ostentatiously showing a desire to leave the lovers by themselves, and kept her face turned away, as though she would on no account be an eye-witness of their proceedings. All this embarrassed Inez

greatly, for the relations between herself and Blake were thus far of a purely friendly character, nor had she as yet thought very much of anything more. Her delicacy was shocked excessively by Bessie's movements, but she did not know how to prevent them. She shifted her seat once or twice, so as to keep near to her friend; but, on every such occasion, Bessie would make such a point of removing again, that it seemed more unpleasant to follow her than to sit still. At length Inez could endure it no longer, but rose, and, calling Bessie, who by that time had taken up her station with her back turned to the lovers about a hundred yards away, she waited for her to join her.

Bessie approached with an air of demurest gravity, which would have made Inez laugh if it had not been so provoking. As she came near she threw at Inez a deprecating glance, and, with an air of childish shyness, walked by her side on a line with the others, but on the other side of the road. Inez gradually drew nearer to her, whereupon Bessie allowed herself to fall behind.

None of this was noticed by Blake, who was too much absorbed by the joy of the moment to detect any thing so covert as Bessie's course of teasing. In fact, he felt quite grateful to her for keeping away, and allowing him thus to have Inez all to himself. This feeling he could not help showing, and this only increased the annoyance and embarrassment of Inez. The position of a young lady in the presence of an ardent lover is never quite free from embarrassment when spectators are by; but, when the spectator is one who has shown herself to be a merciless tease, capable of dragging to the light the most hidden secrets of the young lady aforesaid, why it stands to reason that the embarrassment must become intolerable. So it proved with Inez. Her attention was thus distracted between Blake and Bessie; and, if she noticed any unusual devotion of manner or earnestness of tone, it only served to excite her fears that Bessie would see it also, and treasure it up in her memory for future reference.

When Bessie, therefore, fell behind, Inez slackened her pace also; upon which the former managed to increase the distance between them still farther.

"Bessie," said Inez, stopping short and waiting for her to come up, "I'm afraid you

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must be fatigued after your journey yesterday."

"Oh, dear, no, Inez dearest," said Bessie, with a smile. "Not at all. I am watching something that is awfully amusing. Go on. I'll join you as soon as—as it is advisable."

Upon this Inez turned away in despair, and walked thus with Blake back to the hotel, while Bessie followed at a little distance.

The hotel stood facing the water. In front of it was a portico. At this portico stood an elderly gentleman, whose appearance had in it much that would arrest the attention of the most casual observer. He was a man of medium height, and might have been about fifty years of age, yet there was an air of decrepitude about him which must have been caused by some other thing than his fifty years. He looked as though he might once have been portly, and that too not very long ago; but now the ample outline of his frame had receded somewhat, and an air of looseness was thus given to his figure. His hair was quite gray; his face was still full, but every trace of color had gone from it. He stood on the portico, leaning heavily against the base of a pillar, and his face was turned toward the water.

It was this face, and this alone, that gave this man his striking appearance. It was no common face. It was pale, ghastly pale, in fact, and the flesh which had once rounded its outlines had shrunk away, and now hung loosely in folds. His eyes were fixed upon vacancy, with a far-off, abstracted look. It was not the lake, or the mountains, or any material scene, that he was looking at. The placid water and the towering heights were reflected on his retina, but had no place in his thoughts. There was trouble in that face, deep, perplexed, and bewildered; and he who had thus come forth to gaze upon the face of Nature, presented his own face to the gaze of his fellow-man, and showed there something so woe-worn, so tragic in its sombre gloom, so full of despair, that it seemed as if the traces of crime, or of a ruined life, were marked upon it.

The ladies and their companion walked toward the hotel, and saw the old man, though they were not yet near enough to see his face.

"Papa is down," said Inez.

"Yes," said Blake. "He seems to be en-

joying the view. I feel confident that this place will benefit him."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear you say so!"

As she said this, a footman came up to the portico. He had come from a house not far away. He had a letter in his hand. This letter he handed to the old man. He took it and opened it hastily. As he looked at it a change came over his face. With a quick gesture he crushed the letter together in his hand, and looked in an abstracted way all around. Blake and the ladies were near enough now for him to see them, but he did not notice them at all. The look seemed to have been an instinct blindly obeyed. He then turned his back to the street, and, opening the letter, stood there reading it. As he did so, he staggered slightly, and one hand caught at the pillar for support.

These strange actions, and the singular attitude of the old man, arrested the attention of Inez and Blake. They stopped, and looked, and as they stopped Bessie came up to them.

Suddenly the old man started. He staggered forward, and half turned. They were near enough now to see his face plainly. Upon that face they saw a wild look of terror—a look such as a drowning man may give while seeking for help.

Bessie caught Inez by the arm.

"Look! Oh, do look at your papa, Inez dear!" she cried. "Something's the matter."

There was no need to tell Inez this. She had seen it, but so great was her horror, that she had stood rooted to the spot, mute and motionless. But, as Bessie spoke, Blake started off at a run toward the portico.

If he anticipated what was about to happen, he was too late. Before Blake had gone a half-dozen steps, the old man gave a deep groan, and, suddenly collapsing, sank down senseless. At that moment Blake reached him. The next instant a dozen servants had arrived at the spot. Then Inez came flying up with a pale face, wild with alarm. The sight that met her eyes could not lessen that alarm one whit. That prostrate figure—that head swaying loosely as they raised him up, those nerveless hands, those staring eyes, those venerable hairs soiled with dust—all this only served to intensify her fears. Unaccustomed to scenes like these, she lost all presence of mind, and, clasping her hands



in despair, she watched the servants with white lips and staring eyes, as they raised the senseless form and bore it into the house, and up the stairs to his chamber.

Here Blake went away all the servants except one. He tried to urge Inez to go also, but she refused. Thereupon he devoted himself to the care of his patient, and sought in all possible ways to resuscitate him. An hour passed away, and, at the end of that time, there was little change perceptible. He was breathing, however, and he had closed his eyes. These were encouraging signs, but the stupor yet remained, and it did not seem as though he could be roused out of this.

Several hours more passed, and mid-day came. Blake now made one more effort to induce Inez to leave.

"I assure you, Miss Wyverne," said he, earnestly, "that your father is now doing as well as can be expected under the circumstances. These sudden shocks are very much to be dreaded, but in this case the worst, I hope, is passed. You see him now—he is sleeping. It may, perhaps, benefit him in the end. He has not had much sleep of late."

Blake spoke this as the man, and not as the doctor, because he wished to give Inez some hope, and Inez gasped at this hope which was held out.

"Sleep?" she said. "Yes, it is—it must be sleep—but, oh, if he had only waked once—just to speak one word!"

"He will wake in time. But let us be patient. Do not let us wake him now, Miss Wyverne. And now will you not try to get a little rest for yourself? Let me entreat you—as—as—ah—your medical adviser—to—to take care of yourself."

Inez at length allowed herself to be persuaded to retire, and sought her own room. Here Bessie came to her, and held a letter in her hand.

"Inez, darling," said she, "Isn't this awful? You know your poor dear papa was reading a letter when he fainted. It was on the portfolio. He let it fall. I saw it and picked it up. This is it. You had better read it, and perhaps you can find out the cause of all this."

With these words she handed to Inez the letter which the old man had been reading.

Inez took it, and read the following:

"PARIS.

"MY DEAR HENNIGAR: I am sorry you are not the man you used to be, for you need all your strength now. The event which we have all along dreaded as barely possible has at last come to pass. B. M. is alive! Worse—he has come back. I have seen him with my own eyes in Rome. He has not seen me. I have learned that, after he has attended to his ecclesiastical business, he intends to visit you. Fortunately, you are out of England. Would it not be well for you to go into hiding for a time—in Russia, or the East, or, better still—America?"

"I have just arrived here, and leave to-night for London, on important business. I hope soon to see you. You had better send away those girls at once. Above all, you must get rid of that boy. You were mad to encourage him. His mind has been poisoned by his mother. Depend upon it, he will ruin you. At all events send him off at once, and get Inez out of the way. B. M. will hunt you up, and find you, unless you fly out of his reach. It seems to me that it would be advisable, if possible, to get up a well-concocted death—so as to throw him off your track. Think of this.

"I hope to see you before a week.

"In great haste,

"Yours,

"KEVIN MAORATH."

## CHAPTER VI.

### IS IT DELIRIUM?

To Inez, this extraordinary letter was utterly unintelligible, and yet terrible on account of the dark and impenetrable mystery in which it was shrouded. She had read it with breathless interest, yet not until she reached the end was she aware of the fact that she was reading that which had never been intended for her eyes, or for any human eyes except those of Hennigar Wyverne himself. The deed was one which she felt to be dishonorable in itself, yet she could not blame herself. She had read it solely out of a pure and generous impulse—a desire to learn the cause of this sudden blow which had fallen upon her father. She had read it without hesitation, because she had never imagined that around that honored father could cling

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any secret that had to be veiled from her eyes or from any eyes. She had read it, and the deed for good or for evil was done beyond recall, nor could she forget one single word of all that ill-omened and evil-boding letter.

As she had read it, Bessie had stood watching her; and now, as Inez looked up, she saw her friend's eyes fixed on her with sharp, eager scrutiny. The moment that Bessie caught the glance of Inez, she turned her eyes away; not so soon, however, but that the latter could read the meaning that was in them. By the expression of Bessie's face, and the look that came into her eyes, Inez saw plainly that she, too, must have read the letter; that she, too, had been startled by its mysterious meaning, and was now waiting to see the effect produced upon her. At this discovery an indignant feeling at once arose, which, however, in a few moments, was checked. For, after all, how could she blame her? She knew Bessie's thoughtless and wayward nature, her inquisitiveness, and her impulsive ways; she could easily understand how she, too, could read it with the same thoughtless haste that had characterized her own perusal. So she checked the sharp words that arose to her lips, and merely remarked:

"It's some business of poor papa's. I don't understand it, and I ought not to have read it."

She then flung herself upon the sofa, and turned her face to the wall. Whereupon Bessie softly left the room.

Left thus to herself, Inez, as she lay on the sofa, became a prey to all the thoughts which that letter was calculated to create. The more she thought about it, the less was she able to understand it; but the secret of the letter, though impenetrable, was something which she could not avoid thinking upon, and, though the full meaning was beyond her conjecture, there were a few plain and very ugly facts which stood forth clearly and unmistakably.

First of all, she saw that there was some one living of whom her father stood in mortal dread, named here as B. M. The dread of this mysterious man was evidently no new thing. He had been absent long, but they had always considered his return possible. They had hoped for his death, but found that he was alive. This B. M. was in Rome. He was on his way to England, to see her father.

Secondly, so great was the terror that attended upon the presence of this B. M. that the correspondent's first suggestion to her father was instant and immediate flight, even to the uttermost ends of the earth—Russia, the East, America.

Thirdly, this correspondent urged him to get rid of *the girls*. The girls! What girls? There could be no doubt that she herself and Bessie were meant, and herself more particularly, since greater emphasis was laid on her name. This dark secret affected her then, but how?

Fourthly, who was "the boy?" About this Inez could have no doubt whatever. "The boy" must be Dr. Blake. To no other could the term "encouragement" apply. He had certainly been "encouraged." Though an acquaintance of no very long standing, her father had manifested for Dr. Blake a regard which was wonderful, and quite unaccountable. This must be the "encouragement" of which the letter spoke. But who was the boy's mother, and how had she "poisoned" his mind? How was it that Dr. Blake could ever be the ruin of her father? Had he any connection with those dark events of the past? Dr. Blake had always seemed the most open, frank, and transparent nature in the world; and she could not understand how in his breast there could lurk the knowledge of any secret that could make him able to ruin her father, even if he were capable of wishing it.

Fifthly, this correspondent hinted that a pretended death might be advisable. Such a hint seemed to Inez the most terrible thing in the whole letter. It revealed an abyss into which she dared not allow her thoughts to venture. What terrors must cling to the past life of her father when there impended over him a danger so great that he could only escape it by instant flight or pretended death! Alas! as her father now was, if death was to be thought of, it might be only too real.

Again, this thing of terror, this mysterious "B. M.," who was he? What was meant by his "ecclesiastical" business? Could he be a priest? It must be so. Who else but a priest could have ecclesiastical business at Rome?

And, finally, who was this correspondent himself? He called himself "Kevin Magrath." Could it be a real name? It was evidently an Irish name. She had never heard of it

before in all her life. The sound was utterly unfamiliar. Whoever he was, he seemed to lead a roving life, going from Rome to Paris, and from Paris to London, and promising to come here to Villeneuve. Whoever he was, he must be an old friend of her father's, and an associate in this dark mystery. With him, too, her father must have kept up a constant correspondence, for how else could this Kevin Magrath know his present address to be such an obscure place as Villeneuve?

She thought for a moment of asking Bessie about this man, but the next moment she dismissed the thought. She felt an invincible repugnance to making one like Bessie—or any one, in fact—a confidante of her present feelings. This secret seemed a dishonor to her father; and Bessie's knowledge of the existence of any such secret was of itself most disagreeable to her. Instead, therefore, of saying anything to her friend about it, she saw that it would be far better to hide her feelings from her, and make it appear, if possible, that she thought nothing of it whatever. By so doing, she might induce Bessie to suppose that it was of no importance. This she hoped, but the recollection of that look which she had encountered from Bessie made her suspect that behind all her friend's apparent volatility and frivolity there were other qualities of a graver character—qualities, too, which might prove formidable in the future if it should ever happen that Bessie's interests should be blended with those of the enemies of her father.

The impenetrable secret thus baffled Inez completely, and there was nothing left but to wait for the disclosures of the future, and bear the intermediate suspense as best she could.

This Inez resolved to do, and her resolution was made easy by the situation of Mr. Wyverne. He lay, as he had been prostrated, without much change, upon the last verge of life, motionless, his breathing short and quick, opening his eyes wildly at times, murmuring incessantly to himself, and all the while his heart throbbing fast and furious. He was not senseless now, for he could answer when he was addressed, but he seemed to be the prey of the most agonizing feelings, the torment of which made him unobservant of things around him.

Inez now watched over him incessantly, and the doctor also was equally devoted. He

did not seek to conceal the truth from her. The danger was extreme. He knew it, and he could not bring himself to deceive her. She, on her part, being thus forced so constantly into the society of Blake, and with her secret gnawing at her heart, more than once thought of asking him about it; but no sooner had the thought come than it was repelled. Whatever might be her feelings toward him, she saw that this was clearly a case in which he could be of no assistance to her. She could not show that letter to one who, after all, was a stranger in a certain sense. She could not ask his advice in a case where a father's secret and a father's honor were involved.

Day after day passed, and there was no change. One day Inez implored Blake to tell her the worst.

"I can't bear this suspense," said she. "I expect the worst, the very worst, and I try to make up my mind to it; but I should like to know if there may be any ground for hope."

"Miss Wyverne," said the doctor, sadly, "while there's life, there's hope."

"I know—I know," said Inez, "that old formula, used to disguise the worst intelligence."

Blake sighed, and looked at her compassionately.

"Oh, how I wish," said he, "that I could spare you this!"

"You have no hope, then?" wailed forth Inez, looking at him with awful eyes.

Blake returned her glance with a mournful look, and in silence.

Inez had hoped for some faint encouragement, and this silence was almost too much. But, by a strong effort, she controlled herself.

"Tell me all," she said, in a scarce audible voice. "Let me know all."

"Agitation," said Blake, solemnly and slowly, "is fatal. If I could see any hope of saving him from this—if I could only gain control over his thoughts! But there is something on his mind always. He never sleeps. He eats nothing. Opiates have no effect. It is his mind. There is trouble, and it overwhelms him. If he should sleep, his dreams would be worse than his waking thoughts. I cannot 'minister to a mind diseased.'"

At this, Inez went away to her own room and wept.

So Wyverne lay, struggling with the dark secret that was over his soul, murmuring

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words that were unintelligible to those beside him, with that in his mind which was a horror by night and by day. Thus a week passed, and during this time he grew worse and worse. Of this there was no doubt. The doctor saw it. Inez knew it.

At length one day came when he opened his eyes, and fixed them with a glassy stare upon Inez, who, as usual, was sitting at his bedside.

"Papa, dear," said she, in a choking voice.

"Who—are—you?" were the words that came with a gasp from the sick man on the bed.

Inez shuddered.

She took his hand tenderly in hers, and, bending over him, she said:

"Don't you know me, papa dear—your daughter—your child—your Inez?"

Mr. Wyverne frowned, and snatched his hand away.

"I have no daughter," he gasped. "You are not mine. You are *his*. *He* is coming for you—for you and—for—vengeance! *He* is coming. *He* is coming. *He* is coming—"

A groan ended this, but the sick man went on murmuring, in a sing-song way, like some horrible chant, the words, "*He* is coming! *He* is coming! *He* is coming! *He* is coming!"

A cold shudder passed through Inez. She drew back and buried her face in her hands. "Is this real? Did he mean it? What horror was this?"

Blake had heard all, and had seen her distress. He bent over her and whispered:

"Don't be distressed at what he says. He don't know you. It's his delirium."

The whisper seemed to attract the attention of the sick man. He turned his eyes till they rested upon Blake's face. His own expression changed. There came a gentle smile upon his wan features; he sighed; and then he reached forth his hand faintly.

Blake saw this, and took his hand wonderingly.

"Basil!" said Mr. Wyverne, in a soft, low voice, full of a strange, indescribable tenderness, "Basil—is your—your mother still alive?"

"Yes," said Blake, full of amazement—Mr. Wyverne had called him by his Christian name!

The sick man closed his eyes. There

were tears in them—they trickled slowly down. Inez still sat with her face buried in her hands. Blake wiped those tears away, and waited to hear what might be said, with all his soul full of wonder and awe, and a certain fearful expectation.

"Basil," said Mr. Wyverne, opening his eyes again, and fastening them with the same look upon Blake, speaking faintly and wearily, and with frequent hesitation, "I dare not tell you—ask *her* to tell you—all—all—all."

Once more his thoughts wandered, but he still clung to Blake's hand, and would not let it go.

After an interval, he opened his eyes and looked at Blake.

"Kiss me—Basil," he said.

At this Blake bent down and kissed the forehead of the sick man—damp and cold as with the chill-dew of death.

Not one word of all this had been lost on Inez, and at these last words she raised herself, and saw through her tears what was done. Full of wonder, and deeply wounded also at the neglect with which she was treated, she sat there a prey to the deepest grief. Blake saw this, and, as the sick man again closed his eyes, he murmured in her ear:

"It's his delirium."

The sick man again opened his eyes; they rested upon Blake as before, and then wandered toward Inez, whose pale face was turned toward him, and whose eyes were fixed entreatingly upon him, as though seeking for some look of love.

He looked at her mildly, and then, turning his eyes to Blake, there came over his face a smile of strange sweetness.

"You—love—her—Basil?"

These words came from him faintly. As he said this, the face of Inez flamed up with a sudden and violent flush. Blake said nothing, but pressed his hand. The sick man took Blake's hand in his own left hand, and reached out his right hand feebly, looking at Inez. She took his hand in hers, not knowing what he wished, but still hoping for some word of love. He drew her hand toward him, and joined it to that of Blake's, pressing the two together between his feeble palms. Then he looked at them both, with that same strange, sweet smile on his face.

"My children! my children!" he mur-

mured. "My children!" he continued, after a pause, "you will love one another. You will—love her—Basil—and—make her—yours—promise!" and he looked earnestly at Blake.

To Inez all this was exquisitely painful, and Blake did not know what to say.

"Swear," said the sick man.

"Oh, yes," said Blake, in a low voice.

Mr. Wyverne gave a sigh of satisfaction, and lay for some time exhausted, but still holding their hands. Once more he rallied.

"Basil," said he, "I cannot tell you—what is on—my mind—dare not—you shall know all—your mother—ask her—you will forgive me, Basil—my son."

Son! that word had a strange sound, but it seemed to mean *son-in-law*, and thus they both understood it. But in the mind of Inez this declaration interweaved itself with other thoughts which had been called up by that mysterious letter.

"Your mother," continued the sick man, looking at Blake, "will tell you all—all. Swear that you—forgive me."

"I swear," said Blake, willing to say any thing which might humor the sick man's fancies.

"And you—you," continued Mr. Wyverne, turning his glassy eyes toward Inez with an agonized look, "you—his daughter—you will tell all to *him*—that I repent—and die—of—of—remorse!"

At this Inez tore her hand away, and once more flung herself forward in an agony of grief.

"*It's his delirium!*" whispered the doctor again. These words restored Inez. It was all fancy, she thought. It was not—no, it could not be the truth.

But now the sick man seemed utterly exhausted. As Inez raised herself up, and looked at him once more, she saw that a change had come over him, and that change frightened her.

"I'm dying," he gasped, "send a priest—a priest!"

At this Blake at once hurried from the room.

He did not have to go far.

There was a priest in the hotel. He had arrived the night before. He had come from Italy, and was on his way to Paris. The doctor had heard of this, and went at once in search of him. The priest had arrived late,

and had slept late. He was just dressed, and thus Blake found him.

He was a man of medium stature, with dark complexion, browned by exposure to the weather. He had piercing black eyes and heavy eyebrows. His jaw was square, massive, and resolute; yet, in spite of all this, the face was one full of mildness and gentleness—showing a strong nature, yet a kindly one—a face where dwelt the signs of a power which might achieve any purpose, and the indications of a nature which was quick to sympathy, and full of human feeling. His frame was erect and vigorous. His hair was black, and sprinkled with gray. He could not be over fifty, and might be much younger. This was the man that Blake found.

The priest at once prepared to comply with Blake's request, and followed him to the sick man's chamber. As he entered, Inez shrank out of sight, and retreated to her room, waiting there, with a heart full of despair, the result of this last interview.

The priest took no notice of her. His eyes, as he entered, were fixed upon the bed where lay the man who had sought his offices at this last hour of life.

There lay Hennigar Wyverne.

A great change had passed over him since the morning when he had received that letter. Feeble though he then was, there still might be seen in him some remnant of his former self, something that might show what he once was; but now not a vestige remained; the week's illness had altered him so greatly that he had passed beyond the power of recognition; he was fearfully emaciated; he was ghastly pale; his cheek-bones protruded; his eyes were deep-sunk; his lips were drawn apart over his teeth; his white hair was tangled about his head, and short, gray bristles covered his once smooth-shaven chin. He lay there muttering to himself unintelligible things, and picking aimlessly at the bed-clothes.

The priest approached. Blake stood by the door.

The priest bent over the sick man, and roused him.

Wyverne opened his glassy eyes and fastened them on the priest. As he did so, there came over him an appalling change.

In those dull, glassy eyes there shone the light of a sudden and awful recognition; and, with that recognition, there was a look of ter-

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He lay motionless now.

Blake was just about leaving the room; but he saw this, and waited. As Wyverne fell, he rushed up to the bedside with a pale face. He looked at the form which lay there, and then at the priest. The priest looked with a mournful face at the figure on the bed.

There it lay, the thin, emaciated frame from which the soul had gone! That horror which had been the latest expression of those features still lurked there; the eyes stared at the ceiling; the jaws had fallen.

Blake stooped down and closed, with tender hands, the eyes of the dead.

"I have come too late," said the priest, in a low and mournful voice.

"The delirium has lasted for a week," said Blake. "He has imagined something terrible in you."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GOLD CRUCIFIX.

Thus the blow had fallen at last; and, though Inez had tried to prepare herself for it, she felt crushed by it when it came. For the death itself she might have been ready; it was not the mere fact of bereavement, not merely the sorrow of a loving daughter, that now overwhelmed her. It was something far different which had its origin in the circumstances that had preceded and immediately accompanied his death. Already she had felt sore distressed and perplexed by the terrible possibilities that had been hinted at in that unintelligible letter, and she had tried to turn her thoughts away from so painful a subject. In vain. The circumstances around her had not allowed her to do so. The sick man himself forced them upon her; and, in addition to all that she had already learned, he had uttered words most terrible even to hear as

delirious ravings, but which, if true, told things that could not be endured.

Let us see, now, what the circumstances were that immediately followed Mr. Wyverne's death.

Inez had left the sick man's chamber as the priest entered. She had gone at once to her own room. She had flung herself upon her couch, with her face buried in the pillows, recalling every incident in that terrible scene which she had just witnessed. That her hand should be joined to the hand of Basil Blake might, under different circumstances, have had in it nothing distasteful to her feelings; but, at this time, and under such conditions, it had been simply frightful. For her father had struck her down by the terrors of the revelation that he had made; he had installed another in her place next his heart, and it was only through the medium of this supplanter and usurper of her place that he received her back to his love.

Her father had said that she was not his daughter. This was the one thought that now stood preëminent in her mind. And was this declaration the act of a sane man, or was it the raving of an insane man? Dr. Blake had insisted, over and over again, that it was delirium. Did Dr. Blake really believe so himself, or had he said that merely to console her for the time?

How could she answer such questions as these?

In the midst of these thoughts she suddenly became aware of a certain awful hush—a solemn stillness through all the house. It was as though all in the house had simultaneously stopped breathing.

Something had happened.

There was only one thing, as Inez knew well, which could account for this—the one thing toward which her fearful soul had been looking. But it was doubly terrible now. It was too soon. She expected to see him again. Her last hope would be that he might take back all those words. What if he had left her now forever? What if his last words to her should be nothing more than those appalling ones which she had just heard.

She started to her feet, and stood with her hands clasped together, her limbs rigid, her pallid face turned to the door in awful expectation, her eyes staring wildly, her ears strained to catch the slightest sound. The silence continued for what seemed to her a



fearful length of time. At last there were footsteps in the hall. She wished to go and make inquiries, and put an end to her suspense; but she could not move.

Then there came a light knock at the door. Inez tried to speak, but could not. The handle was turned. The door opened slowly.

It was her maid Saunders.

The maid's face was quite pale; she held a corner of her apron to her eyes, and looked furtively and hesitatingly at her mistress.

"Oh, if you please, miss," she began, and then stopped.

Inez tried to speak, and again was unable to utter a word.

"Miss Mordaunt thought I'd best let you know, miss—immediately, if you please, miss—and, if you please, miss, he—it—your poor papa—it's—it's all over, miss."

"He's dead!" moaned Inez, in a low, tremulous voice; and then, turning away, she flung herself again upon her couch.

Saunders stood looking at her for some time, as though waiting for orders. But no orders came from her mistress. She satisfied herself that she had not fainted, and then quietly left the room. Outside, Miss Mordaunt was waiting, who came in and looked at Inez for a moment. She saw, however, that nothing could be done, and therefore very naturally concluded that for the present the bereaved daughter ought to be left to herself.

Inez now remained motionless for several hours. All the while her mind was filled with the remembrance of those words which formed so strange a legacy from a dying father to a daughter, and with the unparalleled thoughts to which those words gave rise. It was easy to recall them all. Over and over again she reiterated them: "*I have no daughter! You are not mine! You are his! He is coming for you and for vengeance!*" Together with these words she recalled his words to Blake. It was Blake to whom he had kissed him. It was Blake, no doubt, who had closed his eyes when all was over.

It was about an hour before sundown when Inez at length roused herself. She rose, arranged her dress, and called her maid. Saunders came in, as before, cautiously, and watching her mistress furtively.

"I wish to see him," said Inez. "Go and ask if I may see him now."

She spoke in a low voice, but without any tremor that could be detected.

"Oh, yes, miss," said Saunders, "you may. They told me to tell you more'n an hour ago."

Inez said no more, but left the room, followed by Saunders, and went to the apartment around which so many griefs were already gathered. She opened the door. The curtains were drawn.

"Wait here for me," said she to Saunders, and then, entering, she closed the door behind her.

The room was too dark to see any thing, and Inez drew one of the curtains aside and thus let in a dim light. Then she turned toward the bed, whereon she saw the outline of the figure stretched out there. For a moment she hesitated, and then advanced till she reached the head of the bed, where she stood for a few moments in thought. At length, with a steady hand, she drew down the covering from off the face of the dead.

There it lay, all that was mortal of the man whom she had called father, but who had disowned her with his last, dying words, and who, before her very eyes, as she sat crushed and stricken before him, had installed another in her place, and driven her from his heart. Against such treatment her soul rebelled; the dark doubt that he had cast into her mind as to whether he was her father prevented her now from mourning over the dead with a daughter's grief; and, even as she looked at the face of the dead, her chief and uppermost thoughts were about the impenetrable mystery that now surrounded her.

That thin, withered face, cold in death, with its sunken cheeks, and projecting cheek-bones, and hollow orbits, where the closed eyes lay sunken, bore no resemblance to the one who in life had been known as Hennigar Wyverne. The lips were drawn back, and the teeth were disclosed, so that there was formed something like a grisly smile. It seemed to Inez that this man was yet mocking her even in death, and that this ghastly smile had been called up by her approach. The thought was too horrible. She drew back the covering, and turned away.

She turned away and stood in the middle of the apartment with her face averted from the dead. Of the manner of his death she had as yet heard nothing. Whether he had said any thing more or not—whether he had retracted or confirmed his declaration about

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her, she could not know, and this she was eager to learn. This she could find out only from Dr. Blake. To send for him was, however, so repugnant to her delicacy that she hesitated for some time; but finally, seeing that there was no alternative, she went to the door and told the maid to ask him to come.

In a few moments Blake entered. He bowed to her in silence. He did not attempt to console her, or to condole with her. There were reasons which made any such things impossible, for, while the astonishing words of the deceased had disturbed Inez as we have seen, they had produced in the mind of Blake an effect in every respect as perplexing, as confusing, and as agitating. Those dying words lived in his memory as in hers, but she was the last one in all the world with whom he would care to discuss them.

Inez was seated near the window, and Blake took a seat not far away. The silence lasted for some time. Inez had much to ask, but knew not how to begin.

"Dr. Blake," said she, at length, in a low, mournful voice, "it was very unfortunate that I left—him—so soon—but I thought that he would be spared to us a little longer. Was there not time, after his confession, to call me?"

"There was not," said Blake, slowly—and then after a pause he added, "There was no confession."

"No confession!" exclaimed Inez.

The doctor shook his head.

"He was not able to speak when the priest came to him. Before you had been gone ten minutes—all was over."

Inez looked at him earnestly.

"He said nothing, then?"

"Nothing," said Blake.

For this intelligence Inez was not quite prepared, for she had hitherto supposed that a confession had been made to the priest—in which case she hoped that some result might come of it. But he had died and made no sign, and this it was that now seemed most bitter. And now what next was there to inquire—what more should she ask of him? That next question trembled on her lips, yet she feared to ask it. The question would be a final one—a decisive one. It would change her whole future life—it would affect it materially for weal or woe. It would put an end to her suspense on one point, and confirm one dark suspicion or remove it.

"Dr. Blake," said she, at length, after a long delay, fixing her sad eyes earnestly upon him, with a look that showed him that no evasion would be tolerated now; and speaking in a voice whose mournful intonations found an echo in the depths of his soul—"Dr. Blake—you know what his dying words—his last words to me were—and his last acts—you know also what those dying words and acts were to you. You must understand the whole force of their appalling meaning—and you must see, that even the death of one whom I have loved as a father, cannot be more terrible than that revelation which he seemed to make. While he was speaking you told me that it was only delirium. I ask you now in the name of that God who sees us both—did you speak the truth? Will you now say to me that it was delirium?"

She stopped, and her eyes, which had never withdrawn themselves from his, seemed now to rest on him with a more imperative earnestness, as though they would extort the truth from him. His own eyes fell, and a feeling of something like dismay took possession of him, as he thought of the answer which she was forcing from him.

"You will not answer me," said Inez, mournfully, after a long pause.

Blake drew a long breath.

"It is not always possible to say exactly," said he, in a hesitating manner, "how much of delirium enters into the fancies of a sick man. He was feverish—he had been taking powerful drugs—at that time his mind may have gone altogether astray. It is hardly possible to answer your question positively."

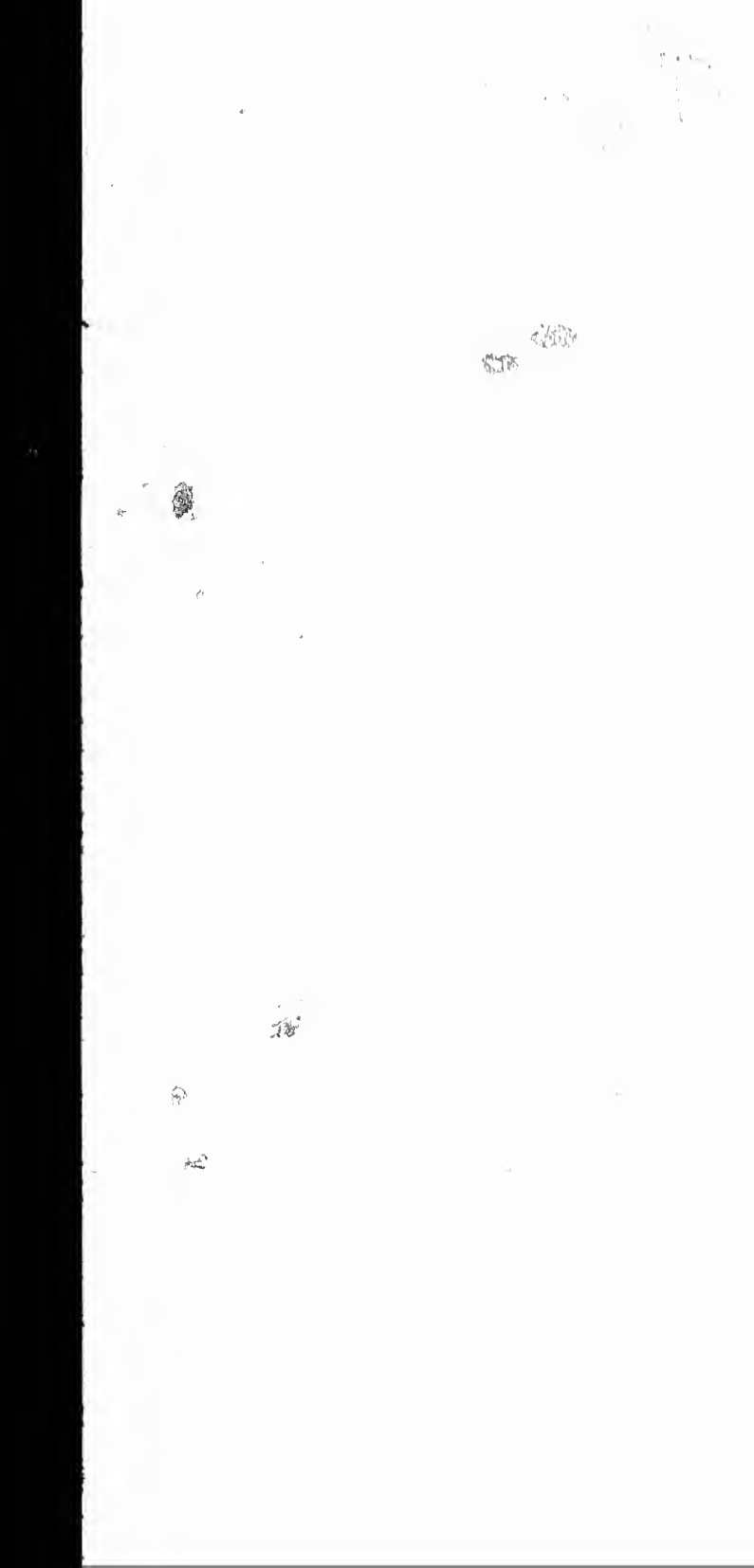
"Have you thought of those words since?"

"I have, and I assure you most solemnly that I cannot attach any intelligible meaning to them."

"In my case," said Inez, thinking of the letter, "circumstances have occurred which give a strange and painful significance to those words, though I cannot understand how they can be true."

Blake said nothing. He, too, had his own reasons for attaching a painful significance to those words. But he did not wish to say one word which might increase the trouble of Inez. He wished, if possible, to say that which might remove her suspicions, yet this very thing he knew not how to say.

"One more question," said Inez. "Do



you now believe, in your own heart, Dr. Blake, that those words were the language of delirium?"

Blake's heart beat fast. He looked at Inez, and then looked away. He knew not how to answer this direct question. He would have been willing to evade, or even to indulge in a little mild deceit for her sake; but with those clear, sad, earnest eyes fastened upon him, no deceit, however slight, was possible.

"You do not answer," said Inez. "Your silence can have only one meaning. Will you say that you believe those words were delirium?"

Blake looked at her with a face full of mournful deprecation. It seemed to him at that moment that his inability to give the answer which she wished, was placing between them an eternal barrier, yet that answer was one which he could not give. In his secret soul he knew perfectly well that the words of the dying man were sane and rational.

Silence now followed, and Blake, after waiting some minutes, and finding that Inez had nothing further to say, rose and took his departure, leaving her alone with the dead.

And now an incident occurred which seemed to complicate still more the extraordinary net-work of bewildering circumstances that was interweaving itself about Inez.

She was sitting by the window. Her back was turned toward the bed. In order to put herself in that position, she had moved the chair a short distance from the place where it had been standing. It was a heavy stuffed chair, without casters, and to move it required some effort. As she sat here, her feet rested on the very place where the chair had originally stood.

As Blake retired, she leaned her head forward, and, feeling weary, she looked for some support to it. The window-ledge was at the right height to give this support. Upon this window-ledge she placed her right hand, and then turned herself slightly, so as to rest her forehead on this hand. As she made this movement, her foot struck something that lay upon the floor, and a slight clinking sound arose. Thinking that it might be some ornament which had fallen, she stooped to pick it up.

On lifting it up, she found, however, that it was no ornament, but something of a far different kind.

It was a crucifix, to which was attached a small fragment of chain. Raising it close to the light, the very first glance filled her with astonishment.

The crucifix was about three inches long. It was of solid gold, and of the most exquisite workmanship. The broken chain was also of gold, and it seemed to have been snapped asunder unknown to the wearer, who had gone away, leaving it here behind him.

But who was the owner?

Not Mr. Wyverne. He had nothing of the kind, nor was he a man who would have carried such an article on his travels.

It seemed to Inez most probable that this golden crucifix belonged to the priest. This priest had come, but his office was not performed. There may have been some agitation in his mind at so sudden a call, followed by so sudden a death; and, as his thoughts were occupied with this unusual event, he may not have noticed the loss of the crucifix. The chain may have broken by catching on some projection, such as the arm of the chair. It had fallen to the floor, and perhaps under the chair, where it had lain unnoticed until she had moved the chair from its usual place.

In this way Inez accounted for the extraordinary presence of the golden crucifix in this chamber. But, while she was thus thinking, she was gazing intently upon the elaborate work, and the exquisite design of the crucifix itself; and, finally, having studied one side, she turned it over with the idea that the name of the owner might possibly be engraved on the reverse, or something else which might give a clue to its ownership. The moment that she turned it over, her attention was arrested by some letters. Looking at them closely, she read the following.

At the intersection of the arms of the cross were these letters:

**B. M.**

*In Memoriam.*

**I. M.**

On the lower part of the cross, and running down its length, were these words:

*Te Jezu Domine,  
Dona ei requiem. Amen.*

As Inez looked at these letters, she felt utterly confounded, and could scarce believe her own eyes. Yet there were those letters unmistakably, the initials which for a week and more had filled all her thoughts; the

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to which was attached a chain. Raising it close to her eyes, a glance filled her with

about three inches long, and of the most exquisite workmanship. The broken chain was also found to have been snapped by the wearer, who had been behind him.

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It is most probable that this was the priest. This office was not perceived to have been some agitation on the part of the wearer, followed by his thoughts were of the crucifix. The by catching on some arm of the chair. It had perhaps under the unnoticed until she was in its usual place.

It was thus thinking, upon the elaborate design of the crucifix, she studied one side, and the idea that the name might be engraved on the other; else which might be the ship. The moment her attention was attracted to the crucifix, she looked at them.

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cross, and running words:

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letters, she felt she could scarce believe that those letters were which for a week she had thought; the

mysterious letters, B. M., which all that time had been present in her thoughts by day and night. What did this mean? How came the crucifix here—this crucifix, marked with such signs as these?

That it did not and could not belong to Mr. Wyverne she felt confident, as has been said. She knew that he had brought no such article with him. He was indifferent to all religious matters; and, besides, she had been his nurse for a week, during which time that very chair had been frequently moved. She reverted then more confidently than ever to her former conclusion, that it belonged to the priest; and then at once arose the question, How came this priest by any such thing as this? One wild thought instantly arose that the priest himself was B. M. The letter had stated that he was in Rome, on his way to England. Might not this priest have been the very man? And, if so, what then? What had happened at that interview? Had they spoken together, or had Mr. Wyverne avoided his dreaded enemy in a more efficacious manner than that which the letter had suggested, and fled from him, not by a pretended death, but by one that was real? Could the priest be B. M.? If so, she might see him, and solve all the mystery.

With this thought, she called in her maid. "Is the priest here, Saunders?" asked Inez.

"Oh, no, miss; he left long ago."

"Long ago? How long ago?"

"Not very long, miss, after—after poor master's—after he was took," said Saunders, hesitating in the effort to find some suitable way of mentioning the dread subject of death.

This intelligence was to Inez a sad disappointment.

"Do you know where he went?"

"No, miss."

"Do you know his name?"

"No, miss; but, if you please, miss, I'll go for John Thomas. I think he knows, miss."

"Send him to my room," said Inez. "I'm going there." Saying this, Inez rose, wearily, and returned to her own apartment.

In a few minutes John Thomas made his appearance. He was a tall footman, with heavy face and irreproachable calves. He bowed, and said:

"I beg parding, miss; but wos you a wantin' me?"

After which he stood, with the corners of his mouth drawn down, and a lugubrious aspect on his face, which was maintained by an occasional snuffle.

"I want to ask you about that priest," said Inez. "Do you know his name?"

"Me, miss? No, miss; and, wot's more, there's nobody about 'ere as knows it. I allus likes to know wot'a goin' on, miss; but this 'ere prier got ahead of me."

"Didn't he give any name?"

"Name, miss? No, miss. He came late last night, and left early this mornin', not long after the—the late mournful bereavemink, miss."

At this, Inez felt utterly disheartened.

"Nobody knows hany think about 'im more'n me; an' wot I knows hain't no more'n the letters of 'is name, which I see 'em on 'is valise, as 'e walked out of the himin'."

"Letters of his name!" exclaimed Inez, catching at these words. "What letters did you see?"

"Why, miss, I felt inquisitive about 'im, and, has I couldn't find hout 'is name, I wached 'is valise. It 'ad two letters on it, painted quite big—"

"Two letters!" said Inez, breathlessly.

"What were they?"

"The letters," said John Thomas, "wos B. M."

At this confirmation of her theory, Inez was too much overcome to make any rejoinder, but sat in silence and perplexity for some time. At last she looked up.

"What did he look like?" she asked, abruptly.

"The priest, miss?—mejum size, miss; dark complected; heyes black, and 'eavy heyebrows; 'is 'air, too, miss, wos a bir's gray. He looked more like a Hitallan than a Henglishman, miss."

To Inez this information gave no assistance; but she noted in her mind the chief points in this description, in case of future need.

She saw Dr. Blake once more that same evening, and received from him a still more minute description of the personal appearance of the priest "B. M."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE EROSY CASKET, AND ITS STRANGE CONTENTS.

THE remains of Hennigar Wyverne were sent home for burial.

Inez and Bessie, with their servants, left for home immediately.

Dr. Blake accompanied them as far as Boulogne. He had no encouragement whatever to do this. Inez was preoccupied, and so buried in the depths of her own gloomy thoughts that she seemed to be unconscious of his presence. At Boulogne, therefore, he bade her farewell, and stood upon the pier, gazing with mournful eyes upon the steamer that bore Inez away from him, until it was out of sight.

Inez had not chosen—for reasons already mentioned—to make a confidante of Bessie. It is to be supposed, therefore, that this young lady had no idea of the peculiar troubles of her friend, but attributed them, as was natural, to the pain of bereavement. She showed the utmost delicacy in her behavior toward Inez, and never sought to utter any of those condolences which are so useless to assuage the true grief of the heart. She refrained also from intruding upon the solitude of Inez when she showed that she wished to be alone, and merely evinced her affection by sundry little attentions which were directed toward the bodily comfort of her friend. Whatever Bessie's own thoughts or feelings were, they never appeared; nor was it certain at all whether she felt wounded or slighted by the reserve of one from whom she might perhaps have claimed greater confidence. But Inez was naturally of a reserved temper, and, even if she had been the most communicative soul in the world, the secret that she now had was one which few would care to communicate.

In that great craving and longing to express her secret griefs which Inez felt, as most people feel, at this time, she had recourse to a simple plan, which was not without its advantages. She wrote down the chief facts of her mysterious case in her private memorandum-book, and over these words her eyes used often to wander, not merely in the solitude of her own room, but even in the greater publicity of rail-cars and steamboats.

What Inez wrote down was as follows:

1. For some unknown cause, H. W. and B. M. were mortal enemies.
2. It seems as if H. W. was the offender, and B. M. the injured one.
3. For this reason, perhaps, H. W. stood in mortal terror of B. M.
4. A third party in this case is one Kevin Magrath.
5. I have been brought up as the daughter of H. W.
6. H. W., on his death-bed, and with his last words, has solemnly said that I am not his daughter.
7. H. W. has said, on his death-bed, that I am the daughter of his mortal enemy, B. M.
8. H. W. has said, on his death-bed, that Basil Blake is his son.
9. B. M. is a Roman Catholic priest.
10. How can I be the daughter of a R. C. priest?
11. B. M. was present at the death-bed of H. W., and saw him die.
12. If he is my father, why did he not seek for me? Answer—Because he may have been told that I am dead.

13. B. M. dropped his crucifix. I found it. By constantly brooding over these things, which she had thus summed up that they might be always present to her eyes, Inez found herself sinking deeper and deeper into an abyss of bewilderment from which no outlet appeared. The great question was, What shall I do? and this she could not answer. Her own helplessness was utter. Her position was most false and intolerable. The name by which she was known was not hers. Her parentage was thrown in doubt, and that doubt indicated something intolerable to a mind like hers. Out of all this confusion and misery she had one definite purpose only, and that was, to carry on the search as soon as she reached home, and take the first opportunity that presented itself of investigating the papers of Hennigar Wyverne.

To one who was so eager as she was, the first opportunity would inevitably be seized. Scarce had Inez set foot within her house, than she began a search among those effects of the deceased which had been sent home already. Here she found nothing; but a greater search was before her—one, too, which she had held in view all along, and for which she had prepared herself before leaving Villeneuve. This was the investigation of the cabinet of Hennigar Wyverne, where she supposed he would

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have been most likely to keep any thing relating to the great mystery, if, indeed, any thing at all had been kept. At Villeneuve she had thought of this, and had prepared for it by obtaining then, before the effects of the deceased were packed up, the keys of that very cabinet. These he had carried with him, and she found them in his travelling-desk.

Inez had no difficulties thrown in her way. Bessie showed no inclination to interfere with any of her movements. She still maintained the same delicate consideration which has already been mentioned. She seemed rather to wait for Inez to make the first advances toward their old confidence, and ventured upon nothing more than the usual kiss at meeting in the morning and parting at night, and an occasional caress when the mood of Inez seemed to allow it. Bessie had also cultivated a pathetic expression of face, which was quite in accordance with her style of beauty, and made her look so very interesting that Inez once or twice felt inclined to break her resolution and confide all to her friend. This, however, was but a momentary impulse, which a second thought never failed to destroy.

The city residence of the late Hennigar Wyverne, Esq., was a large and handsome edifice in a fashionable quarter of London. Opposite the morning-room was an apartment which was called the library, but which had been used by the deceased as a kind of office. Books were around on three sides, while on the fourth were two articles of furniture devoted rather to business than to literature or learning. One of these was a closet, filled with papers all neatly labelled and lying in pigeon-holes. The other was a massive cabinet, which contained the more important books and papers. It was this last which Inez wished more particularly to search.

To carry on such a search would require time, and it would be necessary to be free from observation. These conditions could not be obtained by day, and night must be the time. Among the hours of the night it would be necessary to choose those when the household would be certain to be asleep. Those hours would be, at least, not earlier than two in the morning. At that time she might hope to be unnoticed, unsuspected, and undisturbed. This was the time, then, that Inez decided upon, and she resolved to carry

her great purpose into execution on the second night after her arrival.

In spite of the great necessity which she felt pressing her on to this task, it was one from which Inez recoiled instinctively. It seemed to be a dishonorable thing. But this notion was one which she reasoned herself out of; and by pleading the dictates of duty she silenced what was perhaps, after all, nothing more than false sensitiveness.

It was not so easy, however, to overcome that weakness of nerve and natural timidity which were caused by the nature of her undertaking. Setting out thus on this midnight errand, it seemed to her as though she were about to commit some sin; and it was some time, even after the hour had arrived, before she felt strong enough to venture down. At length she rallied her sinking strength, and stealthily left her room. Pausing there, she stood listening. All was still. She carried a wax-candle, but it was not lighted. She had some matches, and could light the candle when she reached the library.

Softly and stealthily she descended. There was no interruption of any kind whatever. She reached the library and entered, after which she shut the door as softly as possible, and locked it on the inside. She then took her handkerchief and stuffed it into the key-hole. After this she examined the windows, and found that the blinds were closed. No light could now betray her presence here, and so she lighted her candle and looked around her.

The dim light of the single flickering candle but feebly illuminated the large and lofty room. In the distance the walls and shelves stood enveloped in gloomy shadows. But Inez had eyes only for that cabinet which she had come to explore. It was immediately in front of her, and she held the keys in her hand.

For a moment she hesitated. It seemed to her now that the moment had come—the supreme moment when the secret would be all revealed. Yet about that revelation what horrors might not hang! Already one revelation had taken place, and it had been bitter indeed. Would this be less so? It seemed to her as though about the secret of her parentage there lurked endless possibilities of crime, and shame, and dishonor.

But there was no time to lose. Suddenly mastering her feelings, she put the key in the

lock. The bolt turned back. She opened the door.

Before her lay the ordinary contents of a cabinet. There were account-books standing upright, and papers filed away and labelled, so numerous that the sight discouraged Inez. It would take many days to look over them all. But they were all labelled so carefully that it seemed possible for her to get a general idea of most of them after all. She knelt down in front of the cabinet, and, drawing up a chair, she put the candle upon it. Then she began to look over the papers, beginning at the right-hand corner.

This task soon became very wearisome. Bundles after bundle of papers revealed no name that had any connection with those initials whose meaning she was so eager to discover. Some were receipts, others letters, others documents of a business nature. At length she paused, and her eyes wandered dependently over the whole assemblage of papers, to see if there was any thing there which seemed by its position or appearance to indicate any thing peculiar, any thing different from the monotony of the others.

In the very middle of the cabinet there was a square drawer about a foot in width and depth, and this seemed to Inez to be a place where more important or more private documents might be kept. It seemed best to open this at once. She had the whole bunch of keys with her, which she had obtained possession of at Villeneuve, and felt sure that the key to this drawer would be among them. One by one she tried the keys that were on the bunch, and at last found one, as she had hoped, which would fit. She unlocked the drawer and opened it.

One look inside showed her that at length she had found one thing at least which she desired—something different from the general assemblage of receipts, letters, and business documents.

A casket lay there before her, inside the drawer. It was quite small, not more than six inches in length, and was made of ebony, with silver corners and edges, together with silver feet, and a handle of the same metal. At the sight of this, she felt an uncontrollable impatience to get at the secret of its contents, and snatched it with eager hands out of the drawer. Some letters on the silver plate of the casket, immediately underneath the handle, attracted her attention. She held it close

to the light. The silver here was somewhat tarnished, and the letters were of an antique Gothic character, such as are used for inscriptions over the doors of cathedrals, and at first were not quite intelligible. But Inez rubbed at the silver with her sleeve till the plate grew bright, and then once more held it to the candle.

The letters were now fully revealed. Her heart throbbed wildly at the sight. The letters before her eyes were those same ones which so haunted her—

B. M.

And, now, what should she do? Stay here and examine the casket? No. She was liable to discovery. She had been here long enough. Better, far, to take the little casket away and examine its contents in her own room, at her leisure, without the terror of possible discovery impending over her constantly, and constantly distracting her thoughts. In that casket she felt must lie all that she could hope to find, whatever it might be; and, if this were empty, or if its contents revealed nothing, then she would have to remain in her ignorance. If the casket held any thing, she might keep it; if not, she might return it at some future time; but, meanwhile, it was best for her to take it away.

So she now closed the drawer, locked it, then shut up and locked the cabinet; after which she rose to her feet, and, hiding the casket in the folds of her dress, she took the candle and prepared to leave the room.

Before unlocking the library-door she stood and listened. As she stood, she thought she heard a low, breathing sound close by her. Starting, in terror, she looked hastily around. But the room was all in gloom, and all empty and deserted. It seemed to her that it was merely her fancy. But once more, as she waited listening, she heard it even more plainly. This time it seemed like a suppressed cough. It was on the other side of the door.

In an instant it flashed upon her that she had been watched and followed, and that some one was now outside trying to peep through the keyhole. But who? Could it be some burglar, or could it possibly be one of the servants?

She waited still, and listened. But there was no further sound. The cough had been suppressed, and, if there was any one watching, he gave no sign now. There was some-

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She removed her handkerchief from the key-hole, and inserted the key as noiselessly as possible. Then turning it, she opened the door, and peered tremblingly into the darkness. She saw nothing. She put forth her head. Nothing was revealed. Could it have been, after all, a mistake? She tried for the moment to think so. She dared not blow the light out just yet, however, but walked with it up the stairs, and then, reaching the top, she extinguished it.

It was dark all the rest of the way to her room, and she hurried on as quickly and as noiselessly as she could, but there was a terrible sense of being pursued which almost overcame her. When at last she reached her own room, she closed her door hastily, looked it, and then instantly lighted the gas, whose bright flame, illuminating the whole apartment, quickly drove away every vestige of her recent terror.

Had she not found that casket, there is no doubt that the smothered cough which she had heard or imagined would have impressed her much more deeply, and excited within her mind some strange suspicions; but, as it was, the casket filled all her thoughts, and she had an inordinate and irresistible longing to open it at once.

Once more she searched among the keys. One there was, the smallest in the bunch, of very peculiar shape, which seemed exactly adapted to that casket. She tried this one first of all. It was the right one! She turned it. The casket was unlocked.

Her heart was now throbbing most vehemently, and for a moment she delayed before lifting the lid, fearful of the result of this search. At length, however, the momentary hesitation passed; she laid her hand on the lid and raised it.

The casket was there, open before her eyes.

Inside of this there was a parcel. On the

outside of this parcel were written these words:

“MY DARLINGS.”

Inez opened the parcel, with hands trembling now in this supreme moment of excitement, and the contents soon lay revealed.

What it contained was a locket made of gold, of most exquisite design and finish, around the edges of which was a row of brilliants. This locket was about two inches in length, and somewhat less in width. Its shape was oval. It was constructed so as to open in three places, and on the edge there were three springs. By pressing the spring on the right, the side of the locket flew open; the left spring opened the left side of the locket; and the middle spring opened the locket in the middle.

Each one of these openings disclosed a miniature portrait, exquisitely painted on ivory. One of these represented a lady, the second a girl of about twelve years of age, the third a child. Under each portrait was a tablet, on which was engraved some letters. Under the lady's was the name “Inez;” under the girl's was the name “Clara;” and under the child's was the name “Inez.”

As Inez opened these and looked at them one by one, her heart beat so fast, and her hands trembled so violently, that she had to lay the locket down. She gasped for breath. She buried her face in her hands and wept. These tears brought relief, and, once more taking up the locket, she looked at the portraits through her tears.

She looked at those portraits, and there arose within her feelings mysterious, unspeakable, unutterable. They seemed like dreams—those faces. Where in her life had she seen the lovely face of that lady who smiled on her there out of that portrait so sweetly? Where had she ever seen the face of that beautiful girl Clara, whose deep, dark eyes were now fixed on her? And who was that child Inez? Who? Could the thought that was in her mind be true? Dare she entertain such a fancy? Had she herself ever been one of those three? Could it be that she herself had ever, in far-off days, been the original of that beautiful child-portrait that now met her eyes—smiling in its innocent happiness? Was that her sister? Was that her mother? Was it possible that this which was in her mind could be any thing else than a feverish, a delirious fancy—a fancy brought

out of the workings of that brain which of late had been so intensely and so unremittingly active?

No; the faces were not unfamiliar. These were not the faces of strangers. Inez! Clara! Inez!

Hitherto her eyes had been fascinated by the portraits, but now they caught sight of something else at the bottom of the casket. It was a piece of paper folded like a letter.

She took it up. It was a letter. It bore the address:

"HENNIGAR WYVERNE, ESQ.,

"London."

It was a fine, bold hand, and resembled the same one in which the words were written which Inez had seen on the parcel. On opening it she read the following:

"MY DEAR HENNIGAR—Will you have the kindness to keep this casket for me until I send for it? It contains their miniatures, which, after some deliberation, I have concluded not to take with me. Ever yours,

"BERNAL-MORDAUNT."

Bernal Mordaunt!

Inez read that name over a hundred times. This was the meaning of the initials, then. And Mordaunt! Why, that was Bessie's name. What was the meaning of that? Did Bessie know, after all? Had she all along been acquainted with all this? Could it be possible that Bessie had known that secret which she tried so hard to conceal from her? She had been in the habit of regarding Bessie all along as a sort of human butterfly, but she began to think that Miss Mordaunt might have a far deeper nature than she had ever imagined.

For hours Inez sat up, thinking over this, without being able to understand it. At last, however, her exhausted nature gave out, and she retired to bed.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A CURIOUS FANCY.

BLAKE watched the steamer until it was out of sight, and then turned sadly away. The great change that had come over Inez disheartened him, for, although he was aware of the cause, he was not prepared for such a

result. It seemed to him now as though this separation was an eternal one, and the startling revelation which had been made by the dying Wyverne, while it filled him with amazement, seemed also to fix between him and Inez, for all the future, a deep and impassable gulf. His present residence was Paris, and he returned there on the following day.

Arriving there, he spent some time in his rooms, after which he went forth in the direction of the Quartier Latin. Here he entered a house, and, going up to the second story, knocked at the door of a room in the rear of the building.

"Come in," said a deep-bass voice.

Blake entered thereupon, saying: "Hell-muth, old fellow, how are you?"

At this, a man started up, letting a pipe fall from his mouth to the floor, and upsetting a chair as he did so.

"Blake!" he cried. "By Heaven, Blake! Is this really you? Welcome back again!" And, with these words, he strode over toward his visitor, and wrung his hand heartily.

Dr. Blake's friend was a man of very peculiar physiognomy. He was a tall man, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and large-limbed. His hair was short, his beard was cropped quite close, and a heavy though rather ragged mustache, with long points depending downward, overshadowed his mouth. Hair and beard were grizzled with plentiful gray hairs, which gave an air of grimness to his face. His brow was deeply wrinkled, his eyes were deep set, and gray and piercing. His nose was aquiline, and he had a trick of stroking it with the forefinger of his left hand whenever he was involved in thoughts of a graver kind than usual. It was an austere face, a stern face, yet a sad one, and one, too, which was not without a certain charm of its own; and there were many who could bear testimony to the warm human heart that throbbed beneath the sombre exterior of Kane Hellmuth.

The room was a large one, and a bedroom adjoined it, but both were furnished in the most meagre manner. The floor was of red tiles. There was a sofa and an arm-chair. A plain deal table stood in the centre. Upon this was a tumbler and a bottle, a tobacco-box, and several pipes.

Blake flung himself on the sofa, and Kane

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Hellmuth picked up the chair, and seated himself on it again.

"You've been gone a long time, Blake," said he, stooping to pick up his pipe, and filling it again as he spoke. "I began to think that you had emigrated altogether from the capital of civilization, to saw the boncs of outside barbarians."

"Oh, I've been rustivating a little," said Blake, indifferently, "and doing a little in the way of business. I've been last in Switzerland—I'll give an account of myself, some time. And what have you been doing with yourself?"

"Won't you take something?" said Hellmuth, without noticing Blake's last remark. "I've some cognac here."

"Cognac! what! you with cognac?" said Blake, in evident surprise.

"Yes," said Hellmuth. "I've had to come to it."

Saying this, he rose from his chair, and going to a closet he produced a tumbler, which he gravely placed on the table.

"Take some," said he.

Blake poured out a little. Hellmuth poured out half a tumblerful, and gulped it down.

"You'd better smoke," said he.

"I think I shall," said Blake, and, producing a meerschaum from his pocket, he filled and lighted it. Hellmuth lighted his also, and soon the room began to grow somewhat cloudy. Silence now followed for some time, which may have been owing to the occupation afforded by the process of smoking, or may have been caused by preoccupation of mind on the part of both of them.

Kane Hellmuth, however, seemed more absorbed in his own thoughts than Blake. He stretched out his great, long legs, leaned back his head, and, with eyes half closed, puffed forth great volumes of smoke toward the ceiling. Blake lounged on the sofa, occasionally watching the form of the other as it loomed through the gathering smoke-clouds. He seemed on the point of speaking several times, but each time he checked himself.

The silence was at length broken by Kane Hellmuth.

"Blake," said he, suddenly—and, as he said this, he sat upright and rigid, fixing his piercing gray eyes on his friend.

"Well," said Blake, unconsciously rising

out of his lounging position, and looking up in some surprise.

"Do you believe in ghosts?"

"Ghosts," repeated Blake—"believe in ghosts? What a question! Why, man, what do you mean?"

"I mean this: do you believe in ghosts?"

"Why—I believe in—apparitions, of course—that is—you know—I believe that in certain abnormal conditions of the optic nerve—"

"Oh, of course—of course," interrupted Kane Hellmuth, with a wave of his hand. "I know all that—every word of it. All jargon—nothing but words. That is the case wherever science deals with the soul. I need not have asked you such a question. You're a materialist, and you believe nothing but what can be proved by experiment. I once had the same belief. But let me tell you, my dear boy, your materialism is only good for the daylight and the sunshine. Wait till it is all dark—outside and inside, for mind and body—and then see what becomes of your materialism. It goes to the dogs."

"Perhaps so," said Blake; "but, at any rate, science can have nothing to do with fancies. It is built up out of actual facts. Science is not poetry or superstition. It is the truth, whether pleasant or unpleasant. For my part, I am a scientific man, and nothing concerns me that cannot be proved."

"Well," said Kane Hellmuth, "we need not argue. I might say that science is in its infancy, and can decide nothing; that there are things as far out of its reach as the heaven is beyond the earth, but what's the use? I come back to myself. I'm glad you're here, Blake. I've got an infernal load on my mind, and I want to tell it to somebody, if it's only for the relief that one feels after a clean confession."

Kane Hellmuth drew a long breath, laid his pipe on the table, and, turning his eyes toward where Blake was sitting, sat for some moments in silence, staring intently before him. It was not at Blake that he was looking, but at vacancy; and his thoughts were far away from the scene immediately before him. Blake did not interrupt him, but sat watching him, waiting for him to speak.

At last Kane Hellmuth broke the silence. His voice was harsh, and he spoke with solemn and impressive emphasis.

"Blake," said he, slowly, "I'm a haunted man!"

At this extraordinary remark Blake's first impulse was to laugh, but there was something in the expression of Kane Hellmuth's face which checked the rising levity.

"The circumstances are so extraordinary," murmured Hellmuth, as though soliloquizing, "and it has been repeated so often that it cannot be explained on the ground of fancy, or of hallucination. You see, an hallucination generally arises out of a surrounding of exciting circumstances, and is always accompanied by some degree of mystery, unless, of course, as you said a little while ago, the optic nerve is immediately affected; but, mind you, my boy, you take a thoroughly healthy man—a man of iron nerve, clear head, practical mind, strong body—put that man in a public street, or in a railway-train, or in the midst of his daily duties, and say would it be possible for such a man to be subject to an hallucination, and to experience it, not once but four several times, and in such a way that the form presented before his eyes was most certainly no mere apparition, but a real existence?"

Kane Hellmuth had been looking at the floor as he spoke, and, on finishing, raised his eyes with earnest and solemn inquiry to Blake.

Blake made no answer. He was not prepared to form any reply.

Kane Hellmuth was putting his case very strongly, but Blake's ignorance of all the circumstances forced him to wait till he should hear more.

"As to the face," continued Hellmuth, once more lowering his eyes, and falling into his soliloquizing tone, "there is no possibility of mistaking it. It can belong to one, and to one only. The features, the eyes, the expression, could by no possibility belong to any other. Yet how this can be, and why it can be, I cannot comprehend."

"What is the form that is commonly assumed by this—ah—appearance that you speak of?" asked Blake, as Kane Hellmuth again paused. "Is there only one apparition, with only one shape, or are there several, with something in common?"

"There is only one," said Kane Hellmuth, solemnly. "It is always the same features, form, and dress."

"Would you have any objection to tell

what it is like? Is it a man, or a woman, or a child, for instance?"

"It is a woman," said Kane Hellmuth. "She is always dressed as a nun. The face is always the same, and bears one unchanged expression."

"A nun!" said Blake. "That would be a black dress. Pardon me if I allude to spectral illusions, but have you ever investigated the subject of colors with regard to optical delusions, and do you know how black would affect such illusions?"

"I have not."

"Nor have I. I thought, perhaps, that the suggestion might be worth something."

"No," said Kane Hellmuth, "it is worth nothing in this case, for, after all, the dress is the least important part of this visitor of mine. It is the face—the face, the features, the look, above all, the eyes, that fix themselves upon me, and seem to penetrate to my inmost soul."

"Is this face that you speak of at all familiar—that is to say, does it look like any face with which you have formerly been acquainted, or is it some perfectly strange one?"

"Familiar?" exclaimed Kane Hellmuth. "It is only too familiar. It is the face of one who has been associated with the brightest and the darkest moments of my life—one who was more to me than all the world, and whose memory is still dearer to me than all other thoughts. Years ago I lost her, and that loss broke up all my life. I never think it worth while, Blake, to talk about so unimportant a subject as myself; but I may remark that I was once a very different man from what I now am, and occupied a very different position. She was with me in that old life; but, when she died, I died, too. I am virtually a dead man, and it seems that I hold communion with the dead."

To Blake this strange discourse seemed like the ravings of incipient insanity. It was unusual in Kane Hellmuth, who had all along, ever since Blake had known him, been distinguished for his perfect clear-headedness and dry, practical nature. Yet now it seemed as though beneath all this there was some lurking tendency to insanity, and that Kane Hellmuth's strong intellect was giving way. His strange language, and his fancy that the dead had appeared to him, together with his evident liability to spectral illusions, all awak-

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enced new feelings in Blake's mind, and he now felt anxious to learn what his friend believed had appeared to him, so as to see the direction which his wandering fancy or his disease might be taking. It was a friendly sympathy with such an affliction, and an earnest desire to be of some service.

"Yes," continued Hellmuth, in the same strain, "I died once. We died together, at the same time. I am now dead, in law, in reality, virtually dead—a dead man! And it is because I am still moving about among living men, I dare say, that she comes to me now to warn me. Last night's appearance showed that things were coming to a climax."

"Last night?" asked Blake. "You saw this as recently as last night, did you?"

"Yes," said Hellmuth, "for that matter I see it now—that is to say, I have so vivid a memory of it that by shutting my eyes now I can reproduce it."

"How many times have you seen it altogether?"

"Four times."

"How long is it since you first saw it?"

"About two years ago."

"Have you any objections to tell me the kind of appearance which presented itself each time, and the circumstances under which you saw it?"

"Objections? certainly not; I am anxious to tell you exactly how it was in each case."

Hellmuth drew a long breath, and was silent for a few moments. He then continued:

"I came to Paris about two years ago.

Not long after my arrival here I went to Notre-Dame. I went to hear Père Hyacinthe. I was a great admirer of his. There was an immense crowd there, as usual. I was in the midst of it when it parted to make way for a procession. At that moment I saw, straight in front of me, just across the space made for the procession, not more than six feet away, the figure of a nun! She was clothed in black from head to foot. Her face was turned to me, and her eyes were fixed on mine with a burning intensity of gaze that penetrated to my inmost soul. The face was full of unutterable sadness and mournfulness, and there was also in it a deep and overpowering reproachfulness. I cannot describe it at all. There, however, was this black nun with the pale face of death opposite me, within reach, standing there, motionless as a statue, with her eyes, full of a terrible fascina-

tion, fixed on mine. It was the figure, the face, the look, the eyes, the attitude, and the expression of my dead wife!"

Kane Hellmuth looked at Blake with a gaze that seemed to search out the thoughts of the other, and again paused for a few moments.

"Well," he resumed, "I need not enlarge on my own feelings. Words are useless. I will only say that this figure thus stood, motionless, looking at me, and I stood, motionless, looking at her, across this space that seemed to have opened on purpose to disclose her to me; and the time seemed long, yet it could not have been longer than was necessary to allow the procession to come six feet or so. The procession moved on, and, in the smoke of incense, and the confusion of the crowd, the figure was lost to sight. After the procession had passed, I looked everywhere, but saw nothing more of it.

"I must say that I was very much upset by this; but the habit of scientific thought came to my aid, and I accounted for it in various ways—such ways as you would suggest to explain away what you consider the fancies of a disordered brain. Still, I knew perfectly well that my brain was not in the slightest degree disordered, and so I fell back, or tried to fall back, upon the theory that it was some chance resemblance that had so affected me. Various things affected my belief in this; but, nevertheless, it seemed the only terrible one, but the impression produced on me was deep, and seemed likely to be lasting.

"Well, several months passed away, and at length I had occasion to take a run over to England. It was early morning. The train in which I was had gone about ten miles, and reached a small station, the name of which I forget. Another train was stopping there, and, just as we came in, it was beginning to move out. I was sitting on the side next to the other train, carelessly looking out of the window. I was facing the engine, so that the other train moved toward me, and thus I threw my eyes over the passengers as they passed by. Suddenly my gaze was riveted by a face which was turned toward me. It was on the other train. It was a nun—the same nun—the same face, the same look, the same expression, the same eyes; and they fastened themselves on mine with the same burning intensity of gaze which

I had noticed at Notre-Dame. At this second meeting I felt even more overwhelmed than on the first occasion. Again the time seemed very long in which those eyes held mine in the spell of their terrible fascination; yet it could not have lasted longer than the brief moment that was requisite for the other train to pass us.

"After this second visitation, I confess I felt more bewildered than ever. I gave up my journey to England, and, quitting the train at Amiens, I came back here. If the first sight of this nun figure had been unaccountable, this second one was even more so. Several months more now passed away, and I can only say that I remained in a state of perfect bewilderment as to the cause of the two appearances which I have described. I began now to think that, since I had seen it twice, I might see it again, and was conscious of an uneasy state of mind, in which I felt myself to be constantly on the lookout. Thus far it had appeared in the midst of crowds, and by daylight; the next time it came it might appear in solitude, and amid the darkness. The thought was not a pleasant one, and yet I cannot say that I felt exactly afraid. It was more awe than fear, together with a decided reluctance to be subjected to any further visitation.

"At length it came again. It was during the last *fête Napoléon*. It was a little after nine in the evening. I was seated in front of the *café Vigny*, on the Boulevard de la Madeleine. I was smoking, and indolently watching the crowd of people that streamed by, and listening to the confused murmur of idle chat or noisy altercation that rose all around me. The crowd was immense; and the passing forms, the rolling carriages, the noise, tumult, music, and laughter, all served to draw my mind out of certain thoughts over which it had been brooding somewhat too much.

"It was at this moment, and in this place, then, sitting there smoking, amid the surroundings of every-day life, and the flare of prosaic gas-lights, that I saw it again. It passed along the edge of the sidewalk. I was looking toward the other side of the street when it glided into sight. It moved slowly along with a solemn step; and, as it moved, it turned its face and fixed its eyes full upon me. It was the same figure—the black nun's dress—and the same look, inex-

pressibly sad, despairing, and reproachful. It did not stop, but moved along, and was gradually lost in the crowd.

"There was something about its glance that thrilled through me, and seemed to take away all my strength. I felt as before—petrified. I longed to advance toward it, and find out for myself whether this shape was corporeal or incorporeal. I could not. Even after it had passed I felt unable to move for some time. When at length I was able to rise from my seat, I went off after it in the direction which it had taken, but I could not find out any thing whatever about it, or see any figure whatever that bore the slightest resemblance to it."

Kane Hellmuth fixed his eyes more solemnly than ever on Blake, and, after a short silence, continued:

"Last night I saw it once more. But there are certain circumstances connected with this fourth meeting which cannot be intelligible to you without further explanation. I think I shall have to trouble you with an account of my past to some extent, if you care to listen, and don't feel bored already."

"My dear old boy," said Blake, earnestly, "I shall feel only too glad to get the confidence of a man like you."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FATAL DRAUGHT.

BLAKE drew himself nearer to his friend, in the intensity of the curiosity that was by this time awakened within him. Kane Hellmuth rose to his feet, poured out a glass of raw cognac, drank it down, and then, resuming his seat, he sat erect, with his eyes fixed on vacancy.

"When I say," began Kane Hellmuth, "that I am at this moment a dead man, and that I died ten years ago, you think, of course, either that I am using figurative language, or else that I am showing signs of insanity. Neither of these is the case, however. When you hear what I have to say, you will perceive that these words are true, and actually describe my present condition.

"It is a little more than ten years ago that I was married. My wife was an English girl. She was at a *pensionnat* in this city. Girls in this country are seldom allowed any



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liberty before marriage; but she was an English girl, and for that reason, perhaps, was allowed a far greater degree of freedom than would otherwise have been possible. I became acquainted with her through the medium of an English family—people, by-the-way, whom I thought very singular associates for one like her. She was about seventeen, fair, fragile, innocent as an angel. The first time that I saw her, I loved her most passionately. I was able to see her frequently, and at length induced her to marry me.

"I had nothing whatever to marry on. I was at that time a mad spendthrift; and, though I began life with a handsome allowance as second son, I soon spent it all, and had plunged head over heels in debt. My father paid my debts once, and died soon after. My elder brother would do nothing for me, and so I soon found myself in a desperate position. I had to leave England, and come here. Here my bad habits followed me, and I soon found myself involved as heavily as ever. It was under these circumstances that I had the madness to get married, and drag another down into the abyss in which I was.

"She was an orphan. She had lost her mother four years before. Her father was broken-hearted, and left the country. She heard of his death soon after. She had been at this boarding-school ever since. She had a guardian. There had been a sister in her family, a mere child, who had also died. Thus she was alone in the world, and under the authority of a guardian whom she had never seen but once, and who took not the slightest interest in her. She had no future before her, and loved me as passionately as I loved her, and was therefore quite willing to be mine.

"Well, I had a little money about me, and with this I started on a bridal tour. We went to Italy, and spent three months there—three months of perfect happiness—three months which, in so miserable a life as mine has been, seem now like a heaven of bliss, as I look back. I drove away all thoughts of my circumstances. I gave myself up altogether to the joy of the present. I would not let the cares of the future interfere for one moment with the happiness which I had with her. I knew that there would have to be an end, but waited till the end should come.

"At length, the beginning of the end approached, and I began to see the necessity of exertion of some sort. I had already written to the guardian, acquainting him with the marriage. I now wrote to him a second time. He had taken no notice whatever of the first letter, which excited my suspicions that he was inclined to be severe on us. I had an idea, however, that he might have some property belonging to my wife, and wished to know what there was to rely on.

"Paris was not a very pleasant place for one in my circumstances, nor was it safe for me to go there; but I risked all, and went there, expecting that the guardian would prove amiable, and trusting to the chapter of accidents. While I was about it, I wrote also to my elder brother, telling him that I was married, that I intended to lead a new life, and asking him to use his influence to get me some office.

"I got my brother's answer first. He had always felt a grudge against me, because my father had once paid my debts. It seemed as though so much had been taken from him. I never knew before what an avaricious and cold-hearted nature he had. If I had known it, I would not have written. His letter was perfectly devilish. He sneered at my marriage, and lamented that his circumstances would not allow him to do the same, reminded me of all my shortcomings, threw up the old grudge about my debts, and told me that with my talents I should have won a rich wife. Such was his letter. It prepared me for worse things, and these soon came to pass.

"On my arrival at Paris, my creditors all assailed me, of course. I went to see the chief ones, and gave them to understand that my wife had money, and that, when I could come to terms with her guardian, I would settle every thing. The thing seemed plausible to them, and they consented to wait. It was a lie, of course; but, when a man is in debt, there is no lie which he will not tell to fight off his creditors. The course of a failing merchant, or a gentleman going to ruin, is generally one prolonged lie.

"At length, wearied with waiting, I wrote once more to the guardian, telling him that, if I did not hear from him, I would bring my wife, visit him in person, and force him to render an account of her affairs.

"This time I got an answer; it was not

very long. He said that my wife had no fortune at all for which to render an account, that she had been maintained at his expense thus far, and he had hoped that she would do far better for herself than she had done. Her marriage without his consent, he declared, had destroyed all claims that she might have on his consideration. He cast her off, and thought it but just that the man who had stolen her should support her. In answer to my threat about coming in person, he merely remarked that for one in my position England would hardly be a desirable place to visit.

"All news soon spreads. This break-up of my last hope became gradually known. It may have been gathered from my own words or manner; but, whatever the cause was, it was certainly found out, and I soon began to feel the effects of it. The crowd of clamorous and hungry creditors gathered thick around me, and ruin, utter and absolute, was inevitable. I had no more money; I could not even fly, for I was watched, and could not buy my tickets. I owed my landlord, who also was as clamorous as the rest. One day more, and I should be thrown into prison, with no hope of escape. I should be torn from my wife forever. And she—what would become of her? She whom I had guarded so tenderly—she who had never known what it was to struggle for herself, with all her youth and beauty and innocence—what could she do, if I was torn from her, if she was driven from the boarding-house into the streets, alone, penniless, alone in a great city, and that city Paris? There was all that thought.

"Such was my position. For me there was ruin—imprisonment perhaps for life—eternal separation from my wife!—for her a fate worse ten thousand times—the hideous fate which awaits the unprotected innocent in a city like Paris. Thus the crisis had come. One day more would decide all. The landlord had threatened me with ejection and arrest. One day more would plunge me into a prison-cell, and throw my wife on the streets. We had no friends. She was alone in the world. So was I. She loved me so passionately that separation from me would be death to her—death? that would be the lightest of the evils that awaited her."

Kane Hellmuth paused. He had spoken thus far in low but vehement tones, and, though he tried to restrain himself, there were

visible marks of the intense agitation of feeling that was called up by all these bitter memories. He sat erect and rigid, with his eyes fixed gloomily before him, and his hands clutching the arms of his chair. But his hands that grasped the chair were strained to whiteness by the convulsive energy of that pressure; and his brow lowered into a frown as black as night; while on his face the brown, weather-beaten complexion had changed to a dull, ghastly pallor.

"Death!" he repeated. "Yes, death! If I had been torn from her, and flung into prison, I should have killed some one, and have destroyed myself. Arrest was death. For my wife there was no better fate. For her the best thing that could take place was death. Death was before us in any case, and therefore the question in my mind became reduced to this: How shall this death, which is inevitable, be best encountered?"

"These thoughts had been coming to me gradually, and out of these thoughts came this conclusion. It took shape when my brother's letter came, and assumed a final and definite form when I received the answer from the guardian. For myself it was easy to decide—but in this case I had more than myself to consider. My wife. How could she bear the thought? Or how could she receive the communication which I wished to convey when it was one like this?"

"Thus far she had known nothing except that I loved her. I had not shared with her a single one of my cares. I had spared her all unnecessary distress. In my own anguish it pleased me to see her innocent happiness, to watch the expression of her eloquent face as she talked with me. Never was there a man more devotedly loved—more adored than I was by her. The whole wealth of a loving nature she poured forth to me. She had not one single thought apart from me. Her love was like worship in its devotion, but it had the warmth and the glow of human passion.

"But the communication which I longed to make was made at last. It had to be made. It was the day—the last day of our freedom. The next day was to end all. It was early in the morning. I had not slept all night long. In the morning she told me that she had not slept. Then she looked at me with unutterable mournfulness. We were sitting at the breakfast-table at that time. She looked at



roused by a noise at the door. I thought at once of the officers of the law, and the landlord, and hurried there to see who it was. I saw no one. Then I came back—and this last alarm restored my resolution. I took her hand—and we both drank. . . .”

Again Kane Hellmuth paused, and it was now a long time before he went on.

“This is what I mean,” he resumed in a hoarse voice, “when I say that I died then, and am a dead man now. Out of that death I revived. I found myself in a hospital, just emerging from a burning fever. I learned that I had been there for months. It was months before I was able to leave. I learned that I had been sent here. And where was she? Who had buried her? How had I escaped?”

“For days and weeks there was but one thought on my mind. How had I escaped?”

“And gradually there came to me a thought that made life more intolerable than ever. I saw it all at last. I recognized her loving purpose, in her proposal to give me my draught. She had designed to save me. She would die—willingly, since I wished it; gladly, since death would be administered by me. She would die; but, nevertheless, she would save me, and this was her sweet deceit—to give me a draught which should produce senselessness, out of which I might come back to life, while she would go where I sent her.

“I thought also that I could see another reason. She had understood from my words, no doubt, that she had reduced me to this. She saw that my care was for her, and that, were it not for her, I should not die—or think of dying. Alone, I could live; but I could not support her. This, no doubt, she saw, although no such thought ever came to my mind. This she saw, and therefore she died.—Yes. Basil Blake—look on me, and recognize a villain who has done to death the most loving wife that ever gave her heart to man. She died, that I might live; that I might be free from what she supposed was an incumbrance to me in my poverty. Ah, now—how well I understand that look which she gave me when first I communicated to her my fatal plan! Ah, great Heaven! Why did death reject me? What business have I in life?”

“The moment that I was able, I fled from Paris. I considered myself dead. I resolved

to begin a new life. You wonder that I didn't kill myself. I wonder too. At any rate, I considered myself a dead man. My name is not Hellmuth; what it used to be is no matter. It is Hellmuth now. Once only did I make use of the old name. It was in a letter which I wrote to the guardian. I found myself cherishing a faint hope that she might have escaped. I wrote to him, telling him briefly what had happened. After some delay, I received an answer. It destroyed my last hope. It informed me that my wife was dead; that she was found dead in the room on that morning; and that she was buried in Père-la-Chaise, through the pity of some one of the creditors who had relented at the sight of the ruin which had resulted from my vicious and guilty extravagance.

“After this, I became a wanderer. I worked with my own hands to get my living. I have been over all the world as a common seaman. I have worked as a laborer. About two years ago I came back to Paris, feeling an uncontrollable desire to visit her grave. It is at Père-la-Chaise. I go there often. It is a simple slab bearing her name, with the date of her death.

“And now,” continued Kane Hellmuth, “you will be able to understand the full significance of what I spoke of first. That black nun is the form and face of her who is buried in Père-la-Chaise. The expression on her face is precisely the same which I saw there when I first told her of my purpose. All that mute reproach; and even all that deep, self-sacrificing love—all is there. It is the same face always. Remember this, and bear this in mind, while I tell you what happened last night at Père-la-Chaise.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### DEAD OR ALIVE?

KANE HELLMUTH gulped down another glass of raw cognac.

“She is buried in Père-la-Chaise,” said he, “They put a stone over her grave, and I found it without trouble. I went there the moment I reached Paris. No one knew me. All danger for me was over, if I had cared for danger. I came only to weep at her tomb. It's the fashion on the Continent for

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re-la-Chaise," said ver her grave, and I went there the No one knew me. er, if I had cared y to weep at her the Continent for

men to weep, you know." He frowned, and tugged at his tawny, ragged mustache.

"Yes," he added, "and a very convenient fashion it is, too, sometimes—or else—a poor devil's heart might break."

Something like a groan burst from him, and he dashed his brown hand across his eyes.

"It's two years," he continued, "since I came here. You know how I live. I happened, in my wanderings, to be at the Cape of Good Hope the time the diamond excitement broke out. I had nothing else to do, so I went to the diggings, and had moderate luck. That's one reason why I came here. I put my gains in government stock, and got enough francs to keep me in my plain-fashion. All I want is to be within walking-distance of Père-la-Chaise—not too near, you know; enough to take up a good day, if necessary, in going, staying there, and coming back. Somehow, during these late years, my religious views have changed. I no longer hold to the gospel of the French novelists. I do not now believe that I should have gone straight to heaven from my lodging-house; and I comfort myself by praying for the soul of my lost Clara. The Church stands between the living and the dead. I feel a strange consolation in the thought that I am not cut off utterly from her whom I have lost. The Church sends up her prayers, and I blend mine with them. By her grave I feel nearest to her, and therefore I go to Père-la-Chaise. Therefore, also, I have adopted the mode of life which you see me following—acting as a sort of lay-brother, going about among the poor devils of fallen humanity whom I see around me, and trying to do something to give them an occasional lift. I would have scorned the African diamonds if they could have given me no more than a living for myself. I took them for Clara's sake; and, since she made me live, and sent me back to life when she went to death, so I study to make my life such that I may meet her hereafter with—with less shame than I might otherwise feel.

"But now, my boy, listen," continued Hellmuth, rousing himself and drawing a long breath. "Listen. You know Père-la-Chaise—that is, in a general way. You know the tombs there. The grave is about fifty paces away from the gate, in one of the more obscure parts of the cemetery. Close by it is

a cenotaph, with an iron door, and inside this cenotaph is an altar, as is often the case. On this altar the friends of the dead place *immortelles*, and frequently on Sundays or holidays, or on the anniversary of deaths, they place lighted candles there. Yesterday was one of these occasions, and the candles were burning after dark, throwing out a faint gleam through the iron bars of the door.

"No one is allowed there after dark; but, when one is inside, he may stay, for no one can see him easily among so many monuments. I went there toward evening, and stayed after dark. I had frequently done so before. Amid the darkness, it seemed as though I was drawn nearer to her. By her grave it seemed as though I could hold communion with her departed spirit. At least it was consoling to be so near even to her mortal remains.

"So I remained there, and the gates were shut, and I was alone in that city of the dead. The shadowy monuments rose all around on every side, and looked like a ghostly population. I was by her grave. From the cenotaph nearest me the lights shone forth, and illuminated a small space in the gloom. As I sat there I thought over all the events of the mournful past. I had been praying for the repose of her soul, but what was the meaning of that visitation which I had had three times? Was her spirit not yet at rest after so many years? Was there any thing which she wanted of me? What was there that I could do?

"Then I knelt over her grave and prayed.

"How long I was kneeling I do not know. I haven't the slightest idea, nor is there any way of finding out. There are occasions in a man's life when human measurements are useless, and duration extends itself independently of the limitations of time. It might have been long, or it might have been short; I do not know. I only know this, that, suddenly, in the midst of the deep abstraction of prayer and meditation, I became aware of a presence near. There had been no noise that I was conscious of; there was no foot-fall, no breathing even—nothing. How the knowledge came I do not know, but it did come, and I was thus aware of some object, some shape, some being, in my neighborhood.

"I had been meditating profoundly and praying earnestly. I had striven to abstract myself from all thoughts of the external



world, but thus it was that, through all the solemn gloom of that self-abstracted, and that elevation of soul above the world, there came to me this suggestion of a living thing near me.

"I roused myself, and raised my head, and looked forth into the scene before me.

"The first glance was enough. There was something, as I had been aware, and what it was I saw instantaneously. The feeble light of the wax-candles came glimmering out through the bars of the iron gate of the cenotaph into the gloom, and fell upon an object there, which was standing full before me, not more than half a dozen yards away—standing there erect, a human shape, with black robes—the robes of a nun. The light shone on its face, and the face was full before me, and it was on this face that my eyes rested as I raised them. The eyes of this being also were fixed upon mine, and chained them, and held them with a terrible fascination.

"All that I have said about that face was there now, but to me the whole expression seemed intensified. It was, the old, well-remembered look—the look of her face as it had appeared when I saw it last in life. There was that mingled grief and amazement, that sharp anguish and dark despair. There, too, was still that melancholy reproach, which, on that morning, had conveyed the protest of an innocent young life against the destruction which I had brought upon it; but now the reproach seemed deeper and involved a profounder condemnation. The eyes that obtained mine in their gaze seemed to have more of that burning intensity which I had noticed before, and glowed with an awful lustre as they met mine.

"I knelt and looked, but I did not breathe. I could not move. I did not have any impulse to fly away or to spring toward it. It seems to me now as if I was for a short time in a state of perfect mental torpor. My state of mind was not one of horror. It was imbecility, or, rather, vacuity. I thought of nothing. I desired nothing. I feared nothing. I was simply conscious of the presence of this being who thus confronted me.

"At length the figure moved its hands, and then seemed to shrink away into nothingness. The darkness swallowed it up. As I looked, I perceived that it was no longer

there. It was gone. It had vanished. I was alone.

"I remained there for some time—I do not know how long—in the same position, and in the same state of mind. At length I gradually regained the use of my faculties. I rose from my knees, and walked forward in the direction where the figure had vanished into the darkness. I found nothing whatever. I waited and walked about for some time longer, and then I went to the gate, roused the keeper, made some explanation of my presence there, and was let out. I then came home."

Such was Kane Hellmuth's story.

After he had ended it, he lighted his pipe and began smoking. Blake said nothing, but imitated his friend's example. The former seemed lost in his own meditations, and the latter found it very difficult to make any comments.

"Well," said Kane Hellmuth, at length, "I should like to hear what you have to say. Say it out. Don't be afraid of offending any prejudices or prepossessions of mine. You're a materialist. I am not. Let me hear what you, as a materialist, have to say."

"Well," said Blake, slowly, "in the first place, I have merely to say this, that I cannot for a moment share your belief. For every thing that I have ever seen in all my life, or learned, or studied, shows this to me with perfect clearness, that the dead can never—never come back to life—never—never."

"You are begging the question," said Kane Hellmuth, quietly.

"Any theory is acceptable rather than yours," said Blake. "The dead are the dead. They come back no more. No fond longings, no prayers, can bring them back. Superstition may call up visions, but these are only projections of the brain, the images wrought by the vivid fancy. With these, science and reason can do nothing. No proof has ever been adduced—no proof can ever be adduced—that the dead can reappear, or can have any existence, that we can comprehend."

"Very well—we differ," said Kane Hellmuth, "and now let me hear what you propose as a theory of your own."

"I cannot, on the instant, propose a theory which will satisfy every contingency in your case," said Blake. "You yourself say that you have already tried to account for this

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"Standing there erect, a human shape, with black robes—the robes of a nun."—Page 46.

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apparition on all ordinary scientific or practical grounds, and are forced back to your theory of the supernatural. Now, what I have to say is simply of a general character."

"Well?"

"Well, in the first place, we will dismiss altogether the idea of hallucination, since you reject it. You feel confident in your own perfect sanity and robust nerves. There remains, therefore, one of two alternatives—one is this: This one whom you have seen is a living person who, for some reason, is playing a part, and following you. What the reason may be I can, of course, have no idea."

"In answer to that," said Hellmuth, "I can only say that no one can have any motive for doing so."

"Why not? You have already told me that you live under an assumed name. Think over your old relations, and your old position. Has any one any claim on you? Is there any one whose interest it would be to find you in life or in death? Do your relatives know that you are alive, or dead? Is there any inheritance coming to you which cannot go to your heirs till your death is proved?"

"By Heaven!" cried Kane Hellmuth, "what thoughts are these which you are suggesting to me? What do you mean by this, Basil Blake?"

"Simply this," said Blake; "an estate may wait for its heir. The heir may be missing. Until his death is proved, the next of kin cannot inherit. Is there any inheritance which may fall to you? Are there any others next of kin to you? If this is so, it may be a matter of infinite importance to some people to get at your secret, so as, in the one case, if they are friends, to give you your rights; or, in the other case, if they are enemies, to put you out of the way."

Kane Hellmuth frowned darkly, and sat in thought for a long time; and Blake saw plainly that this suggestion had produced, from some cause or other, a most profound effect.

"Blake," said Hellmuth, at length, "when I said that I was a dead man, I had reference to this very thing chiefly. I meant that I am dead to all my former rights and privileges; that, since that day, I have turned my back on my past, and no temptation, however great, shall be strong enough to entice me back. I feel that, since Clara gave me life, I shall hold it from her, as hers, and not my

own. This resolution I have kept thus far. But, as to what you suggest, you have hit the mark fair. I have an inheritance—a great one—an inheritance to gain which many men would stick at no crime whatever. A few years ago my elder brother died. All his estate is mine. He never married. I am the next heir. They are looking for me. I saw the notice of his death in the papers three years ago. I have seen advertisements for information about myself. Large rewards have been offered. . . . Yes," continued Kane Hellmuth, bitterly, after a pause, "the wealth which my elder brother valued so highly is all mine now. Once I could not get any sum to save myself from a terrible fate; now I can have it all by merely saying the word. But, now, why should I say the word? What is that estate to me? What do I care for money? Why should I go back to my old home? Can I bring back my old nature? No. I cast it from me. I refuse it. I am dead."

"Well," said Blake, "you are the best judge about your own affairs, and we are now merely considering the probable cause of this apparition. One part of my suggestion is justified by the fact which you state. One thing now remains to be asked—who is the next heir?"

"The next heir," said Kane Hellmuth, "is my younger brother. There were three of us. He comes in as heir if I am dead."

"He must be anxious to find out," said Blake, "or to prove it if it is so."

"Of course, that is human nature. He was a boy when I saw him last—an average boy, neither better nor worse than his fellows—but, with such a prize before him, I can easily understand that he would be just as well pleased if he could prove that I am dead."

"It is a painful subject," said Blake, "and we had better not discuss it. I merely meant to show that there were sufficient reasons for some one to follow you—either to find out your secret, or for some other purpose."

"Yes," said Kane Hellmuth; "but, allowing that, how can this marvellous resemblance to my lost darling be accounted for? That, of itself, is enough to put your suggestion out of court."

"Advantage may have been taken of that tragedy in your life. Some one may have been found who bears a sufficiently close re-

semblance to her to pass off as her at a distance."

"Impossible!" said Kane Hellmuth; "you forget that this one is in a strange garb; you forget that casual meetings they have been; above all, you forget that this face is identical with that of my lost wife—not in feature only, but in expression—and an expression of a very peculiar nature. For the look that she gives me is not one that can be caught up by some impostor. That is inconceivable. For it is the last look of my dying wife—dying under such circumstances—a look which for years has haunted me, and this is the look which I now see in this presence which has appeared before me. No. The theory of hallucination is preferable to this last one. I will allow that my brother may be anxious to prove my death; I will even concede that he may have emissaries in search of me; but I maintain that this being of whom I speak cannot possibly have any connection with that."

"Very well," said Blake, after a pause; "we will let this pass. I said there were two alternatives. This is one. There is yet another. It is this—do not start when I suggest it; you told me to be frank; I speak it with all respect and sympathy for you and for her—Kane Hellmuth, after all, *your wife may yet be alive!*"

At these words Kane Hellmuth started to his feet, and regarded Blake with an awful face.

"She is dead!" he said, in a harsh voice.

"Who says so? Who has seen it?"

"Did I not get that letter from her guardian?"

"You did—but what of that? He said that some others said so; it is third-hand information. Did you ever go back to that house to ask?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"When I came back."

"What! two years ago? eight years after it occurred! Why, by that time the people had forgotten it all, or else they had gone away."

Kane Hellmuth stared at Blake.

"You are right," he said, hesitatingly; "they had gone; I have never been able to find them."

"Mind now," said Blake, "I am only arguing against your theory of the supernatu-

ral. I am showing you how this may be rationally accounted for on other grounds; and I say this, that you have not yet had reason to feel certain that she died. If you escaped, why should not *she*? How do you know that she gave you a weaker draught, and took a fatal one herself? That is only a theory of yours; you have no proof. How do you know that the drug was strong enough? It may have lost its virtue; it may have been badly made up; she, in pouring it out, may have made a mistake. There are a dozen ways of accounting for it other than the way you have fancied. No; she has lived; she has become a nun, thinking that you were dead. You have come across her own self, by chance, on various occasions. Your intense excitement has thrown around her various semi-supernatural adjuncts which have imposed upon your reason. Go and accost her when you see her next. Speak to her. Do not allow yourself to sink into a stupor."

To all this Kane Hellmuth listened with a frown. Gradually, however, the frown passed. The old look came back. He resumed his seat.

"Well," said he, calmly, as Blake ceased, "it is quite right for you to say this. I have thought of all that, however, though I must say it comes with fresh force from another. Still there is no conceivable reason why any human beings should take the trouble to get up such an elaborate piece of deceit. It was no one's interest to do so. No one could gain anything by it. The people who laid her dear remains in the grave had no motive for acting a farce. The guardian had no motive for keeping it up. Who could have been benefited, or what end could have been gained? There is her grave, and there is the stone with her name. How can it be accounted for if she is not dead?"

"If I were to suggest all that is in my mind to say," remarked Blake, "you would call me visionary. I should think, however, that, until you know more than you seem to have learned—more than even she herself seemed to know about her antecedents, about her father, and her guardian, and the nature of that calamity which so strangely deprived her of all her friends—until then you have no right to say that there was no motive for imposing upon you and the world a false account of her death. But this is a thing which I do not care to speak of. One thing only I

should like—her name."

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should like to ask—if you have no objections—her name, her maiden name.”

“Clara Mordaunt,” said Kane Hellmuth, in a low voice.

Blake started.

“Mordaunt!” he repeated.

The name was a familiar one, associated with the happiest hours of his life, with the presence of Inez; for, wherever Inez Wyverne was, there too was her friend, Bessie Mordaunt.

Kane Hellmuth, however, was looking away, and did not notice the start which Blake gave.

“I do not like this guardian,” said he, after a pause. “You should see that man.”

“So I intended to,” said Kane Hellmuth, “but unfortunately it is too late—he is dead.”

“Dead? Ah! that is bad. Did he die very long ago?”

“Oh, no; only about a week ago. I saw it in the papers.”

“Ah!”

“Yes; he died in Switzerland somewhere—Villeneuve, I think—yes, it was Villeneuve. The name is so peculiar a one that it caught my eye at once. I saw it in *Galignani*, a day or two ago. I am old enough now always to look at the deaths and marriages, the first thing.”

Blake did not hear more than half of this. He heard only the first words. As he heard them, his heart throbbed wildly, and a feeling of indefinable terror came over him. Died at Villeneuve!—the guardian!—the guardian of a girl named Mordaunt! He had suspected evil on the part of this guardian; he had given utterance to those suspicions. All the wild words of the dying man came back fresher than ever to his memory—all the grief of Inez, and all the horrors of that final death. His face grew ghastly white. He clung to the arm of the sofa for support.

“What was his name?” he gasped.

“His name?” said Kane Hellmuth. “What? the guardian? It’s a very odd name. It’s—Hennigar Wyverne!”

“Great Heaven!” exclaimed Blake, with so strange a cry that Kane Hellmuth started and looked at him in amazement.

## CHAPTER XII.

DR. BLAKE'S STRANGE STORY.

The amazement of Kane Hellmuth at the sight of Blake’s face was unbounded. Thus far he had been the prey to excitement, and Blake had been the sympathizing friend and spectator. The tables were now turned. The emotion had passed to Blake; the rôle of sympathizing spectator to Kane Hellmuth. As for Blake, there was every reason, as is evident, why he should be overwhelmed by surprise and agitation. What his feelings were toward Inez have been sufficiently explained; what his feelings were toward Hennigar Wyverne may be conjectured. Mention has already been made of the dying man’s declaration—that Blake was his own son, and of Blake’s perplexity at such an announcement. He now found that this man who was standing in so peculiar a relation toward himself was identical with the very man whose connection with Kane Hellmuth he had found so suspicious; and against whom he had just been trying to lead up the suspicions of his friend. Would he still maintain those suspicions? Would he now carry out to its ultimate consequences that train of thought which was on his mind just before Kane Hellmuth had mentioned the name of Hennigar Wyverne?

The exclamation of Blake was followed by a long silence and a profound meditation, in which he was evidently in a state of great embarrassment and perplexity.

“Well,” said he, at length, “this conversation has certainly taken a turn which is most extraordinary and most unexpected. I will not conceal from you that I feel completely upset, and that the mention of this guardian’s name puts me in a most astonishing position with regard to this affair of yours. I have been brought of late into very close connection with this man, and there is a very mysterious prospect of a still closer connection being discovered. I have not mentioned any thing of the events with which I have been connected during the past few weeks, but there is something in my affairs which seems to run very wonderfully into your own. There is something also in them so puzzling, so confounding, that I am unable to grapple with it altogether. Perhaps you can help me. Perhaps we can help

one another. Perhaps my affairs can throw some light on yours, or yours may throw light on mine."

"Go ahead by all means, old fellow," said Kane Hellmuth; "at any rate, it will divert my thoughts, and Lord knows I want something to divert them just now, or else I shall go mad."

"Very well," said Blake. "My story begins from the time that I left here six weeks ago. I was worn out by overwork. I had an undertaking of immense importance before me, before entering upon which it was absolutely necessary for me to recruit my strength. A change of air to the sea-side was the most important thing for me, and, accordingly, I went to St. Malo."

"On my arrival here I found an English party, who at once excited my deepest interest. There was an elderly gentleman in feeble health and two young ladies, one of whom was his daughter and the other was his daughter's friend, and perhaps relative. She seemed to look upon the gentleman as in some way her guardian; but perhaps that is my fancy. Now you will begin to understand some of the significance of my story when I tell you that the name of this elderly gentleman was Hennigar Wyverne."

"Hennigar Wyverne!" repeated Kane Hellmuth. "Ah, is that so? Why, then, you must have been with him when he died, if you were in Switzerland—that is, if you got acquainted with him, which I presume you did."

"I did," said Blake. "I will come to that presently. I was saying that there were two ladies—one Miss Wyverne, the other—the one whom I may call the ward—Miss Mordaunt."

Kane Hellmuth started in strongest agitation.

"Miss Mordaunt!" he exclaimed, "a ward of Hennigar Wyverne. Great Heavens! man, what story is this that you have to tell me? Miss Mordaunt! What was her other name?"

"Bessie," said Blake.

"Bessie. Ah, that means Elizabeth—Elizabeth—H'm—Clara had a younger sister who died. Her death may have been a mistake. But, no; that sister's name was not Elizabeth. It was some foreign name—unusual. I don't remember it at all. A similarity of name, probably a relation. Wyverne seems to have had a strong interest in the Mordaunt family.

But what did this Miss Mordaunt look like?"

"Very pretty, about seventeen, a brilliant blonde, witty, frolicsome, absurd—in fact, more like a sportive child than a young lady; the most utter butterfly I ever saw."

"No resemblance there," said Kane Hellmuth, thoughtfully—"no resemblance whatever. She was a brunette—grave and earnest."

"That is what Miss Wyverne is," said Blake.

"Well, go on," said Kane Hellmuth, anxious to hear more of Blake's story.

"I was saying," resumed Blake, "that this party excited in me the strongest interest. Miss Wyverne appeared to me the most beautiful being that I ever saw; and I frankly confess that I fell in love with her at once. This will account for the persistency with which I watched the party. I had no difficulty in doing so, for they spent most of the time in the open air, and Miss Wyverne was always with her father."

"Now, you may take for granted my love for Miss Wyverne. I make no secret of that; and I mention it so that you may understand other things."

"I soon saw, to my surprise, that the elderly gentleman took an evident interest in my humble self. At first I thought that he had heard something of my medical skill; but I soon dismissed that thought as a piece of preposterous vanity. Unfortunately, whatever my medical skill may be, the world knows nothing at all about it; so that an invalid at St. Malo would have been the last person to attribute any such quality to me. After a time I began to see that this interest in me grew stronger, and its manifestation more open. As I met him rolling along in his perambulator, or walking feebly up and down near his lodgings, I always caught his eyes fixed upon my face, and they were fixed there with a certain intensity of gaze that was most remarkable. There was, beyond a doubt, something in my face which excited his attention, and he was studying it to find out for himself what it was."

"Well, I was wondering how I could get acquainted with him, and trying to devise some plan of bringing it about so as not to force myself upon him, but I could not hit upon any way that was satisfactory. My passion for Miss Wyverne gave me my chief impulse to this; but at the same time I

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wish you to understand that I felt an extraordinary interest in the old man, so much so, indeed, that if Miss Wyverne had gone away, I should still have stayed there, so as to try to form an acquaintance with her father.

"Well, at length, this problem was solved for me. Mr. Wyverne himself made the advances—he sought my acquaintance. One day I was standing looking out at sea when he came walking along, accompanied by his daughter, and followed by his footman. He came up to me and raised his hat:

"Can you tell me," he asked, "what that steamer is?"

"He pointed to a large steamer passing along out at sea. I informed him to the best of my ability. He then began a conversation and turned it to the subject of the climate of St. Malo. He soon found out that I was a doctor. This brought forth a larger confidence on his part, and he began to tell me about his troubles and his motive in coming here. In fact, before an hour we seemed like old friends. He seated himself upon a bench by the road-side, fronting the sea. Miss Wyverne placed herself on one side, I on the other, and we all talked together as though we had known one another for a long time. More than this, he introduced me formally to Miss Wyverne, and made me accompany him to his hotel.

"There is no need for me to go into details. Mr. Wyverne's regard for me was evident, and it was so marked, so strong, and so unvarying, that it afforded perpetual surprise to me. He engaged me regularly as his medical adviser, at a salary that to me was enormous; he delighted to have me with him; he encouraged my attentions to Miss Wyverne; and, as she was always with her father, and as he wanted me to be always with him, the consequence was, that she and I were together far more than is commonly the case with two young people even when they are in tender relations with one another.

"Mr. Wyverne was troubled with disease of the heart. He had been ordered to this place by his London physician, with the injunction to refrain from all excitement. That injunction I enforced upon him with the utmost emphasis. St. Malo afforded many advantages, and we remained there four weeks after I had made his acquaintance. During that time I noticed his unflinching regard; but,

more than this, I was often struck by the peculiar expression which would come to his face when his eyes rested on me—an expression which had in it a meaning that absolutely confounded me. It was a parental look, but more yearning—more maternal, in fact, than paternal; yet why he, a perfect stranger, should regard me, another stranger, with such an expression, was utterly and completely out of my power to imagine.

"My mother lives in England. I correspond with her regularly. Of course, I know her all the particulars of my acquaintance with these new friends. I was already sufficiently confounded, but the letter which I received from my mother in answer to mine increased my bewilderment. It was the most extraordinary epistle that ever was written.

My first impression was that the poor, dear lady had suddenly gone mad. My ultimate conclusion was, that there was about this Mr. Wyverne an unfathomable mystery, and, what was more, that my mother held the key to it. She remarked that Providence had brought us two together—had brought me and Mr. Wyverne face to face. She said that she was full of amazement and gratitude at the wonder that had come to pass; that at first she had felt like warning me against him, and advising me to leave him; but that she had prayed fervently over it, and her mind had been changed. She concluded by urging me to devote myself to Mr. Wyverne; to follow him wherever he went; to give him my love, and try to win his; to watch over him, and try to prolong his life.

"Such was the unaccountable letter with which my mother made my confusion worse confounded.

"At length I became satisfied that the sea-air was not so good as it might be. It was what is commonly called 'too strong' for one in Mr. Wyverne's peculiar delicacy of health and feebleness of constitution. I recommended Villeneuve, which place is well known to me. Mr. Wyverne at once decided to go. He did not seem to have any will but mine. His reliance upon me had in it something exceedingly touching, and there was that in his look and in his tone in addressing me which was full of a profound pathos. We travelled by easy stages, and arrived there without any accident."

After this Blake proceeded to recount the events which have already been narrated.



The letter which had prostrated Mr. Wyverne he had never seen. It had been picked up by Beasia, and handed to Miss Wyverne.

The points upon which Blake laid emphasis may be summed up briefly in the following way:

*First.*—That Mr. Wyverne exhibited a regard for him which was unmistakable and extraordinary.

*Secondly.*—That Mr. Wyverne's expression, when looking at him, had in it something most striking, and might be called paternal.

*Thirdly.*—That his mother's letter pointed at some knowledge on her part which made it desirable for him to continue his connection with Mr. Wyverne, and also led to the suspicion that she herself might have been acquainted with Mr. Wyverne in some way in past years.

*Fourthly.*—Coming upon all these, and gaining new meaning from these things, while it gave new emphasis to them, was the death-bed declaration of Mr. Wyverne, in which he claimed Basil Blake as his own son. At this same time he said that Miss Wyverne was not his daughter. Moreover, he wished Basil Blake to marry her.

*Fifthly.*—Wyverne's declaration was accompanied with remorseful allusions to two persons. One of these was Blake's mother. The other was Miss Wyverne's father. In his manner of allusion to these two there were manifest the signs of conscious guilt of some sort at their expense.

*Sixthly.*—Wyverne had hastily sent for a priest. He had not seemed to be so near death as to be unable to receive holy communion; but the result had been most unexpected. The moment that his eyes had caught sight of the priest he seemed horror-stricken. To Blake that death seemed caused by sheer terror. About the priest he had discovered nothing. He did not know his name. The question yet remained whether his fear was owing to the priest, or to some resemblance which he had fancied in the priest to some other person.

Finally, after making all due allowance for every thing, there arose the question which of two alternatives to choose. One of these was the theory that he was delirious all through his last illness. In this case these events must all go for nothing. The other was, that he was conscious and perfectly rea-

sonable. In this case the events of that dying bed towered up to supreme importance. They interwove themselves with other things. They joined themselves to the incidents which had gone before them, and gave to all these a tremendous significance. Beyond all these preliminary incidents these last events rose up to that appalling climax of death, and gave to Blake a new character, a new name, a new place in the world, and a new duty in life.

How should this be decided?

The two friends talked over this subject from every point of view.

"It cannot be decided now," said Kane Hellmuth. "You must make further inquiries. Before you can pretend to decide a question of such momentous importance to yourself, there are two persons whom it is absolutely necessary for you to see. One of these is that priest, if you can possibly trace him. The other is, of course, your mother."

"I will write to her," said Blake.

"Have you not yet done so?" asked Kane Hellmuth, in surprise.

"No."

"Then, do not write. Go in person. See her. Tell her all. See how she looks."

Blake hesitated.

"You do not understand," said he. "It is not a subject that a son can talk over with his mother. In fact, I feel a reluctance to mention it even in writing. She has made a profound secret of it, and—in short—I do not know what—painful memories—I may awaken—or what anguish I may cause her—by bringing such a subject before her."

Kane Hellmuth looked solemnly at Blake for a few moments, and then asked:

"Are you sure that she is your mother?"

"My mother!" exclaimed Blake. "What! she—she not my mother! What! confident of that? She! No other thought is possible. She? Oh, yes; there is no doubt about that. All the memories of my life centre about her, and all the happiness of my life has come from her. From my earliest thoughts, I have the recollection of her sweet face, her yearning love, her tender words, and more tender looks and caresses. Whatever may be the mystery of my life, there is none about her. She never could so play the mother with another woman's child."

"Well," said Kane Hellmuth, "you have

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means of judging which are superior to argument. A mother's love cannot easily be counterfeited. The things you mention are the surest proof that she is your mother; and so, if she is, I can understand your hesitation, of course. The priest, also, will be difficult, if not impossible, to find, for the reason that you have not the slightest clew to him. Should you recognize his face if you were to see it again?"

"I should," said Blake, "instantly. It is so remarkable a face that I could not possibly mistake it. I could pick out that priest from among any crowd, and swear to his identity."

"That is well," said Kane Hellmuth, thoughtfully. "There is one other person, by-the-way, who ought to be seen. This Miss Mordaunt. Surely, she knows something. Perhaps she could tell about—Clara."

"There would be no necessity for me to see her," said Blake. "She can know nothing of my parentage. You are the one who ought to see her. If, as is possible, she is the younger sister of your Clara, she can give you some information as to the fate of her father, and possibly may tell you something about that point which we were discussing."

"I have nothing to ask about," said Kane Hellmuth, calmly. "It was a theory of *yours*. My belief is fixed. You, in order to suggest a commonplace explanation to this apparition, and to avoid the supernatural, in which I believe, suggested that this was herself—in life—and, consequently, that she—did not—in short, that she escaped, as I did. I maintained that such an escape was inconceivable in the face of her guardian's testimony and the actual grave. You then proceeded to show that the guardian's conduct was suspicious, that he might have had reasons for putting her out of the way, and concealing the fact by a pretended death and burial. It was *your* theory; it was not *mine*. What do you now say? You yourself have seen this guardian; he was Hennigar Wyverne. You knew him. Answer now. Was Hennigar Wyverne the kind of man who would have been capable of an infernal conspiracy, such as you suggested?"

At this question Blake turned pale.

"When you speak of Hennigar Wyverne," said he, "you speak of one for whom I had already formed a strong regard before that

moment when he claimed me as his son. His evident regard for me inspired equal regard in my breast. His daughter, too, made my regard for the father still stronger. He seemed to me to be an honorable gentleman. Since you ask me that question now, I can only say to you, Kane Hellmuth—and I say it solemnly—I do *not* believe that Hennigar Wyverne was capable of such an act as the one that I have suggested. Besides, the motive which I have imputed to him was false. Here is another Miss Mordaunt in his family, treated like a daughter, just as your Clara would have been, no doubt, had she lived. Whether there is any inheritance or not, I do not know; but it could have had nothing to do with the dealings between guardian and ward of which you spoke. I believe that Hennigar Wyverne's letters to you contained the truth. Harsh he may have been, but I do not believe that he was capable of any act of crime. I take it all back; and I can only say that the mystery of your apparition remains at this moment unaccountable."

A long silence followed. Such a sudden change in Blake's sentiments surprised Hellmuth so much that he had nothing to say; and this testimony to the character of Clara's guardian at once destroyed all suspicion that he might have begun to have of any deception on his part. These last words of Blake had also destroyed the very argument which he had framed but a short time before.

"Well," said Kane Hellmuth at last, "dropping my own affairs for the present, I should like to ask you what you intend to do now. Do you intend to make any examination about the—ah—the truth of the—this strange statement of Wyverne's?"

To this Blake did not return any immediate answer, but sat in deep thought for a long time.

"You see," said he, at length, "I am prevented from taking any immediate action by various important circumstances. In the first place, the only persons who can give me any direct information, or rather whom I can ask for such information, are cut off from me. The priest has passed away, and has left no sign. There is no conceivable way of tracing him. I have already done every thing that man could do to find out something about him, but have been utterly unsuccessful. The other person is my mother; but how can a son mention to a mother such a subject as

which Hennig Wyverne's declaration forces upon me? No. Rather than mention it to her I would allow it to remain an eternal mystery, and live in ignorance always. But, in addition to this, there is another thing that ties my hands," continued Blake, in a more earnest tone. "This affair does not concern me only. It concerns another, and one, too, who, as you may have gathered from what I told you, is very—dear to me—yes—dearer to me—than—than life. It is true, no words of love have ever passed between me and Miss Wyverne—for certain reasons which are easily explained—but yet her woman's instinct must have revealed to her long ago the nature of my feelings toward her. Her father encouraged my attentions, as I told you; but I was held back by a consideration which would have weight with every high-spirited man. It is this: I am poor. She is rich; she is an heiress. I could not bring myself, as I was and am, to do any thing which would make me liable to be stigmatized by the world as a miserable fortune-hunter. No; not one word of love would I ever speak to her till I had in some way lessened the immense distance between us, and had at least raised myself above the reach of sneers. I did not wish to get rich, nor do I hope to do so; my aim was, and is, in some way to gain reputation among men. At present I am utterly obscure; but, if I could only gain some fame for myself, I should then be able to come to her on more equal terms, and ask her to be mine. I know very well how hard it is for a man to push himself above the level of his fellows, but I mean to try. The only trouble is, it will take too much time. But never mind about this.

"I am speaking about what I intend to do in this matter of Mr. Wyverne's strange declaration. Now, that declaration, as you see yourself, was twofold. He claimed me as his son. Very well. But then he also disowned her as his daughter. He took me to his heart, and addressed me in the language of a father; but he also thrust her away, and spoke to her as one who was of no value to him, and of no interest in his eyes. And that, too, on his death-bed! With his dying voice he informed her that she was not his daughter—worse, he declared to her that she was the daughter of his worst enemy—an enemy, too, who does not seem to have injured him, and upon whom he had inflicted

injuries so terrible that they had caused not only the most poignant remorse, but also excited in his mind the sharpest terrors of some strange vengeance that his enemy meant to inflict.

"Now, you see, if I aim to prove the truth of this statement of Mr. Wyverne's, or even examine into it, what is it that I must do? I must enter upon a course of inquiries, the result of which will affect not only myself but her. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that I should at last succeed in finding out and in proving that Mr. Wyverne's words were literally true, and not the ravings of delirium, I should then, of course, discover, first of all, that I am his son, though how in the world that could be I do not pretend just now even to conjecture. But that would not be all. That same discovery would show that she is not his daughter. Who, then, is she? She is some unknown person. Who is her father, if Mr. Wyverne is not? Where did she come from? What dishonor—what shame—yes, what infamy would such a discovery heap upon her innocent head! Good Heavens! could I have the heart; would it even be possible for me to cause such misery, such anguish, to any one in her position, even if she were a total stranger? I hope not; I am sure not. But she is not a stranger. She is the one whom I love better than life, and I say now honestly and calmly that I would rather die than do any thing that would interfere with her happiness. She! why I am so situated now that my only hope is to be able at some time to gain her for myself; and how could I now do such a thing as this? No; my hands are tied. I cannot move a step in this matter. I am only afraid that she may do something to satisfy her own mind; and, if there should happen to be any thing in this; if she should discover that she is really not the daughter of Mr. Wyverne, but of some other man; and that I am the one who is to supplant her and usurp her place—why, good Heavens! what a gulf would that discovery place between her and me! And she is far enough removed from me already, Heaven knows! Besides, there is the grief, the suffering, that such a discovery would cause. She, poor girl, has already suffered enough from the mere suspicion of such a thing as this. How could I do any thing that might change that suspicion into conviction, and thus increase her troubles? Mr. Wy-

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Who is her father, Where did she come—what shame—yes, with a discovery heap! Good Heavens! could it even be possible misery, such an position, even if she hope not; I am sure danger. She is the than life, and I say that I would rather that would interfere me! why I am so hope is to be able or myself; and how ing as this? No; not move a step in afraid that she may her own mind; and, o be any thing in er that she is really Wyverne, but of I am the one who rrp her place—why, alf would that dis- and me! And she from me already, there is the grief, a discovery would as already suffered suspicion of such a I do any thing that on into conviction, oubles? Mr. Wy-

verne's unfortunate words have already resulted in changing her whole nature, in making her brood incessantly over this one mystery which has been suggested to her. Her former kindness and friendly feeling toward me have been changed into what is at the best mere indifference; and, if I have any hope at all now, it is that, if nothing more is done, these cares of hers may eventually pass away. So, you see, these are the things that tie my hands just now, and force me to inaction."

Blake had spoken earnestly and frankly, as though he were giving utterance without reserve to his inmost thoughts. Hellmuth listened in silence, and, when he had finished, made no observation whatever. Perhaps he thought Blake's conclusions unassailable, or perhaps, wrapped up in his own thoughts, he had not heard a word that his friend had been saying.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### MAKING INQUIRIES.

THE RESULT of the examination of the casket had served to complicate still further the difficulties by which Inez was surrounded, and to introduce among them new actors, most conspicuous among whom was Bessie. Hitherto, in her profound abstraction, Bessie had been quite lost sight of, and her only aim had been to hide from her, as much as possible, the troubles that had come upon herself. But now the revelation of the true name indicated by the initial "M.," at once seemed to bring Bessie into the circle of circumstances, and suggested her as a possible actor in the events which might be forthcoming. The name showed that Bessie might be connected with that same family to which Mr. Wyverne had said she herself belonged; her connection with Mr. Wyverne appeared to make it certain; and, if this were so, Bessie might be some relation to herself. What relation? This was impossible for her to say.

This discovery of the name of Mordaunt thus put Bessie at once in a different position. It seemed to Inez that all along, under the appearance of childish innocence and friendly sympathy, she had possessed the full knowledge of that secret which she had been trying so hard to keep from her. She now recalled the incident at Villeneuve with regard to the letter. Bessie had plucked it up.

She had read it. She knew all that was in it. Doubtless, she may have thought over the meaning of its contents as earnestly as she herself had done, and had superior means of information about its statements to help her to a conclusion.

To regard Bessie in so new and unusual a light was unpleasant to Inez. She had always thought of her as a frolicsome child; it did violence to her feelings to think of her as one who was as capable as herself of keeping her own counsel and preserving a secret. It seemed to her now to be of no use to maintain her own reserve any longer. In fact, it was impossible to do so, and, more than this, it was absolutely necessary for her to ask some questions of Bessie. She wished to find out who Bessie's relations really were, and to learn how much she really knew about this matter. She had understood that Bessie was an orphan child—the ward of Mr. Wyverne—who would in due time inherit a respectable fortune, but had never known anything more definite, partly because Bessie was reticent on the subject of her family, and partly because she herself felt a natural delicacy preventing her from asking questions of a private nature.

Thus, therefore, a full explanation, with Bessie was absolutely necessary. But Inez felt a strange repugnance to it. Bessie seemed now no longer the same, and the entire confidence she once had in her had been shaken during the past week. Still Inez was of a frank nature, and so she quelled her repugnance, and lost no time in seeing her friend.

Bessie met her more than half-way. As Inez entered her room to engage in the conversation which she proposed, Bessie's face brightened, and she ran toward her, flung her arms around her, and kissed her over and over again.

"Why, my own darling Inez!" she exclaimed, "is it possible? And so you won't mope any longer. You have been so sad, you know. You have quite broken my heart. I knew, of course, dear, that you could not help being sad, yet still it was very hard for me to see you so absent. And you never favored your poor little Bessie with one single look—no, not one! And now, dear, you must cheer up. I'll never, never, never let you mope any more."

Prattling in this way, with the utmost ex-

uberance of affection, Bessie clung to Inez, and drew her toward the sofa, where they sat down, Bessie with her arms fondly twined around her, with her fresh, smiling face close to that of Inez, and her clear blue eyes fixed lovingly upon those of her friend.

"You shall never mope agalo, Inez dear—no, never, never. You have others who love you. Do you think it is right to be so cruel to a loving heart like mine?"

By such gushing affection as this, by these fond caresses and loving reproofs, Inez felt at first completely overwhelmed, and, for a time, the faint suspicions that had entered her mind faded away. She returned Bessie's caresses, and they talked together, for a little while, in the old strain of perfect confidence and sisterly love. At last, however, the suspense in which she was, and the intense desire she felt to get at the bottom of this secret, brought her back to the purpose for which she had come.

"Bessie, dearest," said she, "you know what I have had to bear of late, and will make allowances for me, I am sure, if I appeared to be cold toward you. If I were to tell you all, you will wonder how I endured it at all. And I will tell you all some day when I feel able to speak calmly about it. But there is something now that I want to ask about, and the person I wish to ask is yourself."

"Me?" said Bessie, opening her eyes wide.

"I am in great trouble, dear," said Inez, "apart from the sorrow I feel about poor papa, and I want you to help me."

"Sorrow—what! more sorrow?" cried Bessie, in mournful accents. "Oh, my own poor, dear darling, unfortunate Inez, what can have happened? Oh, how sorry I am, and oh, how glad I shall be if I can do any thing for you!"

"It was something that poor papa said on his death-bed—the last words he spoke. He said them to me, and they trouble me awfully. I cannot bear to think of them, dear, and so I cannot tell you now, but I will soon. He could not have meant what he said. It must have been his delirium."

"So it was, surely," said Bessie, vehemently, in her slightly Irish way. "Never could he have said any thing at all—at all—that would hurt your feelings if it hadn't been for his delirium. They tell me he was

out of his mind entirely, poor dear! So don't think any thing more about it, but try to be your own self again, Inez jewel."

"I hope it was so, I'm sure," said Inez, sadly, "but I don't know, and I can't help my own feelings. Still, there is something that I want to ask from you. Part of my troubles arise out of something which poor papa said about some person whose name is Mordaunt."

As Inez said this she looked steadily at Bessie. Bessie returned her look calmly.

"Mordaunt!" she repeated, with a slight smile. "Sure that's my name. How very, very funny, Inez darling! Was it me he meant, jewel? I'm sure I don't see why you should worry about that?"

"Would you have any objection to tell me a little about your papa, Bessie dear? I want so much to know. If it is a painful subject, you need not answer, and I beg pardon for asking."

"Objection? Why, my poor, dear Inez, not the least in life. I'd be only too happy, darling, to do that same if I only could. But it's little or nothing I know about that same. Poor dear, darling papa died when I was very, very little, and I have only heard from others what I know about him, and that's little enough, so it is. Unfortunately, all that I know is told in a few words, dear. His name was Bernal Mordaunt, and he died when I was a bit of a child, not more than three years old. He was in some foreign country when he died, and I really do not know even the name of the place. But a child only one year old cannot be supposed to know much, can she, Inez dearest?"

The last part of this Inez had not heard. She had heard the name *Bernal Mordaunt*, and no more. She had heard Bessie quietly claim him as her father. After that, she heard nothing. Her heart throbbed wildly, and her mind was confused with a whirl of fancies that came to her.

"So your father's name was Bernal Mordaunt?" said she, at length, in a steady voice.

"Dear Inez! how very, very sad you look! Why, what possible interest can you take in poor papa?" said Bessie, in a sympathizing tone.

"Do you remember any thing about your mamma, Bessie?" asked Inez again, after a pause.

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"My darling mamma died before I was born," said Bessie, in a childish voice. "I never saw her in my life. I have heard that poor papa's grief for poor darling mamma was so violent that he ran away from the country, and died of a broken heart. But I never saw either of them. Sure and it's myself would be the happy girl if I had some recollection of a papa or mamma to look back upon; but I never, never had one, Inez darling. That is the reason why I never spoke about them to you before. It's so very, very sad, dear."

Again Bessie's words made the heart of Inez throb with strange vehemence. Every word seemed to assure her of that which she half dreaded to know. In this unknown Bernal Mordaunt, and in that beautiful lady that bore her own name, Inez, she saw those whom Mr. Wyverne's words made her own parents; in the two portraits of these children, she saw "Clara" and "Inez." She saw no "Bessie." What place was there for a "Bessie" in that little family group? Yet, Bessie's words seemed to indicate this. One thing alone made it seem impossible, and that was the statement that her mother had died at her birth, or, as she expressed it, "before she was born." Could she have been a younger child, whose portrait had never been taken, and never included among the others? But that was impossible. If she herself were the "Inez" of the portrait, then Bessie could not possibly belong to that family. Bessie was, in fact, several months older than herself, and there was no place for her. On the other hand, Bessie could not be the child of the portrait, for, apart from the difference in the names, which might be passed over, there was an insuperable difficulty in the faces. That child was a brunette. Bessie was a golden-haired blonde.

These thoughts passed through her mind while Bessie was speaking, and, as she ended, Inez asked her, in the same tone as before:

"Were there any others of you?"

"There were, surely," said Bessie, "as I've heard, though I never saw them. Two sisters older than me. I was the baby, and—oh, Inez dear, I'm so fond of babies. Are you not fond of them, Inez dearest?"

Bessie raised her large blue eyes to her friend's face as she said this, and looked at her with a loving smile.

"Sisters?" said Inez, without noticing her question—"sisters, and older than you? Why, I never knew that you had sisters."

"And no wonder," said Bessie. "It was a sad world for all of us; for my two sisters died when I was a child, and it's only the names of them that were left me. You will not wonder now, darling, that I have never chosen to make you my confidante about my family, when there is nothing but so very, very sad a story to tell. It's me that never could bear to speak of that name."

"What were their names?" asked Inez.

"Their names?" said Bessie, with a long sigh. "There were two, one several years older than the other. The eldest one was named Clara, and the youngest one had the same name as you have, Inez. And isn't that awfully funny, Inez dear? But I believe your dear mamma was some sort of a relation to my dear mamma, and that accounts, I suppose, for their both taking the same name for their children. But my sister Inez must have been about three years older than me. Sure it's a mournful subject, and I can't bear to think of it at all at all. Do you know, Inez darling, it's really very hard for you to talk about this? You really almost make me cry. And I hate crying so."

Saying this, Bessie turned her eyes on Inez, who saw that those calm, blue orbs were moist with tears.

"They all died—all," said Bessie, mournfully. "My sisters died while I was a child, and I never saw them. My dear grandpapa took charge of me, and I was brought up in Ireland, you know, till your poor dear papa sent for me, three years ago."

All this Inez heard with the same feelings of perplexity. If Bessie was right, then she saw that her own suspicions were utterly wrong; but, on the contrary, if she was right, then how could Bessie have ever grown up with such an unaccountable belief as this? The Inez of the portrait might not be herself, after all. What foundation had she for her suspicions but a sick man's delirious words? She was younger than Bessie, instead of being older. If Bessie was right, then she was engaged in a foolish task, and heaping up endless trouble for herself to no purpose whatever.

Still, Inez had, after all, so strong a belief that her suspicions were well founded, that she was unable to dismiss them as yet.

There were other things in addition to this about which she wished to ask Bessie.

"Bessie, dear," said she, "you remember that letter that you picked up in the hotel at Villeneuve and handed to me?"

"Yes, darling."

"You read it?"

At this Bessie's fair face flushed scarlet, and the bright and sunny smile that usually irradiated it was chased away by a frown, and a sudden flush swept over it. But this passed in a moment, and Bessie said:

"Well, really, Inez, darling, I hardly knew what was going on I was so terrified, and I wouldn't have dreamed of reading it. I would have had it happen, and I was so fond of your poor dear papa, that I read it without thinking that it was his letter. I would not have dreamed of reading it through, Inez dearest, but the writing was so familiar that I thought it was no harm. It was my own dear grandpapa's writing, and I thought it was something about me. Sure and anybody would have done that same, and never have given it a thought."

At this new piece of information, Inez started in fresh amazement.

"Your grandpapa!" she exclaimed.

"True for you, Inez dearest, my own darling grandpapa; and wouldn't you have read a letter written by your grandpapa if you had been so excited, and so frightened, and didn't know what you were doing? And, after all, there wasn't much in it at all, at all. Really, I could not make it out—not one single word, dear. Why your poor dear papa should feel shocked at such a letter is quite beyond me—quite. And, really, now that same I don't believe at all, and I don't think the letter had any thing to do with it."

"What is your grandpapa's name, Bessie?" asked Inez, anxiously.

"Kevin Magrath, sure," said Bessie.

"It is a very unusual name," said Inez;

"I never heard it before."

"Well, Inez, dear," said Bessie, "poor grandpapa is in—in trouble—most of the time—and I don't generally introduce his name into conversation. He's never done the least harm in the world, dear grandpapa—but the world is not on him."

"Do you know what he meant by those letters B. M.?"

"Surely not. How should I know that?"

"He said that B. M. is alive, and had come back."

"Did he? Really, the words had no meaning to me, Inez dearest, and I had forgotten all about them."

"Don't you think that B. M. means Bernal Mordant?"

"Bernal Mordant? Why, that's poor papa! Why, Inez dearest, what can you possibly mean? Sure and it's joking you are!"

"Didn't you think of that?"

"Never. All this moment," said Bessie, solemnly, "how should I? I read the letter without understanding one single word. It seemed to me like one of the puzzles one reads in the magazines. But what do you mean by all this about my poor papa, Inez dear? Really, do you know you make me feel quite timid? It's like raising the dead—so it is."

"And this Kevin Magrath is your grandpapa?" said Inez, in whom this information had created unbounded amazement.

"Yes," said Bessie, "he is my own dear grandpapa. He's awfully fond of me, too; but he has his trials. I'm afraid he's not very happy. He's so funny, too! I'm sure I sometimes wonder how he can ever have been my dear mamma's papa; but he is so, entirely."

"Your mamma's name was Magrath, then?"

"Of course, it must have been," said Bessie, simply. "But, Inez dearest, are you almost through? Do you know you really make me feel nervous? I never was cross-questioned so in my life, and, if you don't stop soon, you will positively make me feel quite cross with you. I never saw dear mamma, you know; and I hate to be reminded of my lone and lorn condition."

"Forgive me, Bessie dearest," said Inez, who saw that Bessie's patience was giving way. "I will only ask you one or two questions more, and only about that letter. Do you remember noticing a tone of alarm running through your grandpapa's letter?"

"Never a bit," said Bessie. "Was there any?"

"Yes," said Inez, with very much alarm. The writer's face brightened at discovering that B. M. was not dead.

"And you are the wonder? Sure, I myself would be frightened out of my senses at that same time. Didn't you, Inez dearest—wouldn't you yourself be frightened? Now, wouldn't you?"

## CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. KLEIN.

"Of course; but, then, this letter spoke of some danger that my papa would incur, if this 'B. M.' found him. He advised him to run away—to Russia, or America."

"Did he?" said Bessie, with a bright smile. "Haha! the omadhawn! Surra and it's just like him, for all the world! He's always running away and hiding himself. Sure and I can explain it all to you, Inez jewel. This B. M. is some creditor."

"Creditor!"

"Why not? Don't I know all about it? Isn't poor, dear grandpapa head over heels in debt, and always in hiding? Isn't he afraid to show his nose in England? Sure and he is. And so, you see, Inez dearest, that must be what he meant. Your poor, dear papa must have owed money to this B. M., and, of course, this B. M. is going, or was going, to dun him. Oh, if you had been brought up in Ireland, you'd understand all about that same. 'Deed and you would. So now, my poor Inez, don't worry yourself about nothing. Don't think and talk about things like these. I cannot imagine what in the wide world has come over you. You really shock me. And all about a stupid letter about some stupid money!"

With these words, Bessie wound her arms fondly about Inez; and, when Inez opened her mouth to ask some new question, she playfully put her hand against it, and declared she would not let her speak unless she promised not to say any thing more about this subject.

"You are talking stupid genealogy, Inez dear," said she, "and I positively will not listen to another word. I certainly shall be angry if you continue your cross-questions a moment longer. They make my head ache; and I think you are very, very unkind, and I wouldn't treat you so—so I wouldn't."

Inez found it impossible to resist Bessie, and, though there were many other things which she wished to ask, she was compelled to leave them, for the present at least.

But what she had learned from Bessie did not in the slightest degree quell her curiosity, or satisfy her doubts, or soothe her suspicions. Still there rang in her ears the dying words of Mr. Wyverne—"You are not my daughter!"—and still the images of the three portraits floated before her eyes.

THE conversation with Bessie left Inez in a great state of doubt and hesitation. As far as she could see, Bessie had been perfectly frank and unembarrassed in all her statements. Those statements were all as plain and simple as they possibly could be. And yet they were completely at variance with the suspicion which she had been cherishing ever since Mr. Wyverne's death.

Bessie's story was plain, simple, and intelligible. It was also very plausible, and, indeed, far more credible than the theory of her own parentage, which she had raised out of Mr. Wyverne's declaration.

It was this:

Bernal Mordaunt had a wife and two children—Clara and Inez. To these he was tenderly attached.

At the birth of the third child Mrs. Mordaunt had died.

This third child was Bessie, and she was three years younger than the "Inez" of the portrait.

But Bernal Mordaunt's grief at the death of his wife was so excessive that he could endure his home no longer. He left the country, and soon after died.

Mrs. Mordaunt's father now took these children under his care. He was this same Kevin Magrath who had written that ill-omened letter. Judging from Bessie's feelings toward him he must have been a kind-hearted man. He took care of these orphan children. Two of them died, and Bessie Mordaunt was left alone, the last of that family.

Now, in some way, her father seemed to be brought into connection with these Mordaunts.

How?

No doubt as guardian, executor, or agent. Perhaps, in his management of Bessie's property, he had done her some injustice.

And now, out of all this, quick as lightning there flashed across her mind what might be the true theory of all this trouble.

*Her father might have mistaken her for Bessie!*

No sooner had she thought of this than an immense feeling of relief came to her. It



seemed so very probable, so perfectly natural.

There had evidently been some sorrow on her father's soul, arising from the consciousness of wrong done. It was this that gave to him that remorse which he felt, and of which he spoke. To whom, then, had this wrong been done of which he spoke?

There was no doubt, both from the letter of Kevin Magrath and from Mr. Wyverne's own words, that this wrong had been done to Bernal Mordaunt. Bessie herself had indicated the nature of that wrong. Her grandfather, she said, was in debt, and perhaps Mr. Wyverne, too. It may have been that these two men had in some way mismanaged the estate of Bernal Mordaunt, and for this cause they dreaded him when he reappeared. Bessie, then, was the one whom her father had wronged. In his illness his delirious fancies brought all his crimes back. She, his own daughter, appeared to him like the injured Bessie, and thus it was that as she came near he had repelled her with those words, "*You are not my daughter!*" It was not herself, then, but Bessie, from whom he had shrunk; and it was not hers but Bessie's hand that he had placed in the hand of Dr. Blake. Perhaps all along he had misunderstood Dr. Blake's attentions; had thought they were given to Bessie; had encouraged them for this reason; and, finally, had at last sought to make some recompense to her by giving her to be the wife of an honorable man.

It was not without a sharp pang that this last thought came to Inez, but no sooner had Dr. Blake occurred to her mind than the thought and the pang passed, and away in an instant went the soundness and stability of Bessie's theory.

For with the thought of Dr. Blake came the recollection that Mr. Wyverne had claimed him as his son. How should she explain this?

Again, in Kevin Magrath's letter, he had laid particular stress, not on Bessie, but on Inez! How should she explain that?

Again, and above all, how should she explain those mysterious memories of her childhood; how account for her dim recognition of that mother's face in the portrait—that elder sister? To do so was impossible. Had they lived at her father's house when she was a child, and had she thus become acquainted with those haunting faces? It might be so,

yet to her they seemed more, far more than pleasant acquaintances. What was the secret cause of that deep emotion which she felt at the sight of them? Whence arose that profound yearning of her soul over that mother and that elder sister, as over dear ones once loved and lost?

It was evident to Inez that the past must be looked into by means of the help of others besides Bessie. Among the domestics of the household could any one be found whose memory reached back far enough to make him or her of any use in the present inquiry?

No sooner did this question occur to Inez than she at once thought of an old domestic who occupied a very peculiar position in the house. Mrs. Klein had once been house-keeper, but, having fallen into a species of what may charitably be termed decrepitude, with which, however, *sin* had something to do, the active duties of her position were handed over to another, and Mrs. Klein was pensioned off. Mrs. Klein's present residence was well known to Inez, for she had been in the habit of paying frequent visits to the retired potentate, and she now determined to seek her without delay. Accordingly the carriage was ordered, and, after about an hour's drive, Inez found herself before the humble abode of her old friend.

It was about two o'clock, and Mrs. Klein was at home. Indeed, the first glance showed Inez that it would have been difficult for her to have left her home; for there was in her gait an unsteadiness, and in her eye a rolling, watery leer, which would infallibly have drawn down upon her the attentions of the police had she ventured forth to any distance from her humble cot. She was about sixty years of age, dressed in black, with a frilled cap on her head, and a bunch of keys dangling from her waist—these last the emblems of her lost sovereignty, but still lovingly retained from the force of habit. She was stout and decidedly "beery" in her aspect and manner, and there was a fuddled unctiousness of voice in the way in which she greeted Inez, and a maudlin tearfulness of eye which showed that her naturally keen sensibilities had been subjected to the impulse of some gentle stimulant.

"Which it's welcome you truly air this day, my own dear child, Miss Hiny," she began, in a whimpering voice. "An' me think-

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And with this rather equivocal conclusion to her somewhat incoherent address Mrs. Klein drew forth an enormous handanna handkerchief, and mopped away vigorously at her eyes.

Inez took a seat, and waited patiently for Mrs. Klein to overcome her emotions. At length, the old lady drew a long sigh, and, putting out her hand, took an old teapot from the table near her, and poured from this into a tumbler a colorless liquid that looked like water, but whose pungent odor announced the presence of gin.

"Which, after bereavement and melancholick," she said, "there's nothink so 'olesome an' 'ealthy as a drop of this, took, Miss Hiny, only as a medicink, an' to stimmylate the mind an' hease the 'art, which I allus does before I hever goes to my blessed bed at night, an' would 'umbly recommend the same, with my 'umble dooty an' best wishes, for you an' yours, an' 'opin' ypur dear benefactor 'left you comfortable, which we shall not see his like again in this vale of tears, an' 'e was as good as a father to you—"

The old lady's booziness and twaddle had begun to discourage Inez, who saw no chance of getting any intelligible information from such a fuddled brain; but suddenly, in the midst of this, the last remark of Mrs. Klein startled her, and she began to think that perhaps, by humoring the drunken creature's fancy, she might get more out of her than she would be able to do if she were sober. For, in the old days, she had never given utterance to any thing that came so near to Inez's suspicions as this. In her later days, she had been occasionally a little excited by gin, but never so much as to be off her guard.

"Yes," chimed in Inez, anxious to see how much Mrs. Klein would tell, "he was as good as a father; he couldn't have done more if he had really been my father."

"Which there never was a truer word, an' 'im with 'is own son lost to 'im, as a body may say, an' the wife of 'is boosom turned agin 'im, an' you not 'is hown, an' in this world men 'ave 'ard 'arts when they 'ave to bring up them as 'is 'not their hown—all but 'im, as never spoke of you but with lovin' kindness an' tender mussies, an' ever shall be. 'Mrs. Klein,' says he, 'you 'ave a lovin' 'art, an' I hintrust this 'ere lone babe of the woods to you to brink hup as my hown. Call her by my hown name; treat 'er as your young missus; be virtuous, an' you will be 'appy—to be brunk hup in Wisdom's ways, which is ways of pleasantness, an' hall her paths is paths hof peace.' Which them's 'is hown words, Miss Hiny, as hever was, an' 'im a-confidink in me, as knoo 'ow fully 'e might confide. An', 'Don't you hever tell 'er,' 'e says, 'but what she's my hown, for hit'll be hall the same to 'er in the bend; an' fo be brunk up soberly, righteously, an' piously, hall the days hof her life, an' has my hown daughter—Miss Wyverne—hany think to the contrary 'ereof in hany wise notwithstanding."

"How old was I then?" asked Inez, in a tremulous voice.

These wandering words were certainly confirming her worst fears, and bringing back all her worst suspicions.

"Ay, 'ow hold," the old creature went chattering on—"which it's a mere odd you was, not hover fower year, an' not twelve; an' there was your sister, a fine girl, twelve, that was sent to the nunnery in France—"

"France!" exclaimed Inez, in deep excitement.

"Ob, I know it; I remember it," said Mrs. Klein, positively. "An' me 'earin' all about the proposules, an' she a-cryink like a baby, at leavink of you. But I comforted 'er, an' I says: 'Cheer up, little Clara; you shall see Hiny soon, if so be as you be a good girl, an' go hof quiet.' An' so she bade a long adoo to things below."

"Was Mrs. Mordaunt there?" asked Inez.

Her heart was throbbing painfully, and she could speak with difficulty. She asked this question and named this name so as to

test her suspicions to the uttermost, and put them beyond a doubt.

"Oh, ay, ay! an' so you remember the name—poor lady!—which 'er name I remember well, though never seeink 'er, beink dead an' gone before, an' you two being orphans in the cold world below. An' my poor 'art bled for you two in your dissolute state, which your ma beink dead, an' your pa beink fled far away into strange lands, an' mo 'earin' afterward that 'e died in hegg'sile—which Mr. Wyverne 'e stood for'ard, an' says to me: 'That child shall be mine, to be brunk up in the lap of lugsary, an' you be kind an' faithful, an' name your hown reward.' But I ups an' says: 'My reward, sir, axin' your 'umble pardink for bein' so bold, his to be a father to the fatherless-an' a mother to the motherless.' An' he says: 'You are right, an' I commend 'er to your faithful bosom.'"

"Why did Mrs. Wyverne leave her husband?" asked Inez once more.

"Which 'e wus allus a kind 'usband an' a faithful father, an' nobody can deny—no, not heaven 'er as left him to die hof a broken 'art—an' ever 'ad a kind word for hall the 'ouse- 'old; an' took 'er son an' 'is—Basil—'im bein' not hover six year hold, an' in long curls, the be-e-cautiful child! An' 'e says to me, 'Mrs. Klein, an' I says, 'Sir,' an' 'e says, 'They've gone, an' I says, 'Who?' an' 'e says, with a 'alf whimper, 'My wife,' 'e says, 'an' my son—my boy—my Basil!' An' I says, 'Sir,' says I, 'opin' no hoffence, an' axin' your pardink—they'll come back.' An' 'e says, 'Never; she's too hobstinate, an' 'as bid a hternal haydoo.' Says I, 'Sir, what for? Isn't this 'ere their proper 'ome?' Says 'e, 'We've 'ad a fight, an' she's gone.' Says I, 'About what?' Says 'e, 'About 'er, about little Hiny.' An' 'im so kind an' lovin' that 'e treated 'er like a man, an' never heven advertised her, nor sood for a separation, nor nothink; an' me hepectiu', day hafter day an' year hafter year, that she'd relent an' come 'ome; but relent she did not, an' come 'ome she did never, but 'id 'erself close, an' 'as never been 'eard hof from that day to this blessed momink. Which 'er 'usband bore the cruel blow like a hangel, an' never repined, but showed a Christiang fortitood, an' forgiv 'is henemies, an' 'im a good 'usband to 'er, never a-comin' 'ome drunk an' heatin' 'er about the 'ead with a broom-'andle, as is the case with many wives, but kind and true as

'e promised an' vowed in his marriage-bond before the haltar. Which if it's the last word I hever spake, I'd go to that woman, an' look 'er in the heyes, an' I'd ans unto 'er: 'My dear, axin' your 'umble pardink, I'd advise you to pack hup your duds an' Go 'ome, for hif you don't hit's a-goink to be the wuss for you an' your boy; which 'ero is Miss Hiny a-twinink 'erself hayround 'ia 'art, an' a daughter to 'im, an' bein' lost one father to find a father in 'im, an' bein' deservink of it, too, as a warm-'arted girl, an' as dear to me as a child of my hown.'"

Inez had heard enough. She had no heart to ask any further questions. One thing she had learned which was altogether new, and that was, that this sister Clara had been sent to France—to a "nunnery," as Mrs. Klein said. And there, thought Inez, she must have died. Deeply was she touched by Mrs. Klein's remarks about Clara's love for the little sister from whom she had to part, and her heart was filled with unutterable regrets and unutterable longings after that lost dear one, who loved her once so fondly.

Mrs. Klein now, being no longer directed by any leading questions, went off in a series of remarks of a highly-desultory character. She began by pressing a half-tumbler of gin upon Inez, and wept freely because Inez refused. She then, still weeping, swallowed it herself. After this she began a lamentation over the wickedness of the world and the depravity of the human heart, as exemplified in some recent bad bargains which she had made in her favorite beverage. She urged Inez to take her back, to live with her as companion or chaperon. Finally, she produced an old clay pipe and lighted it.

Inez had scarcely heard a word for some time past. During Mrs. Klein's desultory rambling she had been buried in her own reflections, but out of these she was suddenly and violently drawn by a strangling and choking sensation, caused by the smoke of the particularly villainous tobacco in Mrs. Klein's pipe. She hastily rose, and, without a word, rushed to the door, leaving Mrs. Klein talking to the walls of her house.

About the truth of Mrs. Klein's statements Inez had not the slightest doubt. Had she been perfectly sober, it might have been possible to suspect her of acting up to some plan devised long ago in Mr. Wyverne's life. As it was, such a suspicion was im-

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possible. The circumstances under which  
 this had been said, and the way in which she  
 had said it, all combined to show Inez that it  
 must be true.

In this state of mind she drove home.

And now Bessie met her. She rushed  
 down the stairs, and, clasping her in her  
 arms, kissed her, and reproached her lov-  
 ingly for going out alone.

"Sure and you'll never be your own old  
 self again, Inez darling," she exclaimed. "I  
 had begun to hope that you had got over  
 your reserve, and reticence, and sadness, and  
 solitary ways, and all that sort of thing. I  
 can't stand this at all, at all. Really, Inez  
 darling, you'll break my heart. Why should  
 you hold yourself aloof from me, and why  
 won't you come back to your old familiar  
 ways, dear? Positively, if you treat me so,  
 I shall have to go away, for I shall feel that  
 you no longer lil—lil—love mum—mum—  
 me."

And here Bessie burst into tears.

Inez kissed her, and tried to soothe her,  
 and felt real self-reproach at having inflicted  
 so much pain on this innocent child.

"It was only some foolish business of  
 mine," said she.

"But you have no business to have any  
 foolish business at all," said Bessie, fretfully.  
 "You have no right to wound me so. It was  
 hard enough before, but, after we made friends  
 again, it was very, very cruel in you, Inez  
 dear. It's myself that's been the miserable  
 girl this day, and it's fairly heart-broken that  
 I am with you; and you won't do so again,  
 darling, now will you? You will not be so  
 cold and unkind, now will you, Inez dear-  
 est?"

Inez promised not to offend again, where-  
 upon Bessie grew calm, and the two spent  
 the rest of the day together as much on their  
 old terms as was possible, when the heart of  
 one of them was wrung with the remembrance  
 of that which she had heard, and when her  
 mind was perplexed with the problem of the  
 life, and the image of the gentle sister Clara  
 as ever floating before her imagination.

She retired early that night, and at last  
 and herself alone.

Here there was one thought that perplexed

This was Bessie Mordaunt—this girl who  
 bore that name, and gave that account of her  
 marriage.

Inez had now not a doubt left that she  
 was, in very truth, Inez Mordaunt, daughter  
 of Bernal Mordaunt.

She had now not the slightest doubt that  
 Bessie's account of herself was utterly false.

Did Bessie know this? Impossible. Bes-  
 sie would not deceive. Bessie herself must  
 be deceived.

But how?

Evidently Bessie must have been brought  
 up all her life in this belief. She stated it  
 so calmly and so simply, and it agreed so  
 perfectly with her mode of thought and her  
 position in this house, past and present, that  
 she must believe in what she said. Yet it  
 was all false, and Bessie had been carefully  
 brought up to believe it as true.

How could this have happened? Who  
 could have instilled into her so long and so  
 carefully all these lies? What could have  
 been the motive of it? Could it have been  
 Mr. Wyverne? If so, why had he done it?  
 Or could it have been that man who had  
 brought Bessie up—her "dear grandpapa,"  
 Kevin Magrath?

That was the question.

## CHAPTER XV.

### INEZ RECEIVES A LETTER

THAT she had been all along the victim of  
 some dark plot, Inez now felt confident; but  
 whether Mr. Wyverne was the originator of  
 the plot or not, she could not tell. There  
 were many other things also which perplexed  
 her. What was the position of Bessie?  
 Taking her honesty, good faith, and perfect  
 innocence for granted, what was her place  
 in this involved network of circumstances?  
 Was she too a victim? or was she the *prolyte*  
 of the unknown conspirators? Who was  
 her "grandpapa?" What part had he borne  
 in all this? What was his attitude with  
 regard to her? and what had been his atti-  
 tude toward Mr. Wyverne? Above all, what  
 was the motive of the conspiracy? That it  
 was a conspiracy of no common kind, she felt  
 sure. It had begun long ago, and had been  
 carried on for years. What was the purpose  
 of these two confederates—Wyverne and Ma-  
 grath? What end did they propose? Was

it revenge? or was it avarice? Was there any thing of hers that they might gain?

Of course, these questions could not be answered, and this last one was the greatest puzzle of all, for it was impossible for her to imagine what could have been the cause for which these men had framed so deep a plot, and elaborated it so patiently, and carried it out so carefully.

Bernal Mordaunt was her father. She now believed this without the slightest lingering doubt.

Bernal Mordaunt was a priest. What was the meaning of this? This was a point that she could not comprehend. That he was a Roman Catholic and not an Anglican priest, she knew from the allusion in the letter to his "ecclesiastical business" at Rome. What was the meaning of that? Was this, then, the cause why her parentage had been so carefully concealed? Was this the cause of his flight—his neglect of his children? Was it the affection of Mr. Wyverne, seeking to save her from shame, that had surrounded her with all this mystery? Was this the reason that her sister Clara had been sent to a nunnery, and herself brought up as Mr. Wyverne's daughter? Was this so? and, if so, was it not possible that Mrs. Wyverne may have quarrelled with her husband on the ground that he was receiving a child of shame into his household, and had taken herself and her son from the presence of such pollution? Could this be so?

This? Impossible. It was not of affection and self-sacrifice that Mr. Wyverne spoke on his dying-bed. It was of repentance for crime. It was remorse. It was the agonizing desire to make an atonement for wrongs which he had done to her father.

That father had come to him there at that bedside—the injured man had seen the offender, with what result she had heard from Dr. Blake. Of the real horror of that meeting, however, she knew nothing, for Blake had kept that a profound secret from her. She had merely understood from him that Mr. Wyverne had died the moment the priest had entered the room, and that not one word had passed between them.

There were various questions, consequent upon her knowledge of the fact of this meeting, which served to perplex her mind still further.

Had her father recognized Mr. Wyverne?

She thought not, and for various reasons. In the first place, she remembered the fearful change that had taken place in Mr. Wyverne's face, and judged, rightly enough, that such a change would make all recognition impossible, especially on the part of one who had not seen him for fourteen years.

If he had not recognized him, had he at least known his name?

This also she thought impossible. If he had heard so uncommon a name as Wyverne mentioned, particularly the full name Hennigar Wyverne, he would have been struck by it at once. If so, he would not have gone away so hurriedly after that death—making no inquiries after those whose guardian Hennigar Wyverne had been. No; the priest had probably arrived late, as Blake said, from a hurried journey; had been summoned almost from his bed to the dying man; and then, without recognizing him, or learning his name, had continued his hurried journey.

The question now arose whether he had not found out since who this man was. He must have done so. The notice of Hennigar Wyverne's death had been published, and would of course meet her father's eyes. He would then learn who it was that had died so suddenly.

And what then? What, in fact, would be his action? The letter of Kevin Magrath stated that her father was at Rome, and was going to England to see Wyverne. About what? The answer was given in the letter, in part at least: "Inez must be got rid of." It was for her, then, that her father was coming. She was in part, at least, the object of his journey, and of his business in England.

Would the death of Hennigar Wyverne, now no doubt well known to her father, make any difference in his movements? Would he still come to seek after her? What if he had reached him, such as those amid which Beesie had been brought up? What if he had heard and believed that his daughter, Clara and Inez, were dead long ago? Could she expect that he would ever search after her? Wyverne being dead, what business would he have in England? On the other hand, how should she find him, or effect communication with him in any way?

Of the two plotters to whom she could trace the great conspiracy which had enfolded her and Beesie in its grasp from earliest childhood, one was dead. But the other

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ained. What would he do? Would he give up, confess all, and set things straight before the world? or would he continue to carry on his work? He was Bessie's "grand-papa." He was, no doubt, using her as a tool for his own purposes. Would he still try to baffle Bernal Mordaunt?

Kevin Magrath, in the letter which he had written to Hennigar Wyverne, had spoken about Bernal Mordaunt with undisguised alarm; but from that letter it was Wyverne who had chief cause for fear. So formidable an enemy was Bernal Mordaunt, that flight or pretended death were the only ways by which the terrors of his presence could be evaded. Was the danger which had been so dreadful to Wyverne less dreadful to Kevin Magrath?

Not one of these questions could she answer. The one which was most important to her was about her father's possible movements. Did he know that she was alive? Would he come to England?

Since that memorable death at Villeneuve a fortnight had passed away. No signs had presented themselves as yet of his appearance. This did not look like haste on his part. The day seemed unnecessary. It looked as though he did not know of her existence. It looked as though he had heard of Wyverne's death, and had given up his design of going to England.

After breakfast that day, a letter was handed to Inez.

She looked at it in amazement; it bore the postmark of Paris. Who could write her from Paris? There was only one—Dr. Blake. But why should he write? Perhaps it was something with reference to Mr. Wyverne, or perhaps something the thought of which excited her indignation. Could it be possible? No, it could not be; he would not dare, at such a time, to write to her a confession of his feelings.

With this thought she left the table, and hurried to her room to read the letter. There was no reason why she should not think so. Dr. Blake lived at Paris, or lodged there for the present; she had no other acquaintance there; and she did not know enough of his unwilling to judge of the writer of the letter by the address.

But the first words of the letter at once struck this notion to flight. On opening it, she read the following:

"MY DEAREST CHILD:

"By this time you know all, and therefore will not be surprised at finding that there is one alive who has a right to call you by that tender name. Returning home after a long absence, during which you have been taught to believe me dead, or rather have been kept in ignorance of me altogether, my only business now is to fold my beloved daughter in my arms, and save her from the machinations of those who so long have had her in their power.

"It was my astonishing fate to meet Mr. Hennigar Wyverne at Villeneuve. I was on my way from Rome to England with no other purpose than to see that very man, and receive from him an account of those dear ones whom I had intrusted to him years before. At that inn, just after a short night's rest, I was requested to visit a dying man. I at once went to the room, and, to my utter amazement, found before me the very man I sought. Fearfully changed though he was, I recognized him; for beneath the mere outline of features there is always something more, which, as long as life lasts, betrays the man. And here the recognition was mutual.

"Although he was evidently surprised, yet my presence was, after all, not altogether unaccountable to him; for he had heard of my return, as he told me himself, and the dread of meeting with me had brought him to this. I will not tell you now all the particulars of that interview, when the soul of the dying man, already hovering on the verge of the eternal world, and going to its last account, lingered for a moment to try to atone for the crimes which he had committed, to try to obtain forgiveness from the man whom he had wronged, before passing into the presence of his Maker. I need only say now that he told all, without reservation. All—all was confessed. I have the consolation of knowing that I was not harsh to my false friend, nor deaf to his appeal for mercy, but forgave him all, freely; and, while the man I forgave the injuries that he had done to man, as priest I gave him absolution for the sins which he had committed against God.

"In the midst of the tremendous agitations of that unparalleled hour, it never occurred to the poor dying man to mention that you were in the hotel, and close by us, even though much was said about you. He informed me that he had already told you the



truth, though not all. As it did not occur to him to tell me of your presence, it never occurred to me to suspect it. I had thought of you always as a child, and imagined you at boarding-school somewhere. It was not until I came here that I learned where you really were then, and where you are now.

"As it was, I should have remained in Villeneuve long enough, at least, to perform the last, sad funeral-rites over one who, in spite of his treachery, had once been my most intimate friend. But I could not; business of an urgent nature required my immediate presence here in Paris, and I had no remedy but to hurry forward.

"But the emotions called up by that meeting have been too much for me. I am not so young, dear child, as I once was, and I have suffered very much in body and in mind during the years of my absence. Do not be alarmed, my own child—Inez, if I now inform you that I am unable to leave my chamber. I have delayed writing to you thus far from the hope that I might go in person, but the prospect of this is too remote for my impatience. Do not imagine by this that my illness is at all dangerous. It is not; it is serious—that is all. But there is one thing which, more than all drugs and remedies, will give me new life, and raise me up from my bed; and that is the sight of my own beloved child—sweet memorial of my sainted wife, whose image is still enshrined in my heart, for whom my love can never die. Come, then, my daughter—come to your father! Come, my sweet Inez, my only treasure in life! I long and yearn to look upon your face. Do not delay. Do not stop to make any preparations. Do not even think of money. You will find every thing with me that you may need. Come! I shall expect you to leave on the very day when you receive this, and I shall count the hours till you reach me. But I fear I am too urgent. I shall give you one day, then, dearest daughter; and after that I shall look for you. My address is No. 123 Rue de la Ferronnère, Paris. A carriage will be at the station, and my servants will be ready. I shall send some friend to receive you.

"I can write no more now, as I feel exhausted, and must reserve any more until you come. *Ad revoir*, my dearest child! Make haste; for my strength is failing, and you are my last hope. I embrace you with all my

heart, and wait for you, my own precious child, with indescribable longing.

"Your affectionate father,

"BERNAL MORDAUNT."

The handwriting of this letter was different from that of the address. In the address it was directed in a round, bold, flowing hand; but in the letter itself it was written in a tremulous hand, with frequent breaks, and words written indistinctly. It looked as though it had been written by some one who was feeble and ill, and had scarce strength enough to conclude his task; for toward the close it became very much less legible, as if, having finished it, the writer had been too exhausted to do more, but had to commission another to write the address.

There were certain circumstances in this letter which at another time would have bewildered Inez exceedingly. One was the story of the conversation between Bernal Mordaunt and Hennigar Wyverne, followed by extreme unction. Dr. Blake's account was altogether the opposite. He had said positively that not one word had been spoken by either; but that, as the priest came in, Wyverne died. Here was a discrepancy so immense that each version destroyed the other utterly. The other difficulty lay in the fact that the handwriting of Bernal Mordaunt was not, in the slightest degree, like the writing of that Bernal Mordaunt whose short note to Hennigar Wyverne, accompanying the portrait, lay in the casket. This in itself was a slight thing, and could easily be accounted for on the ground of weakness, change wrought by a new mode of life and increasing years, or the nervous irregularity of a hard unaccustomed life years to hold the pen; but still, in connection with the first-mentioned fact, it was significant.

Both of these things, and others, also, Inez certainly noticed, but failed to lay any stress upon them whatever. She was, indeed, quite incapable now of weighing any thing calmly. That letter had produced upon her an overwhelming effect, that there was some idea in her mind—her father ill in Paris—obviously ill—longing to see her—calling to her to come to him—counting the hours—her father looking upon her as his only hope in life—looking to her for strength to draw him up from his bed of languishing—her father, with his unutterable love for her, and yearn-

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that you ay longer ay thing, the les a chan et now e your ow d won't g, as oft ly frant fully bol off trave er be at

you, my own precious  
 ble longing.  
 ante father,  
 BERNAL MORDAUNT."

of this letter was dif-  
 e address. In the ad-  
 n a round, bold, flowing  
 ter itself it was written  
 with frequent breaks,  
 distinctly. It looked as  
 written by some one who  
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 much less legible, as if  
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n circumstances in this  
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 sation between Bernal  
 igr Wyverne, followed  
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 opposite. He had said  
 e word had been spoken  
 as the priest came in,  
 e was a discrepancy so  
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 uther difficulty lay in the  
 ting of Bernal Mordaunt  
 est degree, like the writ-  
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ainings, and others, also  
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 whatever. She was, in-  
 e now of weighing any  
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 nd—her father ill in Paris  
 ng to see her—calling to  
 -counting the hours—her  
 her as his only hope in  
 for strength to draw him  
 languishing—her father,  
 love for her, and yearn-

ing over her. How piteous seemed to her  
 those letters, traced with so feeble a hand,  
 growing fainter and feebler as they ap-  
 proached the end of the sheet! How pathetic  
 that allusion to her mother—how restless  
 that call to her to come—how tender and sweet  
 that loving urgency, which could scarce allow  
 one day for making her preparations to travel!  
 No idea of refusing entered her mind.  
 Such a call must be obeyed. She must go.  
 Besides, it was the thing that she herself now  
 longed most of all to do. She began, then,  
 at once to pack up a few things. She had  
 money enough in her purse to take her to  
 Paris. She needed no more than enough to  
 take her to his bedside.

One thought of Bessie came to her, and a  
 slight feeling of sadness at thus being com-  
 pelled to quit her so abruptly. She wondered,  
 also, what excuse she should make. She could  
 not show her the letter. Though her own  
 frank nature would have prompted such a  
 course, her consideration for Bessie restrained  
 her. It would only bewilder her and give her  
 pain. Bernal Mordaunt she believed to be  
 her own father. If she was ever to be unde-  
 ceived, the explanation would have to come  
 from those who had deceived her—from her  
 "grandpapa," Kevin Magrath. On the other  
 hand, Inez should not stoop to deceit of any  
 kind, and therefore was unable to make up  
 any plausible pretext for her sudden depart-  
 ure. In the end she solved this particular  
 difficulty by telling Bessie that she had to go  
 to Paris immediately on "business."

This intelligence Bessie received in a  
 much better manner than Inez had antici-  
 pated. She appeared startled, but said nothing  
 against it. She was mournful, and affec-  
 tionate, and very pathetic.

"Oh, I knew it," she said, sadly. "I saw  
 it was coming to this. I knew, Inez dearest,  
 that you were changed and didn't love me  
 any longer. But there's no use in life to say  
 anything for, when love grows cold, there's  
 at the least use of complaining at all, at all.  
 As a changed nature you're seeming to have  
 got now entirely, Inez jewel, but I hope you'll  
 be your own dear self again before very long.  
 I don't want you to promise to write me, Inez dar-  
 ling, as often as you can, for I shall be per-  
 plexed to hear from you? It seems  
 fully bold and brave in you, so it does, to  
 go off travelling this way. I'm sure I should  
 never be able to do it—never."

Inez found that she could not leave till  
 the next day. Her preparations, however,  
 were very simple. She took Saunders with  
 her, and a footman was to accompany her as  
 far as Southampton.

When Inez prepared to start, she found,  
 to her surprise, that Bessie was dressed for a  
 journey also.

"You need not think you're going to get  
 rid of me so easily," said Bessie. "It's-my-  
 self that'll be the lone girl when you go, and  
 what in the wide world I'll be after doing,  
 with myself without you I don't know, so I  
 don't. And so I mean to stay with you till  
 the very last moment, Inez darling, and I'm  
 going all the way to Southampton. I shall  
 bid you good-by on the pier, and I'm sure I  
 think you might be just a little bit affection-  
 ate to-day, dear."

Inez was deeply touched by this mark of  
 Bessie's affection, and embraced her, and  
 kissed her fondly. They then drove to the  
 station.

During the drive to Southampton Bessie  
 was loving, tender, pathetic, and occasionally  
 lachrymose. She appeared to cling to Inez  
 with so much tenderness, that Inez felt her-  
 self drawn to the fair young girl more than  
 ever, and wondered how one like her would  
 bear the blow of being told that her name  
 and her life were a deceit. She was glad  
 that it did not fall to her lot to tell Bessie.

On the pier at Southampton they parted.  
 Inez went with Saunders, and Bessie, after  
 waiting on the wharf and waving her hand-  
 kerchief till she could no longer distinguish  
 Inez, returned to London.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## FATHER MAGRATH.

As Inez, with her maid, Saunders, landed  
 upon the pier at Havre, several persons were  
 passing down on their way to another steamer  
 which was just about to leave for Southamp-  
 ton. Among these was one man, and, if it  
 had been possible for her to recognize that  
 one man upon that spot, the recognition  
 would have changed altogether the progress  
 of circumstances, and have snatched her from  
 the fate upon which she was blindly rushing.  
 But such a recognition was impossible, and  
 Inez passed on her way—away from the one

man who could have solved every mystery, and removed every difficulty—away from the man who could have saved her, and on to the station to take the train for Paris. He was dressed as a priest. He was a man of medium stature, with a very remarkable face, the expression of which was so strangely compounded of force and gentleness, of energy and meekness, of resolute will and sadness, that the eye of the most casual observer was irresistibly drawn to take a longer observation. He carried in one hand some wraps, and in the other an old leather valise, worn and battered as though it had accompanied its owner over thousands of miles of journeyings, and bearing upon one end, in white painted letters, the mark B. M.

Following this man was one whose tall figure, stern and strongly-marked features, and shaggy mustache, revealed the person of Kane Hellmuth. This journey had been the result of his recent conversation with Blake. The mystery of his apparition had now come to be a leading idea in his mind, and, as his friend had hinted at the possibility that his wife might not have died, he had resolved upon this journey so as to satisfy his mind once for all. As Mr. Wyverne, her guardian, was dead, that resource was taken away from him, and he could think of no one to whom he could apply for information except that Miss Mordaunt, to whom also Mr. Wyverne had been guardian. It was, therefore, to no less a person than Miss Bessie that Kane Hellmuth was making this journey.

As the steamer was leaving the pier, the priest stood on the deck along with the other passengers, and Kane Hellmuth found in this man a mysterious attraction that riveted his gaze in spite of himself. The last man was he of all men to feel or to yield to, if he did feel, any impulse of idle curiosity; yet, in this case, in spite of his efforts to check himself, he found his eyes, no matter how often he would force them to look elsewhere, irresistibly drawn back again to fix themselves upon that sun-browned face, with the deep, earnest glance, the resolute purpose, the indescribable pathos—that face which, in its expression, and in the traces of the years, showed such a record. It was a record of a life of no common kind—a life of struggle and of suffering—an heroic life, yet at the same time a life which must have been not without some fulfilment of the holiest duties of that office

which his garb indicated—the office of a Christian priest. Kane Hellmuth thus felt his eyes attracted, and with his eyes his heart; but there was no opportunity of making the acquaintance of this singular man. Kane Hellmuth was naturally of a reserved disposition; the priest, on the other hand, was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to be conscious of the interest which he had awakened in the mind of another, and so these two, who might have found much in common if they had become acquainted, passed on their different ways, without exchanging any word with one another. After leaving the harbor the priest retired, and was seen no more; and Kane Hellmuth, who felt no desire to rest, and no capability of obtaining it if he had desired it, paced the deck for hours. Arriving at Southampton, he saw the priest on landing, and then lost sight of him in the bustle and confusion of the train for London.

Kane Hellmuth found out the location of the house of the late Mr. Wyverne from the directory, and went there as soon as possible. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

To his immense disappointment, he learned that Miss Mordaunt was not at home, and, upon further and more persistent inquiry, found that she was not in town. Upon still more urgent inquiry as to her movements, John Thomas, with whom he had been speaking, thought that it could be no other than a lover who could be so persistent; and, though Kane Hellmuth's appearance was not that of the one whom John Thomas might imagine as a suitor for one like Miss Bessie; at the same time John Thomas's heart was not without some sentiment of its own, and he thought that such a visitor should not be dismissed too hastily. So he went into the house to make some inquiries before giving any final answer.

After a brief absence he returned, and informed Kane Hellmuth that he could find out all he wanted from Father Magrath, who was in the house, and had sent an invitation for him to come in.

This invitation Kane Hellmuth accepted. He entered the drawing-room, and, in a few moments, a person came in who introduced himself as the Rev. Mr. Magrath.

Father Magrath, as John Thomas called him, was a man of very remarkable appearance. He was dressed in the usual garb of a priest, but his face was not altogether a

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keeping with his costume. He was apparent-ly about fifty years of age, of medium height, with a frame whose nervous strength and powerful development had not yet felt the advance of years. His hair was curly, and only lightly sprinkled with gray; he had bright keen eyes, straight thin nose, and thin lips, which were curved into a good-humored smile. The pervading expression of his face was one of jovial and hilarious good-nature. He wore spectacles, which, however, did not conceal the keen glitter of his penetrating eyes. His face was unmistakably Celtic in its character; in fact, it was the face of an Irishman, and, if Father Magrath's name had been less Irish, his face would of itself have been sufficient to proclaim his nationality.

A few questions served to make him acquainted with the fact that Kane Hellmuth wished to see Miss Mordaunt for the sake of making inquiries of her about some family matters.

"Well," said Father Magrath, "she's away out of town, and, what's more, she won't be back at all, at any rate not to this house; but I'm her father confessor, and any questions that ye may have to ask, of a reasonable character, I'll be quite happy to answer. Ye'll have to excuse me for the present, however, as I'm engaged on some business of the most prising kind, and perhaps ye can neemo some hour whin I can mate ye."

Kane Hellmuth thanked him, and informed him that his time was limited, and that the earliest possible meeting would be most acceptable.

"Sure, thin," said Father Magrath, "it's meself that's sorry that I can't stee witl ye just now, and for that matter any time this dee, an' not before to-morrow ayvenin'. Could ye make it convenient to come to-morrow, in the ayvenin', about eight o'clock? If so, I'll be happy to have ye. Come and bind the ayvenin'," he continued, in a warm and cordial tone; "I'll be alone, an' I assure ye I'll be daylighted to have the plisure of your company."

This invitation, so cordially extended, Kane Hellmuth accepted with thanks, and, bidding the friendly priest adieu, he retired to pass the time as best he could till the hour that meeting should arrive.

Punctual at the hour, on the following day, Kane Hellmuth reached the house, and was at once shown into the brightly-lighted

parlor. Father Magrath was not at home, but had left a polite request for his visitor to wait. In about a quarter of an hour he returned, and, after a slight delay, he entered the room, and greeted his visitor with very great warmth and cordiality.

"Sure and it's glad I am to see you this night," said Father Magrath. "It's me that's not fond of loneliness at all at all. We'll make an ayvenin' of it between us, thin. I'm of a convivial timplerment, and I howld that convivialeete is one of the issines of true enjoyment in loife. So we'll get up something. Is it whiskey ye take, thin, or cognac, or do ye prifer woine, or cèl? For me own part, I always teek whiskey."

"I shall be happy," said Kane Hellmuth, pleasantly, "to join you in any drink that may be most agreeable to yourself. I think that whiekey, as you say, is as good as any thing."

"Sure and ye nivir spoke a truer word," said Father Magrath.—"Jeemes, my hey," said he, turning to a footman, "the whiskey; bring a dycanter of Scotch and Irish, and the hot wather, with the it ceteras.—And ye smoke, too, of course?"

"Yes."

"Jeemes, whin ye're about it, bring the poipes and tobacco," added Father Magrath.

At this Jeemes retired, and soon returned with a tray upon which were all the articles which, in the opinion of Father Magrath, went toward making up the requisites for a pleasant evening.

"Yis," said Father Magrath, continuing pleasantly, in a half-serious, half-jocular way, some remarks which he had been making; "as I said, there is no plisintness in loife without convivialeete. Of eobars, I main it in a harrumless sinec. It was not in veen that the ancients theevgtid convivialeete to the skois, and made it one of the occupations of the Olympian dayeties. I'm no ascetic. I believe in harrumless and innocent joys, and so I take an occasional drop of somethin' warrum, and an odd whiff of the poipe at intervals. Now, here ye have whiskey, both Scotch and Irish, and I don't know which of them ye prefer, an' I don't know meself for that matter. And it's a moighty difficult thing to decoide. For, ye see, there are two great laiding schools, if I may use the xpression, of whiskey, the Scotch and the Irish, or, to xpress meself more comfictly, the Erse and

the Gaelic. Both schools, like both liquors, are an intermixture of the radiant Celtic jaynius, which, amid all its gifts to man, has contributed this last and this best one, whiskey. Now, there is a very remarkable distinction between these two outcomes of the Celtic jaynius. One, the Gaelic, is best, when mixed with hot wather and taken in the shape of toddy; the other, the Erse, aids not the foreign adarrument of hot wather, but stands on its own beesis, as a pure, unmixed drink, which in itself is a deloight. There's a deep philosophical and symbolical mayning in this which I haven't time to go into just now, but I may suggist, in passing, that these two drinks ixlpen in some masure the varying jaynius of the rispictive races, and the internal qualectees of the two may be seen in their liquors. The Irish is best taken raw, without admixture; the Scotch is best, like the nation, mixed—that is to say, as the liquor is best with hot wather, so the Gaelic race in Scotland has achieved the most by intermixing and blinding with the Lowland Saxon population."

All this Father Magrath rattled off in a quick, jovial way, pouring out glasses for himself and his guest, so as to allow themselves a taste of each of the liquors with which he professed so close an acquaintance. He poured out the Irish whiskey raw in two wine-glasses; but the Scotch whiskey he poured into tumblers, and manufactured into toddy, in accordance with his own curious theory about the utility of mixing the Gaelic race and the Gaelic whiskey. Kane Hellmuth tasted the Irish liquor, and then apped the Scotch in its form of toddy.

"Ye'll be smoking," said Father Magrath. "Here are two kinds of tobacco, the Turkish and the Virginian. Which'll ye have? Here are poipes, unless ye've brought yer own in yer pocket, which I always do myself."

"I have one," said Kane Hellmuth, producing from his pocket a short meerschaum in a case.

"That's my way," said Father Magrath, with a sigh of appreciation. "Ye do right. Your own poipe, and your own silf, that's the true smoker's motto."

"It's a mighty quare thing, too," continued Father Magrath, as he filled his pipe, "about this same fashun of smoking, and this same tobacco. Have ye lvir thought where it origenatid? Ye know the popular

thayory that it came from America. Don't believe a word of it. Columbus did enough for the wurruld, but it wasn't him or his discovery that gave tobacco to civecleezecton.

"Ye see," he continued, "there's this diffeecultee staring ye in the face. Ye've got to account for the unversalectee of its use. One quarter of the human race use tobacco. How has it ixtindid so widely in less than four centuries? If Columbus is the earliest date for the use of tobacco, how did it pinitrate into India and China in that toime? Now, my thayory is this: ye know China. Ye know how all the great inventions and discoveries of civecleezecton have been traced there; paper, printing, powder, the mariner's compass, and other things. Now, I trace tobacco there. It wasn't America that gave tobacco to the wurruld. It was China. China gave tay. China gave also tobacco. If researches are made into Chinese history, I don't doubt that it will be found that tobacco has been used there for thousands of years; that Confucius snuffed; Mencius chewed; that Fo-hi smoked; and that the Tartar nomads, and the Persians, and the Indians, received their knowledge of the 'sublime weed,' as Byron calls it, from China. And I don't know but that America may have received it from China' also, for if, as some suppose, America was peopled by the Mongol race, there isn't the laste doubt in life but that they carried their poipes with them.

"Now, when ye look at tobacco," continued the priest, in an animated way, "ye see three grand classecelectees, corresponding with the three grand divisions which we notice in modern civecleezecton. First, there is the Aseatic; it is manipulated, and drugged, and spiced, and made into a luxureous arteefical substance for the use of the upper classes of socieete. It ripisints Art. Then there is the American, which comes to us in its purity. This ripisints Nature. Finally, we have the stuff made here in the vareous countriea of Europe; giving a rivine to the governments, and grinding the face of the poor. This ripisints the Brummagin system of manufactures, which is swallowing up all Art, and all Nature, and thritentig to swallow up modern civecleezecton itself. But mark me, ther'll be a rayaction among the nations. The peoples will no longer be oppressed. Governments will no longer tread down humaneete in the dust. The may

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"Your own poipe, and your own sill. That's the true smoker's motto."—Page 70.

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will at last force their wants upon the notice of the few. The days of the privileged classes are wellnigh indid. If modern civilization means any thing it means the rights of man. Those rights man will have. First among them, he will insist on having free tobacco; he will wrist this great luxury of the human race from the grasp of tyrannical governments, and stand up in all the dignity and grandeur of manhood to smoke, or to chew, or to do any thing else to which the great heart of humanity may impil him."

Thus far Kane Hellmuth had listened to the priest without any comment. Just here, however, partly because Father Magrath happened to pause, and partly because he was surprised at this cropping out of revolutionary sentiments from one who belonged to the most conservative class of mankind, he said:

"You talk as though you had embraced the radical gospel. Is radicalism common with the priests of your church?"

Father Magrath looked at him with a keen glance for a few moments.

"Oh," said he at last, "this is only talk. A man's banter never shows his real sentiments. For my part, my life and my thoughts are all taken up with a work in which modern civilization, and radicalism, and conservatism, and all the other isms, niver inter. How should they? I'm an anteequarian. I gave up all my time to the most zilous anteequarian raserches. Most of my life I live at Rome. There I come into immaydeate contact with the Holy Father, and the whole College of Kyardeenals. If there's any one man they know, that man's Father Magrath. The ijuhuncions I've made, and the explorations, and the discoveries, would take all night to tell. Why, it was only the other day I found at Civita Castellano, in an owld Ayruscan tomb, an antique urrun, and I've got it here now, and that same urrun is worth more thin its weight in solid gold, so it is. There's people that's offered me more already, and I refused. Me a radical! I'd like to see meself botherin' me head about modern politics. Put me in Florence in the days of Cosmo de Medici, and I'll take my stand with one party or the other; but this vulgar nineteenth century, with its miserable party squabbles, seems like child's play to me.

"The worst of it is," continued Father Magrath in a pensive tone—"the worst of it

is the lack of a proper spirit at Rome. Why, here I am; and I've been urging for years upon the Roman Government a course of action that might have given them untold wealth. First, I've urged the ijuhuncion of the Palatine—the palace of the Cæsars, the *Aurea Domus Neronis*. The trisures that must lie buried there would be enough to give them means for carrying out the boldest designs that Anjonelli or anybody else might wish. Secondly, and still more earnestly, I've urged upon them the plan of diverting the Tiber from its bed. It would cost something, it is true; but the cost would be nothing whin compared with the raysult. Why, only think of the trisures that lie buried there—the gold, the silver, the diamonds, the gims, and precious stones; the statues, the carvings, the orniments innumerable. Trisure! Why, in the bed of the Tiber is enough trisure to buy up all Italy! And yet the Papal Government is hard up. And why—?"

Father Magrath paused and looked earnestly for a few moments at Kane Hellmuth.

"Why?" he resumed. "I'll tell you why. It's because they want an Irish pope!"

"An Irish pope!" repeated Kane Hellmuth, as Father Magrath paused.

"Yis," said Father Magrath, solemnly—"an Irish pope! Rome, Italy, Christendom, all need an Irish pope. The Italians cannot govern Rome, or the Church, in the nineteenth century. They are a worn-out race. It's not poverty that ails thim. It's indolence, inertia, want of interproise, cowardice, and all that. Give Christendom an Irish pope, and she'd be redjemed. The wurld would wear a diffrint aspect altogether, the day after the libtion of a born Paddy to the chair of Saint Payter should be made known. No country but Ireland, no race but the Irish, could furnish the requisite qualifeccations. Ireland has the piety, and the loyalty to the Roman Catholic faith, and at the same time it has the spirit of indipindence, the love of freedom, and above all the ristless, bounding, invincible, indefatigable inirgy, that makes this age what it is. What is now the layding nation in the wurld? America. Who have there, America what it is? The Irish people, therefore, the Irish people, being at the same time the most pious and the most inirgitic of all the races of man, are the ones



from whom, above all, the next Pope of Rome should be illicted!"

Upon this Father Magrath at length succeeded in lighting his pipe, an attempt in which for some time he had been baffled by his own eloquence, and then, puffing out heavy volumes of smoke, he relapsed for a time into silence.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## FAMILY MATTERS.

FATHER MAGRATH thus succeeded at last in lighting his pipe, and for a few moments his flow of conversation was checked. He sat holding the pipe with his left hand to his mouth, while his right hand stirred a spoon round the tumbler of toddy. Clouds of smoke rolled up around his head, through which his eyes occasionally peered forth in a furtive way, with a quick, keen, penetrating glance from his rugged face and sombre brow of Kane Hellmuth. The latter surveyed the priest, but said nothing. He had come to this interview out of no desire for society, and of no love of conversation, and no taste for that conviviality upon which his companion laid stress. He had come simply because he hoped that he might be able to learn something directly or indirectly about Clara, his late wife; and it seemed to him that one who filled the responsible post of father-confessor to this family would be the very man who, of all others, would be the most likely to give him that information which he needed. He listened, therefore, in silence and with patience to the priest's remarks, thinking that his wandering fancy would soon exhaust itself, and his mind come to business matters.

"I rigit extramely," said Father Magrath, at length, "that Miss Mordaunt isn't at home. But she couldn't stay here any longer. The raight sad occurrence, the dith of her vinirible frind, preed dalyly upon her mind, and she has been compilled to quit the city. For me own part, I must say that, although I was not altogether surprised at poor Wyverne's dith, I flit it extramely."

"Yes," said Kane Hellmuth, who, now that Father Magrath had got to a topic like this, was anxious to keep him to it and to draw him out. "Yes, I suppose so, but it was

very sudden, and I did not know that any one could be expecting it."

Father Magrath sighed and shook his head.

"I was acquainted with the doctor who attended him."

"The doctor that attendid him?" repeated Father Magrath. "That'll be Dr. Burke—no, Black—no, that's not it—It's something like it."

"Dr. Blake."

"Blake—yis, that's the name, so it is. A young man—yis. Miss Mordaunt infarramed me all about it, and she mitioned him with much rayspict."

"There was some trouble on Mr. Wyverne's mind toward the last," suggested Kane Hellmuth. "The doctor said that Miss Wyverne seemed to feel uneasy. I hope that she has overcome that feeling."

"Miss Wyverne—what?" said Father Magrath. "What's that? Why, ye don't mane that wild fancy of his? Sure and did yer frind the doctor let her go off with such a fool's fancy in her poor little head? D'ye mane his notion about not knowing her? Sure and it's wild he was. Didn't I hear all about it. He didn't ricognize his own choild. It was delirium. He was out of his sinsis. Yer frind the doctor must be very young to take the language of fever and delirium for sober sinse. I'm afraid he hadn't his wis about him; but, most of all, I blame him for not explaining to her, poor girl. Faith, thin, there's no fear that she'll be troubled about that. She's got a black future before her, I'm afraid."

"I sincerely hope that no new affliction has happened to Miss Wyverne."

"Well, it's generally considered an affliction," said Father Magrath, "to be lift dischoot."

"Destitute? Why, wasn't her father a very rich man?"

Father Magrath shook his head with solemn and mournful emphasis.

"No," said he, "Miss Wyverne has nothing. Her father had nothing to layve her. He was head over heels in dibt. Under the show of great apparent wilth, he concealed utter poverty."

"You amaze me," said Kane Hellmuth, in a sympathizing tone.

"It was an old dibt," continued Father Magrath, "contracted years ago—he niver

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was able to do any thing with it. He had to kape up a certain style, and this, of course, necessitated a great expenditure; consequently he went from bad to worse. One man was his chief creditor, and he was lenient for a long time, until this last year or so, when he changed his chum, and demanded a settlement or some sort of security. All this preyed greatly upon my poor friend's mind, and, in connection with the life-long anxieties of his business, resulted in some affliction of the heart, some inflammation of the pericardium. And here now ye see the ind. Here he is—a did man—and here is his daughter literally pinnillias. What a wust, she doesn't know any thing about it yet, and I'm bothered out of me life about it, for it is my melancholy duty to infarrum her of these facts, but how I'm to do it I don't for the life of me know."

Father Magrath was silent for a few moments, and pensively sipped his toddy.

"By-the-way," said he, at length, "this friend of yours, the doctor, do ye know where he is?"

"Oh, yes; he's in Paris."

"In Paris? Well, that's very convaynicent. I find that it is necessary for me to obtain some sort of a formal statement from his medical man, if possible, relative to the disease of poor Wyverne, and to have it duly attested before some magistrate. If yer friend be so handy as that, maybe I might write and send forward the necessary documents. Would ye have the kindness to give me his address? And, perhaps, ye'd better write it out in this memorandum-book."

With this Father Magrath drew a memorandum-book and a pencil from his pocket. Opening the former, he handed it to Kane Hellmuth. The latter took it, and, on the page indicated by the priest, he wrote down the address of Dr. Blake in full. The priest thanked him, and restored the memorandum-book to his pocket.

"Ye," he continued, in a soliloquizing tone, "it was very sad the whole affair, poor Wyverne's life and his dith. His money-troubles killed him at last. He was always hard up—his walth all show, and a grasping creditor, and him as poor as a rat, with nothing to leave his daughter, poor girl."

"What'll become of Miss Wyverne?"

asked Kane Hellmuth, with some interest.

Father Magrath smiled.

"Oh, for that matter, there's no danger,

after all. It's only the sinse of indipindluca that she'll lose. She has frinds that love her far too dearly to see her suffer, and they'll know how to keep her from knowing any thing of want."

"Was Mr. Wyverne any relation to Miss Mordaunt?" asked Kane Hellmuth, who now felt anxious to bring the conversation nearer to the subject of his thought.

"A distant relation. Mr. Wyverne was her guardian."

"She has something, I suppose, to live upon?"

"Oh, yes; she is sufficiently well provided for to make her feel jew contentmint. Her wants are not extravagant. She has been brought up with very simple tastes, and, for that matter, if the worst comes to the worst, she could be a governess. It's very different with her from what it is with Miss Wyverne, that's looked on herself all her life as an heiress."

"Has Miss Mordaunt any brothers or sisters?"

"No," said the priest; "she's alone in the wuruld. There were others, but they're dead and gone. She had a sad lot in life— orphaned in her infancy—alone without any relatives to speak of—but she's got a good, and a gentle, and an anglio disposition of her own."

"Had she no sisters?" asked Kane Hellmuth, in a voice which he tried to make as steady as possible, but in which, in spite of his efforts, there was a perceptible tremor. The priest took a hasty glance at him, and saw that his head was bowed, leaning upon his hand.

"She had," said the priest, after a short hesitation—"she had a sister."

"A sister? I thought so," said Kane Hellmuth. "Was she older or younger?"

"Older—tin years older."

"Do you know her name?"

"Clara."

With every new word the agitation of Kane Hellmuth had increased, so that it would have been perceptible to duller eyes than those keen and scrutinizing ones of Father Magrath, which were fastened so vigilantly and so searchingly upon him.

"Beesie," said the priest, in a mournful tone, "comes from an ill-fated family. I hope she may be an exception to the mournful distines that seem to purscho her rili-







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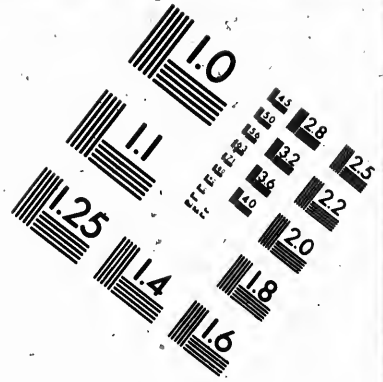
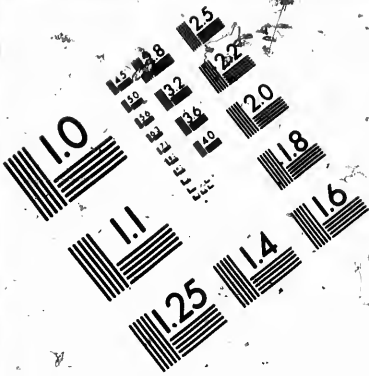
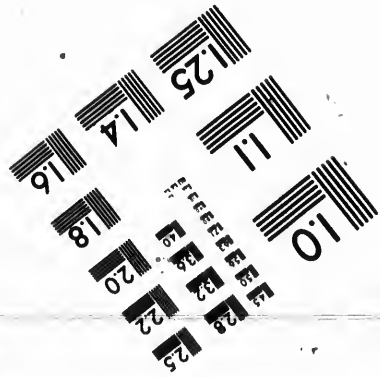
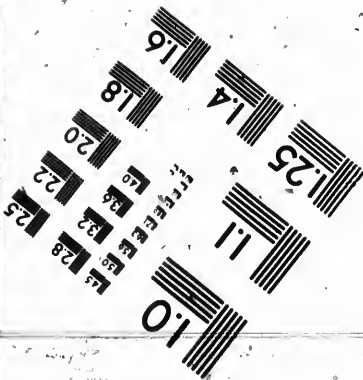
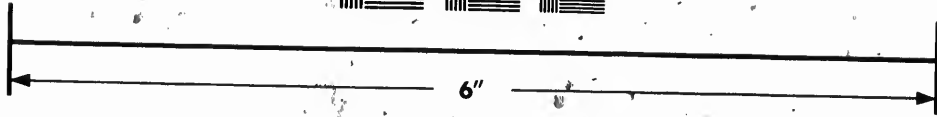
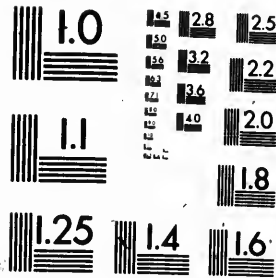


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tives. There was the mother, died in the prime of her life; there was the father, wint mad with sorrow, and took himself off to foreign parts, where he wint and died. Thin, there was this elder sister. Whin Mr. Mordaunt died, Mr. Wyverne stipped forward and took the two poor orphans under his own protection. He didn't take them into his own house, because it wasn't conveyment, owing to family diffeiculties of his own with his wife; but he put the two orphans in good hands, as I can testify. He was as good as a father to them. He took care of their little means, and, for that matter, ye might say he gave it to them."

"What becames of this elder sister?" asked Kane Hellmuth, in a scarcely audible voice.

"It was a very sads fate, the saddest I iver knew," said the priest. "Mr. Wyverne had determined to give her the best education possible, and sint her to a boarding-school in Paris."

"Well?"

"Well, it's almost too sad to talk about. Remember, she was very young—a mere child—not over sixteen, and that, too, in a Frinch school, where gyerruls are so seclndid. Well, it happened that some prowling adventurer—some unprincipled and fendish deludherin' riptoile—managed to make her acquaintance. Ye know the ind of thät. There is only one ind. That ind was hers. Clara Mordaunt was ruined by the macheenections of a scoundril that I hope and trust is ayvin now gittin his jew in this life or the other."

At this, Kane Hellmuth's face turned to a ghastly pallor. It was hard indeed for him to listen to this, and yet say nothing.

"I have heard something about it," said he. "A friend of mine once told me, some years ago, but he said they were married."

"Married!" said the priest, with a sneer. "There were no pains taken to lit the marriage be known, at any rate, and the scandal about her was as bad as if she had not been. No, depind upon it, there was no marriage. She was run away with. It was the old story, and it came to the same ind."

"The end? what was the end?" gasped Hellmuth.

"The villain deserted her, and—"

"He did not!" cried Hellmuth, in a terrible voice, starting up and looking at the priest.

"I only say what I've heard, and what the frinöds of the poor gyerrul have heard and have believed," said the priest, mildly. "Perhaps ye know more about it than I do. If ye were livin' in Paris that toime, ye might have found out, and in that case ye can tell me."

Kane Hellmuth made a mighty effort, and regained his self-control.

"Excuse me," said he; "but years ago I saw the man that you speak of. He was my friend. He said that he was married."

The priest shrugged his shoulders incredulously.

"Oh, of course, he said so," he remarked; "that's what they always say. At any rate, there is the fact that she was virtually betrayed, deserted, and died the worst of deaths, brought down to that by a brokin heart. What matter his impty protestations about farrums of matremoney, I ask ye, in the face of sich a catastrophe as that?"

To this Kane Hellmuth made no answer. He came to get information, not to argue or to apologize. He knew better than any other what was the actual extent of the guilt of that man of whom the priest spoke so severely; but he had no heart to offer an apology. Was not the deed itself full of horror? had it not crushed his life down into the dust of never-ending self-reproach?

"Did she die?" he asked, in a faint voice, returning to the subject.

"She did, and by the worst of deaths. She died—and by her own hand."

The priest paused. Kane Hellmuth listened breathlessly. At last the revelation was coming.

"It was found out by their landlord, who told her frinds afterward all about it. According to mine story, the two had high words together that morning. Toward ayvenin' his suspectid something, and knocked at the dure. There was no answer, which made him break open the dure. There he saw a sight that filled him with horror. The poor gyerrul lay did, stone did, on the fure, and the scoundril that had killed her was in some drunken fit on a sofa, or in bed. He was sint off to his frinds—she was buried. He disappeared, and I hope he's did. I wouldn't like to be sittin' near that man. Priest though I am, I fear I should feel a murderous inclination stealing over me. I wouldn't have any confidence in meself, at all at all—not me. Ye

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"He's dead," said Kane Hellmuth, in a faint, choking voice.

"Dead? Thin I hope he killed himself. That was the best thing left for him to do after killing that poor gyerrul."

At this Kane Hellmuth bowed down his head, and buried his face in his hands. Was there any thing more now for him to learn? Was not this enough, this confident declaration of Father Magrath? Did he wish any more? Could he venture to go into details about such a subject, and ask the particulars of that most terrible of tragedies from a man, like this, who uttered words that pierced like daggers? That were too hard a task. The information which he had already gained seemed sufficient.

"Her frinds," continued the priest, still pursuing the train of thought which had been started, "buried her, and strove to save her name from stain by putting the name of the man on the stone, just as if he had been her husband. And so, if ye iver go to the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, ye'll see on that stone, not the name of *Clara Mordaunt* but *Clara Ruthven*. Ruthven, ye know, is the name of the villain that killed her."

At this a deep groan burst from Kane Hellmuth.

"Sure, ye don't seem well," said the priest, in a tone which was meant to express sympathy. "Won't ye take some more whiskey? Try it—neat. Its moighty iffictive, whin taken that way, for dispillin' mintal depression, and shuperinjewing a contimint and placidity of mind."

Kane Hellmuth shook his head.

"Well," said the priest, "I'll power out a thimbleful for meself, for the subject is a distressin' one intirely. And so ye say," he continued, "that this man is a frind of yours, or was? Sure, and I'd like to know, thin, is he alive now?"

Kane Hellmuth drew a deep breath.

"He's dead," said he again, in a hollow voice.

"Dead! Oh, yis. So ye said before. Whin did he die?"

"Ten years ago," said Kane Hellmuth.

"Tin years ago!—Why, that was the same toime!"

"He died when she died," said Kane Hellmuth, in the same tone.

"Sure, and I niver heard a word of that afore. And what was it that he died of? Min, like that, don't often die off so aisy. They live long, whin their betters die; and that's the way of the wurruld. What was it that he died of, thin?"

"He killed himself," said Kane Hellmuth, in harsh, discordant tones, that seemed wrung out of him.

"Killed himself!" repeated the priest. "Well, it's well he did; for, if that man were alive now at this moment, it would be enough to make poor Clara rise from her grave."

These last words were too much. Thus far this priest had shown an astonishing capacity for saying things that cut his companion to the very soul, and saying them, too, in a casual, off-hand, unconscious way, as if they were elicited by the subject of their conversation. It had been hard for Kane Hellmuth to endure it thus far, but he could endure it no longer. These last words summed up briefly the whole horror of his present situation, to avert which, or to escape from which, he had made this journey.

He started to his feet. He did not look at the priest.

"I'm much obliged to you," said he, "for the information which you have given."

At this the priest stared at him in astonishment, which, if not real, was certainly well feigned.

"What's this?" he said. "what's this? Why, man! What d'ye mane? Ye can't be going! And the ayvenin' not fairly begun."

"I must go now," said Kane Hellmuth, abruptly, in a hoarse voice. "My—my time is limited." He stood swaying backward and forward, his face ghastly, his eyes glazed, and staring wildly at vacancy. He did not see the keen glance of the priest as he earnestly regarded him.

Kane Hellmuth staggered toward the door. The priest followed.

"Sure," said he, "it's sick ye are. And ye won't take another glass? Perhaps, ye'd like cognac. In the name of wonder, what's come over ye, man? Take some cognac, or ye'll niver get home. Sure, and I'll niver let ye go this way. Wait, and get some cognac. Faith, and ye must wait, thin."

Saying this, the priest laid his hand on Kane Hellmuth's arm, and drew him back. Kane Hellmuth stood with a dazed look in

his eyes, and an expression of anguish on his face. The priest hurried to the sideboard, and, pouring out a tumbler nearly full of cognac, offered it to his companion, who took it eagerly and gulped it down. The fiery draught seemed to bring him back to himself, out of that temporary state of semi-unconsciousness into which he had fallen. His eyes fell upon the priest, and the wild light faded out of them.

"Pardon me, sir," said he, in a perfectly cool and courteous manner, which offered a striking contrast to the tone of his voice but a minute before. "I am subject to spasms of the heart, and I'm afraid I've caused you some alarm. But they do not last long, and your kind and prompt assistance has helped me."

"Won't ye sit down again, thin?" said the priest, earnestly, "and finish the ayvenin'?"

"You're very kind," said Kane Hellmuth, "but, after this attack, I might have another, and, under the circumstances, I think I had better go."

"Won't ye stay and rest, thin, till ye feel stronger?" persisted the priest.

"Thank you," said Kane Hellmuth, "but I require the open air just now. A walk of a mile or so is the best thing for me. I shall, therefore, bid you good-by, with many thanks for your courtesy."

Saying this, he held out his hand. The priest took it and shook it heartily.

"I won't say good-by," said the priest. "We'll meet again, I hope. So I'll say *au revoir*."

"*Au revoir*," said Kane Hellmuth, courteously, falling in with the priest's mood.

They thus shook hands, and Kane Hellmuth departed.

The priest accompanied him to the door. He then returned to the room. He poured out a fresh glass of toddy, lighted a fresh pipe, and then, flinging himself into an arm-chair, sat meditating, smoking, and sipping toddy, far into the night.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MORDAUNT MANOR.

SEVERAL miles away from Keswick, Cumberland, lay some extensive estates, surrounding a first-class country-house, known as Mor-

daunt Manor. About a fortnight after the departure of Inez for the Continent, a solitary horseman stopped at the gates of Mordaunt Manor, and was admitted by the porter.

A broad avenue lay before him, winding onward amid groves and meadows, lined on each side by majestic trees, among which clouds of rooks were fluttering and screaming. Riding along this avenue for about a mile, he at length came in sight of the manor-house.—It was a stately edifice, in a style which spoke of the days of the Restoration and Queen Anne—one of those massive and heavy houses which might have been built by a disciple of Vanbrugh, or Vanbrugh himself—a false classicism employed for domestic purposes, and therefore thoroughly out of place, yet, on the whole, undeniably grand. There were gardens around, which still had that artificial French character that was loved by those who reared this edifice. There was any quantity of box-wood vases, and plants cut to resemble animals, and a complete population of nymphs and Olympian gods.

The horseman dismounted, at length, and, throwing the bridle to one of the servants, ascended the steps and entered the house. He gave his name as Sir Gwyn Ruthven.

Sir Gwyn Ruthven seemed to be an average young man of the period. He was under twenty-five years of age, of medium height, with regular features, brown hair cut short and parted in the middle, side-whiskers not extravagantly long, bright, animated eyes, and genial smile. An eye-glass dangled from his button-hole, and a general air of easy self-possession pervaded him.

Two ladies were in the drawing-room as he entered. One of these was an elderly personage, with a face full of placidity, self-content, and torpid good-nature. The other was a young lady, whose vivid blue eyes, golden hair all flowing in innumerable curls and frizzles, *retroussé* nose, perpetual smile, and animated expression, could belong to no other person in the world than Bessie Mordaunt.

Bessie had already risen, and greeted the new-comer with the cordial air of an old acquaintance. She then introduced her companion, who seemed to act in the general capacity of *duenna*, guardian, chaperon, guide, philosopher, and friend.

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"I could scarcely believe what I heard," said Sir Gwyn. "I had no idea that the Miss Mordaunt of Mordaunt Manor was you; but, from what they told me, I saw it must be. Even then I could hardly believe that I should be so fortunate as to have you for so near a neighbor; and so, you see, I've dropped ceremony, and come at once, without giving you time to rest after the fatigues of your journey. But, 'pon my life, Miss Mordaunt, I couldn't help it; and it's awfully good in you, you know, to see me."

To this Bessie listened with her arched look and merriest smile. It was evident that they were very good friends, and that the pleasure which Sir Gwyn so plainly expressed was not disagreeable to her.

"Sure," said she, "a month ago this day I hadn't the least idea I'd be here now; and I don't know what to make of it at all, at all. But it was so very, very sad about poor, dear Mr. Wyverne! It almost makes me cry. But, then, you know, it's such a comfort to be with my dearest suttid again!"

Sir Gwyn looked at her admiringly.

"You vanished out of London so suddenly, you know," said he, "that I began to think I should never see you again. And Mr. Wyverne—ah!—yes—very sad—to be sure—as you say. I suppose, however, he was no relative—"

Bessie sighed.

"No, not a relative," said she; "but then, you know, he was always so awfully kind to me, and he was my dear old guardy, and, really, I loved him almost like—like—an—uncle, you know; and it's myself that was fairly heart-broken—when—when I lost him."

Another sigh followed. It was a mournful theme, and Sir Gwyn's face was full of sympathy for this lovely mourner.

"How is Miss Wyverne?" he asked, gently.

Bessie sighed, and shook her pretty little head.

"She feels it very, very deeply," said she, "of course—she is such a very affectionate nature—and it was all so awfully sudden, you know! I was so anxious for her to come here with me—poor darling!—but I couldn't get her to do so. And it's fairly dead with grief she is this day. I told her how I sympathized with her, but it was no use. Oh, yes, Sir Gwyn! it's myself that knows what it is to lose a papa, and a dear mamma, too, by the

same token; for I've been through it all, and it's awfully sad. It almost makes me cry."

At this Sir Gwyn looked deeply distressed, and tried to change the conversation.

"I suppose," said he, "Miss Mordaunt, you have not been here for a long time?"

"No," said Bessie, "not since I was a child. It's perfectly strange to me. I don't remember one single thing about it. But I was so very, very young, you know—a child in arms, positively! So, of course, I remember nothing. I was taken away to France, you know."

"To France?" repeated Sir Gwyn, in some surprise.

He knew nothing about the history of Bessie's life, and was quite eager to get her to tell something about a subject which was evidently so deeply interesting to him.

"Yes," said Bessie; "and so, as I was taken away so early, I really know nothing whatever about Mordaunt Manor, though it is my own sweet home. My dearest auntie knows all about it, and many's the time she's took up whole days telling me about my ancestors."

At this Sir Gwyn regarded Mrs. Hicks Lugin with a bland and benevolent smile, as though her close connection with Bessie was of itself enough to give her interest in his eyes.

"Perhaps you don't know, then," said he, with a smile, "that I am your nearest neighbor. I should have told you that in London, if I had only known it."

"Oh, auntie told me," said Bessie.

"I hope," said Sir Gwyn, "that Mordaunt Manor won't be any the less pleasant to you on that account."

"Well," said Bessie, with a droll smile, "there's no knowing. You may be after finding me a disagreeable neighbor, and, before we know it, we may be engaged in litigation with each other. And I never knew till yesterday, and I think it's the awfulest, funniest thing!"

"It's a remarkable coincidence," said Mr. Hicks Lugin, suddenly, after a period of deep thought, "and one, my dear Bessie, which, I may say, is as pleasant as it is remarkable."

There was some degree of abruptness in this speech, and in the tone of Mrs. Hicks Lugin there was something that was a little stiff and "school-ma'amish," but Sir Gwyn was too amiable to criticise the tone of a

kindly remark, and was too well pleased to think of such a thing. He looked more benignly than ever at Mrs. Hicks Lugin, and a thought came to him that she was a very admirable sort of woman.

"Oh, thanks," he laughed, "but really when you come to talk of pleasure about this discovery, I am dumb. Pleasure isn't the word. I assure you Ruthven Towers will know a great deal more of me now than it has thus far. I've been deserting it too much. It's a pity, too; for it is one of the finest places in the country. Perhaps some day I may hope to have the honor of showing it to you and your—your amiable aunt. I'm awfully sorry that I have no one there to do the honors, but you know I'm alone in the world, like yourself, Miss Mordaunt."

Saying this, Sir Gwyn looked at her with very much tenderness of expression and a world of eloquent suggestiveness in his eye.

"How very, very funny—that is, sad!" said Bessie, hastily correcting herself.

"That," remarked Mrs. Hicks Lugin, with her usual abruptness, "is a circumstance which can easily be remedied."

This remark conveyed a meaning to Sir Gwyn which, though not in very good taste, was nevertheless so very agreeable to him that his face flushed with delight, and he thought more highly of Mrs. Hicks Lugin than ever. But Bessie did not seem to apprehend its implied meaning in the slightest degree.

"Ruthven Towers," she said; "what a perfectly lovely name—so romantic, you know—and I do hope, Sir Gwyn, that it is a dear old romantic ruin. I'm so awfully fond of ruins!"

"No," said Sir Gwyn. "I'm very sorry, but, unfortunately, it's in excellent preservation."

"How very, very sad!" said Bessie. "I do so dote on old ruins!"

At this Sir Gwyn looked pained. For the moment he actually regretted that his grand old home was not a heap of ruins, so that he might have the happiness of gratifying the romantic enthusiasm of this lovely girl.

"Ruins," interrupted Mrs. Hicks Lugin, "may be very congenial to the artistic taste, but, for a young man that has life before him, there is nothing so wholesome as a whole house over his head."

This remark Sir Gwyn entirely approved of, and acknowledged it by another of his benignant smiles.

The conversation now wandered off to other things. Sir Gwyn and Bessie had much to say about the last London season. He had met her then, and had seen her several times, during which interviews he had gained a friendly footing, and had begun to manifest for her an interest very much deeper than usual, which Bessie could not have been altogether ignorant of. Upon the present occasion he was evidently most eager to avail himself of all the advantages which grew out of this former acquaintance; combined with the additional advantages of his position in the county, and his close neighborhood to her, it gave him occasion to offer her many little services. He knew all about Mordaunt, and could tell her all about it. He could also show her Ruthven Towers. These were the things that first occurred to him as being at once most desirable, most pleasant, and most natural, under the circumstances.

Bessie's chaperon seemed to be pleased with Sir Gwyn's polite attentions, but Bessie herself was very non-committal. She spoke of the necessity of seclusion, and alluded to the death of her guardian as something which she ought to observe in some way commensurate with her own grief. Sir Gwyn, upon this, was too delicate to press the matter, and postponed it until another time.

"English country-life," said Bessie, in the course of these remarks, "is a strange thing to me entirely. I've never seen any thing of it, at all, at all; and really it will be quite a new world to the likes of me. I was so young when I was taken to France, you know, Sir Gwyn, and all that I know of English country-life is what I have heard from dear auntie—isn't it, auntie, dearest?"

"Your observations are entirely correct," said Mrs. Hicks Lugin.

"Then let me hope," said Sir Gwyn, politely, "that you will find it as pleasant as London life."

"Oh, I'm sure I found London life perfectly charming," said Bessie, with enthusiasm. "And you know I had just come from France, and you may imagine what a change it was."

"You must have lived there all your life."

"Yes," said Bessie. "It was at St. Malo. Have you ever been there, Sir Gwyn?"

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"Oh, it's such a perfectly charming place," said Bessie, "and it's more like my home than any other place. It's so lovely. And I was taken there when I was—oh, only the littlest mite of a little thing, and lived there till only a year ago, Sir Gwyn, and sure it was myself that had the sore heart when poor, dear, darling guardy came to take me away, so it was."

"I'm sure it must have been," said Sir Gwyn, in tones full of tenderest sympathy.

"I'm sure it was awfully sad to lose my papa and mamma," said Bessie, mournfully, "but to lose my home seemed worse, so it did; and that's why I feel so awfully sorry about my poor, darling Iny. Not but that she has a home—but then it doesn't seem like it at all, at all."

"I suppose not," said Sir Gwyn.

"And it's worse for poor, dear, darling Iny than it is for me," continued Bessie, "for you know she has no one, and I have my other dear guardy, my poor mamma's dear papa, you know, Sir Gwyn. And he's the very nicest person! You can't imagine!"

Sir Gwyn looked as if he were trying to imagine, but was unable.

"You know her, my own dear, darling Iny—do you not, Sir Gwyn?"

"Iny? You mean Miss Wyverne?"

"Yes—Inez her name is—the same name as mine, you know," continued Bessie, gently and sadly.

"The same as yours!" exclaimed Sir Gwyn. "Why, I thought that yours was Elizabeth? I remember Miss Wyverne, of course, and she always called you Bessie."

As Sir Gwyn uttered this name there was an indescribable tenderness in the tone of his voice which did not by any means escape the notice of Miss Bessie, but she gave no sign to that effect. She merely went on, in a calm way:

"Oh, yes; she always insisted on calling me Bessie. She said it was awkward for both of us to be Iny. My name, you know, is Inez Elizabeth—Inez Elizabeth Mordaunt."

"I think Inez is a perfectly beautiful name," said Sir Gwyn, enthusiastically.

"So do I, surely," said Bessie; "it is so entirely. In France they all called me Inez, but dear, darling Iny set the fashion of calling me Bessie; and, after all, it would have been awkward to have two in the house

named Inez, and so it was nothing else but Bessie, Miss Bessie, and so I grew to love that name, because I loved so the dear, darling friends who called me by it. Still, I think Inez is awfully lovely, and it's uncommon and romantic. Dear, darling Iny and I are second cousins, and Inez is a family name, you know, so we both had it."

All this was news to Sir Gwyn, of course, who, as he said, had heard her called "Bessie," and had always thought of her under that name. Still, "Inez" was undeniably a beautiful name, and Miss Mordaunt was no less lovely under this sweet foreign name than she had been under the plainer one of "Bessie." He lamented that he was not at liberty to make use of either one of these names and call her by it. The time for that, however, had hardly come as yet, and he could only indulge in the hope that it might come before very long.

This preference which Bessie expressed for the name "Inez" was also sanctioned and solemnly confirmed by Mrs. Hicks Lugin, who said, in her characteristic manner:

"My dear, your preference is every way justifiable, and you should insist now on all your friends calling you by the name for which you yourself have so decided a preference."

When Sir Gwyn at length thought of his departure, it was in a state of mind that may be described as made up of exultation, expectation, anticipation, elevation, and all other "ations" which go to set forth the state of mind which humanity experiences under the stimulus of Love's young dream. Already, in that London season above referred to, he had been smitten with Bessie's charms; and, though her absence had weakened this effect to some extent, yet now the sight of her face more than revived these old feelings. The circumstances under which he now saw her tended to deepen this effect. She was in a quasi state of mourning. She announced that she intended to keep herself secluded, for a time at least, and avoid the gayeties of society. Her "mourning" was thus deep enough to keep her restricted within the very sphere where she would be most accessible to him. Her face now seemed to him more piquant than ever; the perpetual smile which Nature had stamped upon her lips did not readily adapt itself to a sombre expression of grief; and thus Bessie's attempts



to look bereaved and afflicted were only successful in so far as they served to call up to her face a new expression, and one, too, of a very attractive kind. The circumstances that had thus brought her here and given him such access to her, could not be regarded by him with any other feelings than those of the deepest satisfaction; and he determined to avail himself to the very utmost of the rare privileges which chance had accorded to him.

And so Sir Gwyn, on the very next day, found a pretext for riding over to Mordaunt Manor. He found Bessie as cordial as ever.

She received him with a smile, that bewitched him, and with a simple, frank friendliness that was most touching. She told him it was "awfully kind" in him to come to see her again when she was so lonely. She remarked that Mordaunt Manor was "awfully stupid," with other things of the same kind. Mrs. Hicks Lugrin also chimed in with similar sentiments. On this visit Sir Gwyn ventured to hint at a drive through the country. Mrs. Hicks Lugrin thought that it would benefit Bessie's health, and that a companion like Sir Gwyn, who knew all the history of the county, would be a benefit to the minds of both of them.

The drive was very successful, and was repeated. In a few days Bessie went out riding with Sir Gwyn, first confining herself to the park, and afterward going into the outer world. Then it began to be interrupted, for the great world was in motion, and everybody who pretended to be anybody was hurrying to Mordaunt Manor to welcome its lovely young mistress to her ancestral home and to her native county.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

##### THE LOST ONE FOUND.

FROM what has been related it will be seen that Miss Bessie had experienced a great change in her life, having thus suddenly advanced from the position of certainly not much more than ward to the conspicuous elevation which was given by becoming mistress of Mordaunt Manor. Nor in coming to what she called her ancestral home did she find any lack of any thing which she might have conceived of as necessary to the gran-

deur of her position. There was the Hall itself, and the broad estate, and every thing corresponded, without and within. Troops of servants stood ready to do the slightest bidding of their young mistress; men-servants and maid-servants, footmen, grooms, coachmen, pages, appeared before her wherever she wandered. Prominent among these were several dignified functionaries—the butler first; then the French *chef de cuisine* and the housekeeper, Mrs. Spiller. Over all these Miss Bessie reigned as queen; while, as her prime-minister, Mrs. Hicks Lugrin stood at her side to give her counsel, or to carry into execution her wishes. Thus Mordaunt Manor, on once more being open to the great world, appeared fully equipped. During the years in which it had been closed every thing had been managed with the utmost care; and now it seemed about to enter upon a new career, under auspices at least as brilliant as any which it had ever known.

As the eye of the great world thus came to turn itself upon the young mistress of Mordaunt Hall, and to subject her to its scrutinizing gaze and its cold criticism, Bessie bore the ordeal in a manner which could not be surpassed if she had been trained all her life for this very thing. Perfectly calm and self-possessed, she yet showed nothing which was in any way inconsistent with the most sensitive delicacy and maiden modesty; she appeared like the type of innocence and self-poise combined; and around all this was thrown the charm of her rare and radiant beauty. Society, which thus came to criticize, remained to admire; so beautiful, and at the same time so wealthy an heiress had but seldom been seen; and she was evidently one who was adapted to shine in the lofty sphere to which she had been born. Society thus took note of all her charms. Society decided that Miss Bessie had a remarkably tender and affectionate nature. Society noticed the slight touch of Irish brogue in her accent, and thought that it added a zest to her already bewitching manner. Society also noticed the attentions of Sir Gwyn Ruthven, and smiled approvingly. It was without doubt a most excellent and suitable thing; and, if Sir Gwyn Ruthven could win her, the match would be unexceptionable. The two largest estates in the county already adjoined one another; and this would unite them into one magnificent property. Society,

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This new-comer was stature, with dark complexion-sun-browned, weather-bea

in fact, admired this prospect so very greatly that it unanimously declared Sir Gwyn's attentions to be "really quite providential."

The blandishments of the great world and the devoted attentions of Sir Gwyn Ruthven did not make up the whole of Bessie's life, however. One part of it was taken up in a correspondence which, though not large, was yet of immense importance. It was not large, for it consisted of but one letter every other day or so, yet that one letter was so important that most of her time when alone was taken up with the study of it, and with writing her answer. The letter which she sent in reply was always dropped into the mail-bag with her own hand, and it always bore the same address—*Kevin Magrath*.

Several weeks of Bessie's new life passed away, and at length, one day, she received a letter from this one correspondent which conveyed intelligence of such unusual importance to her that she remained most of her time in her room with the letter before her, pondering over its startling intelligence. To Sir Gwyn, who called on her as usual, she did not deny herself, but appeared as animated, as careless, and as joyous as usual; but, after his departure, she once more sought her own apartment, and there sat motionless for hours, with the letter in her hands, plunged into the deepest thought, and with such an expression of anxiety on her brow, and such a deep abstraction in her gaze, that if Sir Gwyn Ruthven could have seen her he would scarce have been able to recognize the face of the smiling, joyous, exuberant, and careless girl, whose image had been stamped so deeply upon his memory, and upon his heart.

After receiving that letter, Bessie sat up late into the night, and it was well advanced toward morning when she wrote a reply. She then retired, slept a few hours, and, after rising and taking a slight breakfast, she went herself, as usual, to mail her letter.

About a week after this, a gentleman drove up to the gates of Mordaunt Park. Dismounting from his carriage, which was evidently a hired one, he paid the driver, who at once returned in the direction of Keswick. Upon this the gentleman went to the porter's lodge and stood talking for a few minutes with the porter.

This new-comer was a man of medium stature, with dark complexion, which had a sun-browned, weather-beaten appearance, like

the face of a sailor; but the refinement of the features, and a certain indescribable something in the expression, showed that he was something very different. His dress showed him to be a clergyman. He had heavy eyebrows, from beneath which glowed piercing black eyes. His jaw was square and massive, and yet, in spite of these signs of strength, vigor, and resolute will, the prevalent expression of his face was one of gentleness; and there were sufficient indications there of a nature which was full of warm human sympathies. His hair was sprinkled with gray, and he seemed somewhere between fifty and sixty years of age. He walked with a slow pace, and in his gait and in his manner there were certain unmistakable signs of feebleness.

This man stood talking with the porter for some time, and at length, having satisfied himself, he turned away and walked up the avenue toward the Hall. He walked slowly, and with feeble steps, as has been said, and used a cane, which he carried to assist his walk. He frequently paused, and looked around; but, whether this was through curiosity or through weariness, did not appear. At length he came within sight of the Hall. Here there was, by the side of the avenue and under the trees, a rustic seat, and upon this the clergyman wearily placed himself.

He had not been there long, when the sounds of galloping horses arose in the distance, coming apparently from somewhere down the avenue. The old man was sitting on the rustic seat, with his eyes fixed upon Mordaunt Manor-house, and did not appear to hear these sounds. Soon, however, they drew nearer; and at length a gentleman and lady came galloping by, on their way to the house. The gentleman was Sir Gwyn Ruthven. The lady was Bessie. They had been riding; Sir Gwyn did not notice the old man, being too much absorbed in his fascinating companion to be at all conscious of any other thing; nor did he see the start which the old man gave, and the eager gaze which he directed toward them. Bessie caught one glimpse of him and of his rapid gaze, but appeared not to see him, for she instantly turned her eyes away, and went speeding past. Thus, to the old man, as he fixed his eyes on her, there appeared this fitting vision of loveliness; the round, rosy, dimpled face, the sunny blue eyes, the

beautiful perpetual smile, and the gleaming golden hair of the young heiress, forming an image of beauty that might have excited the admiration of the most world-worn or the most cold-hearted. She rode with admirable grace, her elegant figure seemed formed for horsemanship, and, thus speeding by, she was borne swiftly away toward the house.

The old man still sat, and, after she had dismounted, and had disappeared within, he still kept his eyes fixed upon the door-way through which she had vanished from his gaze. An hour passed, but he did not move. At length, Sir Gwyn reappeared and rode past toward the gate. Upon this, the old man rose and went toward the house.

Upon Bessie's return, she had allowed Sir Gwyn to bask for a time in the sunshine of her presence, together with the shadow of the presence of Mrs. Hicks Lugin, and had been as gay and as charming as ever. Upon his departure, however, she had flown at once to her room. Here all her abstraction returned; she seated herself by the window, and breathlessly watched the movements of the old man. She had seen him! What would he do?

She saw Sir Gwyn ride past.

She saw the old man then rise and walk toward the house. Then she retreated to the middle of the room and waited.

A servant brought up a card:

"M. l'Abbé Berna!"

Bessie took it in silence, and looked at it carefully.

"Tell him that I shall be down presently," said she, very quietly, "and tell Mrs. Hicks Lugin that I should be obliged to her if she would come here."

The servant retired.

In a few minutes Mrs. Hicks Lugin entered.

Bessie handed her the card.

Mrs. Hicks Lugin read it, and said not a word.

"I have been thinking," said Bessie, "that, on the whole, it would be as well, auntie, if you were not to be present at our interview."

"Oh, most undoubtedly," said Mrs. Hicks Lugin. "I only thought that perhaps you might require my presence for purposes of corroboration or identification."

"Never a bit," said Bessie; "trust me

for that, auntie. Am I an owl? Sure, it's me that's well able to take care of myself without any help at all at all—and there you have it. But it's really getting awfully exciting," she added, in a different tone, "and do you know, auntie dear, I really begin to feel a little nervous?"

Mrs. Hicks Lugin said nothing, and Bessie soon after went down to the drawing-room.

The old man was seated in the middle of the room, with his face turned toward the door. As she entered, she saw his face, figure, and expression, most distinctly. A window which was on his left threw light upon him, and gave the most distinct view possible. She herself also, as she came in, was revealed to him as fully and completely. She came in as light as a dream, with her ethereal beauty, her large, tender, deep-blue eyes, her golden hair, her dimpled cheeks, her sweet smile of innocence; there was on her face a simple expression of courteous inquiry, blended with gracious welcome; and, with this on her face, she looked at him steadily, with the fixed glance of an innocent child, and came toward him.

He rose and bowed; then she sat down, and he resumed his seat, drawing himself nearer to her as he did so. He then looked at her earnestly for some time. He appeared agitated. His hands trembled; there was a certain solemn sadness and melancholy on his face.

"And you are Inez?" he at length said, in a tremulous voice.

At this, there came up in Bessie's face the deep, wondering look which often arose in her eyes. She said, softly:

"Inez Mordaunt."

"Inez Mordaunt?" repeated the old man, "I saw you when you were a child. I—I knew your—your parents. You have changed so much that I should not have recognized you, and you do not look like either of your parents."

"How very funny!" said Bessie; "and did you really see me? and so long ago? Indeed, then, and it's true what you say, that I've changed; for, when I was a child, my hair and eyes were darker. I've got some of my hair now—cut off by poor dear darling mamma—and really do you know it's quite brown? and isn't it funny, when I'm such a blonde now?"



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"The old man still sat with his eyes fixed upon the doorway." — Page 89

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A melancholy smile came upon the old man's face, and a look of tenderness appeared in his eyes as he listened to Bessie's prattle.

"And you are Inez?" he said once more, slowly, in a tremulous voice, which was full of indescribable pathos.

Bessie said nothing, but smiled sweetly.

Thus far this interview had certainly been an unusual one. The old man's address had been abrupt and odd in the extreme. Evidently he had no desire to be otherwise than courteous; and yet his manner showed a strange lack of the commonest observances of civility. Bessie, on her part, showed herself quite at her ease; altogether frank, unconventional, and communicative. She evinced no surprise whatever at the old man's singular mode of address, but accepted it as a matter of course, and certainly such a reception by her was quite as extraordinary as the behavior of the visitor.

"You don't know me," said the stranger; "you do not recognize the name which I sent up. I wonder if it is possible for you to guess the errand upon which I have come? I wonder how you will bear the news which I have to tell?"

He spoke in a tone of profound sadness, yet infinite sweetness and tenderness, fixing upon Bessie the same gentle and loving look which he had already turned toward her. Bessie looked back at him inquiringly, and now a change came gradually over her own face.

"I don't know, I am sure," she said, in a faltering voice. "You seem to have something dreadful on your mind; and I don't remember ever seeing you in all my life. Oh, what is it? Tell me, and do not—oh, do not!—keep me in suspense. It's something awful; I know it is. It is some sad news!"

As Bessie said this, a sudden expression of terror passed across her face, and she clasped her hands and started back.

"Do you remember your parents?" asked the old man, in the same tone, and regarding her with the same look.

"My parents?" said Bessie. "Oh, no—only a little. My dear, darling mamma died when I was only three years old; and my poor dear papa left me then, and went away somewhere, and died. And I have often wept—oh, how bitterly!—as I thought of those darling ones—lost entirely—that I was

never going to see again, at all, at all! And, do you know, really, it's quite awful?"

Bessie sighed, and rubbed her little handkerchief over her bright blue eyes.

The old man's eyes now seemed to devour her, as they rested upon her in the intensity of their gaze. There was also in them a certain expression of longing, yearning love—something deeper than any thing which had yet appeared, and yet something which was the natural development of that gentleness and tenderness with which he had gazed at her from the first.

It cost him an effort to speak.

"Your parents," he said, in a low voice, "did not both die. Your father did not—"

"No," said Bessie; "poor dear papa, as I was saying, was so upset by the death of poor dear, darling mamma that he left the country, and died abroad, so he did. And, oh! it is so very, very sad!"

The old man's eyes glistened. Was it a tear that trembled there?

"Your father," said he, in tremulous tones, "did not die. He is—alive."

"Oh, really, now," said Bessie, "you're altogether wrong, you know. Pardon me—but I ought to know, when I've been mourning over him all my life. Sorrow a day had passed that I haven't felt what it is to be an orphan! It's fairly heart-broke with grief I am when I think of it. And then, you know, it was so very, very hard for poor darling papa to go and die so far, so very far away!"

"It was all wrong; it was all a mistake," said the old man, drawing his chair nearer, and looking at her with more longing eyes, and speaking in more tremulous tones. "It was a false report. He was on his way East. He was very ill at Alexandria. It was the plague. But he recovered. He had given up the world, and so he never wrote. But he did not die—"

"Sure, then," interrupted Bessie, "he might have dropped a line to me. Oh, if I could but have heard from him only one word! And me all alone in the wide world—none to love me—none for me to love—an orphan! It was heart-breaking entirely, so it was; and really, now that I think of it, I wonder how I was able to bear up."

Again Bessie rubbed her eyes.

The old man said nothing for some time. He was struggling with profound emotion,

and for a few minutes was quite unable to speak.

"Inez!" said he at last, in a voice deep, low, tremulous with unutterable tenderness.

At this Bessie looked up with the same frightened face which she had shown a short time before.

"Inez," said the old man, "it was hard for you to be left so many years alone, as you thought, in the world; but the reasons will all be explained some day. Your father, Inez—your father now mourns over this, and sees that he indulged a selfish grief, and was too forgetful of you in one sense, though he never ceased, even in his deepest grief, to love you passionately—you and that other dear one, your sister. But now, Inez—now it is over. Your father has come back to you. Look, Inez—look at me! I am changed, I know. Look! Do you not see something in my face that you remember?"

At this Bessie rose from her chair, clasped her hands, stared at him, and started back a few paces.

Tears fell from the old man's eyes.

"Inez!" he said, and then was silent.

"O sir! what do you mean by this?" cried Bessie. "Is this real? Do you mean it? In Heaven's name, is this true? You are mocking me. How can I know it? How can I believe it? And so sudden!"

"Inez!" said the old man again; "it is all true. I tell you that I am your father!"

Bessie now stared at him, and her face underwent several very remarkable changes. It was a face so mobile and so expressive that it was wonderful how strongly the feelings that she might wish to show were shown forth there. First, then, came surprise, then fear, then timid hope, then joy. The old man watched all these changes breathlessly, and with tremulous agitation. At last, Bessie seemed to comprehend the truth; and, as this last joyous change came over her eloquent face, she sprang forward, and flung herself into the old man's arms.

And Bernal Mordaunt pressed her to his heart, and kissed her tenderly, and murmured words of love over her fair young head:

"Inez! my own Inez! my daughter! my darling! I have found you at last, and we must never part again!"

## CHAPTER XX.

## AT HOME.

Thus it was, then, that Bernal Mordaunt, after so long an absence, came back to his own home.

The joy of this meeting filled all his heart, and he surrendered himself to it completely. The sadness which years had stamped upon his face was succeeded by the sunshine of happiness; and he could not remove his loving gaze from Bessie's face. She, on her part, conducted herself admirably; and there was no lack of tender caresses, and of all the manifold signs of filial affection with which a loving daughter should receive a father so suddenly and unexpectedly restored. Bessie's whole nature seemed singularly gentle, and tender, and feminine, and soft, and ear-ressing; and so her father, after years of exile and sorrow, found himself at last once more in the possession of those sweet, domestic joys which he had thought were lost forever.

Mrs. Hicks Lugrin was very properly overwhelmed with surprise when she learned what had happened; but Bernal Mordaunt, who had been informed of her office in the household, greeted her with warm yet gentle courtesy, as his daughter's friend and benefactor.

There was a whole world of things to be talked over between these two—Bessie and Mordaunt—and each had something to tell to satisfy the curious inquiries of the other.

"Do you not remember me at all, dearest daughter—not at all?" was a frequent inquiry made by Mordaunt.

"Well, only just a little bit—a little tiny, tiny bit, papa dearest," said Bessie. "You know I was only three years old when you left; and I only remember a dark-haired, handsome man; but now you're not dark-haired at all, at all—that is, at any rate it's as gray as it is dark, now isn't it, papa dearest? And, besides, you would never have known me, for I'm so awfully changed, if you had seen me anywhere else, you know—now would you, papa dearest?"

And Bernal Mordaunt, looking at her lovingly, could only say:

"Well, dear child, I must confess that the Inez I expected to see was different from you."

Bessie gave a gentle sigh. Then she

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smiled. Then she stooped forward and kissed his forehead.

"But you love your poor little Inez all the same, if she has grown to be an ugly little blonde—now don't you, papa dearest?" Mordaunt stroked her head fondly.

"Ah, my child!" said he, "I take you as you are, and thank Heaven for finding you so loving and so dear. Sorrow and hardship, dearest Inez, have made your father a very different man from the one you remember, and the father who comes back to you has not long to live."

"O papa!" murmured Bessie—"O papa! dearest, dearest papa, don't—don't—don't talk so! You really almost make me cry."

Mordaunt looked at her lovingly. Such affection as this, so tender, so devoted, was sweet indeed to him.

Mordaunt's account of his past life was not a very long one. It was the death of his wife that had been the cause of his departure from home, as Bessie already knew. Before that he had lived a life of unalloyed happiness and prosperity; living in splendor at Mordaunt Manor, and holding a leading position in the county. From all this the death of his wife had suddenly dashed him down. He had been passionately attached to her. Her death had been very sudden. In an instant all interest in life was lost, and all the sweetness and light of existence died out utterly, and were buried in her grave.

A resolution was then taken by him, which, under such circumstances, was not by any means so unusual as may be supposed. It was to devote himself to a religious life for the rest of his days. He was a Roman Catholic, and his Church afforded ample opportunities for the gratification of such a wish as this. His devotion to religion was profound and earnest. To him, in his dark and bitter grief, religion alone gave him any consolation; and amid such consolations he sought to bury himself. He flung himself into the arms of the Church. He became a priest. Finally, in order to carry out to the farthest his new desires, he sought to become a missionary to heathen countries. This desire was gratified without any very great difficulty.

At the outset he had taken steps to secure a fitting home for his children; and for this purpose had applied to Mr. Henniss, Wyverne, who was an intimate friend, and was,

also, a connection. This gentleman had consented to do what Mordaunt requested, and was appointed guardian of the Mordaunt children, and trustee of the estate till they should come of age. It was, therefore, with a feeling of perfect peace on his children's account that he had gone to his distant field of labor. While on his way to the East he had been attacked by the plague at Alexandria, and had the narrowest possible escape from death. Recovering, he had resumed his journey, and had spent many years in India. Finally, his health had broken down, and he was compelled to return to Europe.

Now, no sooner had his back been turned upon the scene of his labors and his face set toward Europe, than there arose within him a great longing to see his children, or at least to learn what had become of them. He had given himself up so entirely to the work which he had imposed upon himself, that he had held no communication of any kind with Mr. Wyverne; and so, on returning home, he was in perfect ignorance about their fate. He remained for a few days in Rome, and then travelled to London. He had to visit Milan and Geneva on his way. This took him through a part of Switzerland, and brought him to Villeneuve. There he was, without knowing it, brought face to face with Wyverne himself. Not until he reached Paris had he learned this, and then it was only from the papers and from certain inquiries which he made that he was able to find out the truth. This discovery was a most distressing one. He longed to see Wyverne, but now it was too late. He hurried back to Villeneuve, but the party had left, and the remains of the dead had been sent forward to London. He returned to Paris, and was detained there by ecclesiastical affairs for some time, after which he hurried to London.

On inquiring at Wyverne's house, he found that Miss Wyverne had gone away, and that the house was about to be closed. No one but servants were there, and none of these could give him any information. After laborious inquiries, he was able to find out Wyverne's solicitors, and called on them for information as to his daughters. But the information which they gave was only of the most general character. Their relations toward the late Mr. Wyverne, they told him, were not at all confidential, but only of an ordinary business character; and, consequently, they



knew nothing about his private affairs. Some years ago they had heard that the elder Miss Mordaunt had died abroad. The other one they believed was still alive, though they knew nothing at all about her.

The mournful intelligence of the death of one of his children was thus the first definite information which he had received; and beyond this it seemed difficult, if not impossible, to learn any thing. But his desire was now stimulated, if possible, still more to learn the whereabouts of his surviving child. He went back once more to Mr. Wyverne's house to question the servants. Most of them were new ones, none had been there more than three years, and of the affairs of the family they knew nothing, except what they had heard as the gossip of their predecessors. This was to the effect that Mrs. Wyverne had separated from her husband and was dead; that Miss Wyverne had lived at a boarding-school until the last year or so, and had gone to live with some relatives, they knew not where. He recalled the name of the old house-keeper who had once been there. It was Klein. He asked after her. He was informed that she had been dismissed for drunkenness. This was all.

He now sought after this Mrs. Klein. With the help of the police, he at last found her residence; but from the woman herself he could learn absolutely nothing. This arose partly from the drunken confusion of her brain, but partly also from some unaccountable suspicion which she seemed to entertain that he was meditating some injury to Miss Wyverne. She remained obstinate in her stupid unbelief in him, and from her disjointed and incoherent answers he could gather nothing.

After this there remained nothing for him but to go to Mordaunt Manor. At Kenwick he had learned that Miss Mordaunt had returned home, and was living there now. This filled him with hope, and he had come onward without delay. The concealment of his name arose merely from the desire to spare her the shock that might arise from too sudden a revelation, and also from a desire to see how far she might remember him.

Such was the substance of Mordaunt's story, and, of course, where he was in ignorance, Bessie was able to give him all the information that he desired.

She informed him, therefore, that Mr. Wy-

verne had been the kindest, the most affectionate, and the most thoughtful of guardians; that he had sent her away after his wife's departure to live with a relative of his, Mrs. Hlicks Lugrin; and that she had lived with her ever since, with one interruption. A year ago, Mr. Wyverne had invited her to come and stay with his daughter for a time; and she had been travelling with them when he died. She informed Mordaunt, to his intense amazement, that she had been at Villeneuve at the time of Mr. Wyverne's death; and, therefore, that they must have been in close proximity without suspecting it. Mr. Wyverne, she said, had suffered for years, and had been sent to the Continent by his physicians as a last resort. About Mrs. Wyverne she knew nothing whatever, nor had Miss Wyverne even mentioned her name.

About Clara Mordaunt Bessie had but little to say. Clara had been very much older than she was, nearly ten years, and had been sent to a boarding-school. She had died there, and her death had taken place about ten years ago.

Bessie's information, meagre as it was, gave Mordaunt all that he could learn now, since Mr. Wyverne, who alone could tell all, was dead. Her story was interlarded with characteristic remarks about Mr. Wyverne's kindness; about her "dear auntie's" affectionate care; about Miss Wyverne's gentle friendship, and her deep grief over her father's death; and about her own joy at such an unexpected termination to her own troubles.

"And as for poor, dear, darling Iny, you know, she has the same name that I have, papa dearest, and isn't that funny? and she used to call me Bessie, to prevent confusion, while I was living at poor, dear Mr. Wyverne's—she was the dearest and best of girls—and oh, so affectionate. It almost killed her, papa dear, for her to lose her dear papa. And wasn't it awfully sad, now? And she with never a care in the wide world before! Oh, but it was myself that had the sore heart for her! It was too hard for her to bear that same. She wasn't the one that would stand grief at all at all! And no more was I, by the same token; but, papa dear, really you know it seemed worse for her, because I was so very, very young. But she became quite changed. Her grief was too much for her, and you wouldn't have known her. For

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my part, I should have stayed with her till death, but I saw that she did not wish to have me; in fact, she herself went away to some of her friends, and wouldn't let me go with her, though I wished to so. But, then, I need not be sorry for that, for, by coming here, I've found you all the sooner—haven't I, papa dearest?"

While talking about Villeneuve, Mordaunt informed her of a cross which he had lost, and which he afterward thought had been lost there. On his return he had made inquiries about it, but without effect. No one had seen it. It was a precious relic—one which he had got made in memory of his dear wife, and had worn ever since.

"Of this cross Bessie knew nothing whatever."

Mordaunt also mentioned some lockets which he had left with Wyverne.

"They were three—one of my wife; one of Clara; and one of yourself, Inez. I at first took them with me, but I found that they only served as reminders of my incurable grief, and caused a distraction to my thoughts and affections, which, henceforth, I hoped would be centred exclusively on religion. For this cause I made a final sacrifice of my feelings, and concluded to leave them behind me. I sent them to poor Wyverne, but never heard from him about them. Did you ever see them? Did he ever mention them?"

Bessie shook her head.

"Oh, no, papa dear; no, never. For you know, of course, if I had seen them ever, I should remember; and how awfully nice it would be to see myself how I looked as a child—and only three—and much darker than I am now. Only fancy! Oh, but it's a strange thing entirely! But, of course, poor, dear Mr. Wyverne could never have received them, you know, papa dear—now, could he?"

To Mordaunt, this suggestion seemed a probable one, and he thought that Wyverne must have failed to receive those precious lockets, for, if he had, he would certainly have shown them to his dear daughter.

So remarkable an event as the return of Bernal Mordaunt after so long an absence, and after a general belief in his death, could not be long unknown. Society hastened to offer his congratulations, and to welcome the wanderer back to its fold. But the wanderer did not show any very strong desire to be wel-

comed. Society soon became aware of the fact that Bernal Mordaunt was desirous of quiet and seclusion. The sorrows and hardships of years had produced their natural effect upon his constitution, and he felt himself to be, as he told Bessie, a broken man. Aside from this, the profession which he had adopted, and the life that he had lived, had drawn him away altogether from the great world; nor could he any longer bring himself to feel any sympathy with that world, or its tastes, or its ways. What had he, the world-worn man, the missionary priest—what had he in common with a gay, thoughtless, and frivolous crowd; with a society as light and shallow as that which he saw around him? But there were yet a number of his old friends living who heard of his return with joy, and hastened to greet him. These, of course, were different from the common run, and Mordaunt received them with unfeigned pleasure and cordiality. Yet even these visitors could not help seeing that the old Bernal Mordaunt lived no longer. This man was like another person; his sympathies, and tastes, and feelings, had all changed. A few words of conversation about the old days served to exhaust the subject of the past; and then there remained no subject of common interest in the present. So, though Bernal Mordaunt tried to be cordial, and his old friends tried to be enthusiastic, yet the conditions of each had so changed that a feeling of dissatisfaction was the only result.

Bernal Mordaunt thus showed no desire to regain that position in the great world which had once been his; and might now do his if he had chosen to claim it. He had come home as a broken-down man, and he wished to remain home as quietly as possible. The calm of domestic joys, the dear delight of a daughter's fond affection, these were the only things which he now valued. A return to Mordaunt Manor brought back old associations, and revived all those memories which the years had only partially dimmed. Bessie became more beloved, more dear, and more precious to him every day. The old man had only this one object in all the world to love, and upon her he lavished all his affections. For her part, it must be confessed that no daughter could have been more affectionate, more attentive, more watchful of every mood of his, more solicitous of his comfort. She gave herself up to him completely.

There was an incessant vigilance in Bessie's watchful care of Mordaunt which surprised and delighted him, exciting his tenderest gratitude, and lending to most touching expressions of affection on his part. Even Sir Gwyn was now put in a secondary place. Bernal Mordaunt was supreme in Mordaunt Manor. Bessie was his daughter and his slave. Sir Gwyn saw the new idol of Bessie's heart, and had nothing to say or do but join in the common reverence. And this he did honestly and cordially.

The fact is, there never was a better fellow than this same Sir Gwyn Ruthven. He was desperately in love with Bessie by this time, and, though no formal declaration had as yet escaped his lips, still there was an evident understanding between them, and he felt that Bessie was aware of his feelings and desires. Now it happened that Bernal Mordaunt had come home at the very juncture when he wished to have Bessie most to himself, and the most critical time for his own prospects. Still the young fellow scarcely complained, even to himself. The restoration of a father, long mourned as dead, seemed to him to be an event which could be thought of with no other feelings than those of solemn joy; and Bernal Mordaunt had that in his face which excited in the mind of the young man the deepest reverence and even affection. Among those who greeted Bernal Mordaunt none was so cordial, so sincere, and so respectful, as Sir Gwyn.

Bernal Mordaunt scarcely noticed any others in that society which sent its representatives to welcome him; but Sir Gwyn Ruthven could not escape his notice, and, out of Mordaunt's own tender and vigilant parental feeling, he soon detected the love which Sir Gwyn had for Bessie. This discovery made him anxious to know more about the young baronet, and thus he sought him out; and the result was to create in his mind feelings of strong esteem for Sir Gwyn, and of thankfulness that his daughter should have won the regard of so worthy a man. This discovery also produced a change in his own attitude. He began to fear that he had been too selfish, and had been monopolizing too much of his daughter's time and care. He, therefore, tried to remain more by himself, so that he might not interfere in the slightest degree with his beloved daughter's happiness. Yet, strange to say, Bessie would not allow

this. She began to reproach him for growing tired of her already, and so Bernal Mordaunt had to give up his little plan of self-sacrifice, and indulge his paternal fondness for his daughter without any further fear of being *de trop*. But Sir Gwyn had no reason to complain, for he was always made cordially welcome by Mordaunt; and this species of domestic footing upon which he found himself could not be otherwise than pleasing.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### DAFFLED FANCIES.

AFTER that interview with Father Magrath, Kane Hellmuth returned to Paris with a graver sense of mystery, and a profounder feeling of gloom. The remarks of the priest had stung him to the very soul; and yet he did not see how they could have been intentional. He did not think it possible that this priest—a man whom he had never seen before, and one who certainly could never have seen him—could have penetrated that deep disguise which years and grief had thrown over him—a disguise far more effectual for concealment than any mere change of attire or arrangement of hair and beard. It seemed evident to him then that the priest's words, sharp and incisive though they were, must have been uttered quite spontaneously, and arose from his indignant sympathy with the injured Clara Mordaunt, without any suspicion that he was speaking to her murderer.

The faint hope, therefore, that had been raised within his mind by Blake's suggestions, had been dissipated by this interview with the priest, and his journey had proved worse than useless. All that he had heard had only served to confirm his worst fears, and to tear open afresh the old wound of his sorrow and remorse. But, in addition to this, there remained the mystery of the apparition, which was now even more inexplicable than ever. Had he been able to think for one moment that his brain, or his optic nerve, or even his digestive organs, might be in a diseased condition, or in a condition even approximating to it, he might then have had an easy explanation. But nothing of this was the case. His bodily frame in every part and every function had never been more sound and vigorous. The apparition, he believed, must

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have an objective existence, whatever it was. Its mysterious movements, the tremendous effect which it produced upon him in mind and body, the extraordinary expression of its face, and the never-to-be-forgotten look of its eyes as they rested upon him, all conspired to increase his conviction that there was something of the supernatural about it. He now could have no other expectation but that it would repeat its visits. With this expectation, he tried to nerve himself to a resolution to force himself out of that passive state in which he had sunk on former occasions, and to take some action—to accost it—or at least to follow it. In this way, if it were possible, he might be better able to fathom the mystery. But to nerve one's self up to a resolution in the absence of the terror was a far different thing from effecting it in its face and presence; no one knew this fact better than Kane Hellmuth, and he was too conscious of his weakness to make resolutions which could not be carried out. He could only resolve, in a general way, to struggle more strenuously against his weakness, and hope that another meeting would find him less unprepared.

It was in this frame of mind that Kane Hellmuth returned to his lodgings. Blake had not expected him back so soon, and therefore was surprised when his friend called at his own rooms. He had not entertained a visitor in those rooms since that memorable evening when Dr. O'Rourke told him the appalling story of the monk Aloysius. When Kane Hellmuth's knock came, he was thinking over that very circumstance, and wondering what had become of O'Rourke, from whom he had not heard a word since his departure. Various circumstances had intensified his interest in O'Rourke's project, which had at first seemed so wild, but which had been presented to him as so feasible. At the present time, he jumped up hastily and sprung to the door, expecting O'Rourke, and it was with a momentary feeling of disappointment that he saw Kane Hellmuth. But this visitor was also welcome, for he had been to London; he had perhaps seen Inez, and he could tell him how she was bearing the bereavement with which she had been afflicted.

So, no sooner had he recognized his friend, than he poured forth a current of questions. Had he actually been to London? - Why had he come back so soon? Had he found out

any thing? Had he seen Miss Wyverne? Had he heard any thing about her? Had he asked any thing about her? To all these questions Hellmuth listened in gloomy silence. At length, he seated himself, and then leisurely told the general outlines of his story. To this Blake listened with an impatience which he tried in vain to repress; and at length, as Hellmuth ended without having made any mention of the only subject about which he cared to hear, he once more reiterated his questions. To these, of course, Hellmuth could give no satisfactory answers. He had not seen her, and she had only been spoken of in a casual way by Father Magrath. He had mentioned her name, merely in connection with her recent bereavement. He told what the priest had said about the condition of Mr. Wyverne's affairs, and Blake was astonished and shocked to learn that the lady whom he had regarded as a great heiress was really no better than a penniless dependant. Of course, no idea ever entered his mind about the credibility of the priest's statements. The testimony of one who occupied so important and so confidential a position in the family as this man evidently did, was of itself final, and left no room for doubt in the mind of either.

Another deep impression was produced upon Blake by Father Magrath's treatment of Mr. Wyverne's dying declaration. He had half believed in their actual truth, and had led Inez to feel the same, though that truth seemed to him most bewildering and most incredible. Now, however, all such ideas would have to be dismissed. Father Magrath must know perfectly well the truth about the past life of his friend, and his summary rejection of Mr. Wyverne's declaration as utter nonsense, together with his very clear and natural explanation of the facts of the case, left no room for further discussion on that subject. After all, from almost any point of view, it was far easier to consider his words, as Father Magrath expressed it, the ravings of delirium, than as the sober utterance of reason. If any perplexity, now remained on Blake's mind with regard to this subject, it arose wholly out of his mother's mysterious language with reference to that man with whom he had become acquainted in so singular a manner, and Mr. Wyverne's own very remarkable regard for himself. Still, perplexing as these things

might be, he was now forced to conclude that they must be accounted for in any other way rather than that in which he had lately been interpreting them.

Both of these men, then, had been indulging in fancies, which now seemed to them not only unteachable but nonsensical.

These may be enumerated :

*First.* Kane Hellmuth had indulged in a vague hope that the wife who had died ten years ago might not have died at that time, as he supposed.

*Secondly.* That the mysterious apparition which so strongly resembled her might be accounted for on the ground that it was really herself.

*Thirdly.* Blako had fancied that Mr. Wyverne, when in the evident delirium of mortal illness, had been speaking the language of calm and sober reason.

*Fourthly.* He had, therefore, been led to believe in these delirious words, and to suppose that Inez Wyverne was not the daughter of Hennigar Wyverne.

*Fifthly.* For the same reason he had brought himself almost to the belief that he—Basil Blake, M. D.—was the son of this Hennigar Wyverne.

Now, all these fancies, and all other fancies connected with these more or less directly, were at once scattered to the winds; and Basil Blake could only congratulate himself that his unselfish consideration for Inez had prevented him from entering upon so absurd a search as this would have been. It was gratifying in other ways, too. He saw now that one trouble, which had so distressed Inez, would be dissipated; and he saw also that the false position, in which his own tenderly beloved and honored mother had been placed by Hennigar Wyverne's declaration, had no existence whatever.

All this time, as will be seen, both Kane Hellmuth and Blako remained in ignorance of one important fact. Neither of them had the slightest idea that Inez had left her home. If Father Mgrath had known this, he had at least chosen to say nothing whatever about it. According to his statement, Bernal Mordaunt was the father of Bessie; and, therefore, the belief which had caused the flight of Inez had apparently no place in his mind. The story which he had told Kane Hellmuth accorded in all points with the account which Bessie had given of herself to Inez, though

not altogether with the story which she had told Sir Gwyn, or the reminiscences of the past which she had narrated to Bernal Mordaunt himself. Inez, however, had indulged her own beliefs, and had acted upon her own impulses; and now, as has been seen, at the very time when Blake and Kane Hellmuth were holding this conversation, she was far away from her own home. While, therefore, Blake was eagerly questioning Kane Hellmuth about her, he had no idea that she had left her home, and that, too, with Paris for her destination—that she might, even now, be not very far from him. But such a thing could not possibly be suspected under any circumstances, and the dismissal of his fancies made it inconceivable to him that she should be anywhere else than at home.

Among all the facts which Blake gathered from Kane Hellmuth's account of his visit, the one that produced, perhaps, after all, the most profound effect upon him, was the startling and unexpected announcement of her poverty.

At first this shocked him, but afterward other feelings arose within him. She was no longer a great heiress! Her father's wealth, it seemed, was all fictitious. The great heiress was an utterly destitute and penniless dependant. She would have, henceforth, to trust for her very daily bread to the bounty or the pity of her friends.

A tumult of emotion arose within Blake's heart; and, after the first natural feeling of pity or regret, there came a sense of gratification and triumph. Such feelings were quite natural. For, hitherto, the great wealth of Miss Wyverne had seemed almost appalling to one in his situation, with his feelings toward her, and hopes. Her wealth elevated her far above him, so far, indeed, that he almost despaired of ever reaching so high. He could only hope to attain to an equality with her by some sudden stroke of Fortune. He shrank from the position of even an apparent fortune-hunter; and his high sense of honor and manly pride recoiled from the apprehension of the world's comments upon him, even if it should be possible for him to win so great an heiress. It was this great difference in their positions that had held him back even when Mr. Wyverne had so strongly favored his advances, and had over and over again prevented him from saying to her that which he longed to say, and which she herself some-

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times seemed not unwilling to hear. Now, however, the difference was destroyed. He found himself on a level with her, not by his own elevation, but through her depression. Had he been merely a friend, he would have felt sorrow, but, being an ardent lover, he rejoiced. It gave him hope. As soon as the first sharpness of her recent bereavement should be mitigated, he might go to her and tell her all. It only remained for him to make himself able to give her a home in order to ask her to be his.

This now became his one idea—to win Inez.

But, in order to win her, it would be necessary for him greatly to improve his present position. Just now, he was doing no more than enabled him to support himself and assist his mother. Under present circumstances, he could not gain her. The one thing that he wanted was a rise in life. He wanted it immediately. He was burning with impatience, if not to win Inez at once, at least to see his way toward gaining such a prize.

Kane Hellmuth left, and Basil Blake was alone. Now, there came back the thought which he had entertained when Kane Hellmuth's knock had startled him. He recalled the memorable interview with Dr. O'Rourke—the story of Aloysius. One thought arose, and stood forth prominently in his mind, rising up to grander proportions, till all his excited soul was filled with one vision—a vision of splendor unutterable—of wealth illimitable—the vision which O'Rourke's vehement words had once before imparted to his imagination, and which now once more arose and would not be driven away—the treasure of the Cæsars.

At another time, and under other circumstances, Blako might have reasoned away his gathering faith in O'Rourke's theory; but now his love for Inez, his impatience to win her, his own poverty, her dependence, his intense desire for some immediate action, all forced his thoughts to dwell upon this, and caused him to give to it that faith which he will rather than his reason dictated. Some treasure might be there, at any rate. Whether it had been buried there in ancient or in mediæval times mattered not. As long as any treasure might be there, whether of the Cæsars or the popes, the Hohenstaufens or the Roman barons, it was worth a search.

Failure could do no harm; it could involve no loss; while success would give him all that his wildest fancies could portray. In spite of himself, therefore, his thoughts constantly reverted more and more every day to this dazzling, this transcendent, this unparalleled project; and, while he struggled to repress too great eagerness of hope, the remembrance came to his mind of all those vehement arguments with which O'Rourke had once before reasoned down his incredulity, and enforced at least a temporary acquiescence in the credibility of his theory. He recalled also the minuteness of details which had characterized the story of Aloysius, and the stress which O'Rourke had laid upon this; he recalled what he knew of the character of O'Rourke himself, a man who, as far as he could judge, seemed too hard and practical, too much possessed of common-sense, to become a prey to visionary projects; and, to Blake's mind, O'Rourke's own character appeared one of the strongest arguments in favor of the bulk of his theory.

During Blake's stay at St. Malo, the events of his life had been so interesting that O'Rourke's plan had become, if not forgotten, at least obscured by other things. In the presence of Inez, even the treasure of the Cæsars became a matter of small importance. The days passed, and, as every day Inez Wyverno occupied a larger space in his thoughts, so O'Rourke and his projects became less and less prominent. At length the tragedy of Villeneuve occurred, and Inez suddenly became alienated. Between him and her a gulf seemed to have opened, arising from that mysterious declaration of the delirious father, which seemed to place them both in so false a position toward one another. This last occurrence had furnished Blake's mind with new thoughts, and the alienation of Inez had given him new anxieties. Thus they had separated; and, while the coldness of Inez had prevented her from exhibiting the warmth of common friendship, his own delicacy and his respect for her grief had prevented him from showing in any way the deeper feelings of his own heart.

But now, under these new circumstances, every feeling that could influence him combined to direct his thoughts once more to the forgotten plans of O'Rourke. Day succeeded to day, and the more he thought of it the more did his thoughts cling to it. Week succeeded to

week, and these thoughts came to be uppermost in his mind. It came at last to this: that it was simply impossible for him to take any interest in any other thing so long as this should be undecided. So brilliant a plan for securing at one stroke the fortunes of his life was not to be easily set aside or lightly disregarded; more than this, it forced itself more and more upon his attention, and finally engrossed all his thoughts.

So aggressive were these thoughts, and so absorbing, that all other things at length lost their interest; and, so long as this was held in suspense, he was unfit for any thing else. Kane Hellmuth could not help seeing that Blake was preoccupied, and profoundly interested in some purpose; but what it was he forbore to inquire. Blake never alluded to the subject, even in the remotest way. He remembered O'Rourke's warning, and was resolved that no carelessness or rash confidence of his should endanger the success of this great enterprise.

Meanwhile, the days passed on, and the weeks also, and O'Rourke gave no sign. As the time passed, Blake waited, expecting every day to hear from him or see him. Between his interview with O'Rourke and his return to Paris, eight weeks had elapsed; several weeks more had passed away since, and still there was no sign. The three months would soon be up.

What then?

The longer his suspense lasted the greater his impatience grew, and at length that impatience became intolerable. It caused innumerable speculations as to the result of O'Rourke's attempts thus far. Sometimes he feared that O'Rourke had changed his mind about taking an assistant, and had resolved to do all the work himself. At other times he feared that some disaster might have occurred, and that the bold explorer into those subterranean realms had paid for his temerity with his life. Again his fears took a new shape, and led him to suppose that the experiment had been tried, the search had been made, and had resulted in such a total failure that O'Rourke had retired in shame and disappointment too deep to allow him even to give notice of his failure to his proposed confederate. This fact of Blake's anxiety, and of his numerous speculations about the causes of O'Rourke's silence, shows better than any thing else how com-

pletely this treasure-hunting scheme had taken possession of his soul.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE RETURN OF ANOTHER MESSENGER.

At length one day a telegraphic dispatch was brought to Blake. He opened it, with a vague thought that it might be some ill news from his mother, from whom he had heard nothing for some time. It was not from England. It was from Rome. It was from O'Rourke. Blake's heart beat high with hope as he read it, though in those few words there was but little of a definite character. The dispatch was as follows:

*"Have made good beginning. Be Paris two days. Be ready."*

The three months were almost up when this came. Blake's fever of excitement had reached its height. His suspense was becoming intolerable. In the midst of such feelings this message came, and served to stimulate his hope to the utmost. In that meagre dispatch there was no mention made of the particulars of the Roman expedition, but O'Rourke spoke of a "good beginning," and told him to be ready. He could not wish for any thing better. It was all that O'Rourke had proposed to do by himself. Any thing more he had already decided to defer, even to attempt, until he should have a companion and an assistant. Best of all, O'Rourke would be here in two days, and he would know all.

The two days passed slowly. Blake saw Kane Hellmuth once. The two friends had but little to say. Hellmuth was preoccupied. Something unusual had occurred, but Blake had too much on his own mind to notice it. Had not Blake himself been so taken up with that dazzling plan which now filled all his thoughts, and lured him on constantly with a restless fascination, he could not have failed to notice the troubled aspect of his friend's face. Some new thing had evidently happened, but what it was Blake did not ask, nor did Kane Hellmuth tell.

That same evening Blake was alone in his room. He expected O'Rourke on the arrival of the Marseilles train; and, if he did come by that, he could not hope to see him much before midnight. Time passed. At last midnight came. About half an hour afterward

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Blake heard steps ascending the stairway. In uncontrollable excitement he sprang to the door and looked out. He met O'Rourke face to face.

"Well, me boy," said the latter, wringing Blake's hand heartily, "here I am again. I haven't disappointed ye, havé I? Oh, by the powers! but isn't it the hard time I've had! Sure it's meself that's been going to give up latirely, over and over agin. Still for all, mind ye, it wasn't the trisure, or the catacombs, at all, at all. The difficulties arose merely in the attempt to get a futhold, and juring the failure that was consequent from the obchousness of the people. But I'll talk ye all. Have ye iver a drop of whiskey, thin?"

Blake hurried to his closet and brought forth a bottle, which he placed by the side of a decanter of wine, that already stood upon the table, and then produced a glass.

"I have cognac," said he, "but I'm sorry to say I have no whiskey."

O'Rourke gave a sigh.

"Well, well," said he, "it's no bad substitute," and, with these words, he poured out some cognac. Then he flung himself into an easy-chair, and, holding the glass in his hand, sat leaning back for a few minutes sipping the cognac. At length, he put down the glass, and then drew a long breath of satisfaction.

"Well, Blake, me boy," said he, "I'll tell ye all about it from beginning to ind; all the whittal and ehumulit of ivjints that have happened juring my absence, and ye'll discerrun for yerself the difficulties I've had to contend with.

"In the first place, ye'll be surprised to hear that all this time thus far has been consumed, not in any subterranean labor, but simply in the attempt to get a house. Ye see, it isn't ivery house that'd do. There were only a certain number in the immajiate vicinity of the monastery of San Antonio. It would have been quite useless to git a house any distance away. Now, ye know, the monastery is on the Via dei Conti, and the passage of Aloysius takes its beginning from the west wall—in the very middle of that wall, according to the description of me own cousin Malschi, monk that was, and is now in glory. This passage, as I have all along infarrumed you, runs in a direction which must lead to the Roman Forum—now the Campo

Vacchino—and the Palatine Hill. Of course, any house I'd be after renting must be situated in sufficient proximity to the monastery to allow of the possible engineering a way to the passage of Aloysius; or, if I could get a house on the ground, in the rear of the monastery, it would do as well, for thin the passage could be tackled more directly. Well, this, of course, was the thing I tried to do, but it was the very thing I couldn't do. I could git upper room quality enough, but the lower flure was the thing I couldn't git. Thin, there was sich indiffirbrence, sich a lack of interprise, sich churrullishness and shupinness, that over and over I felt inclined to throw up the kyards and returrun home in despair.

"Howandiver, sich a prize as the one I had before, me was not one that was to be given up, merely because there happened to be a few obstacles at the outset, ispecially when these obstacles arose from nothing more than the obchousness and shupinness of min, and other things which could easily be continded with. So I kipt on, and, though week after week passed away without any thing being done, yet I persevered, and finally mit with an opporchunity, which I at once seized a holt of. This opporchunity was a large house, which was one of the foulest, and vilest, and most dilapidated in the city. For this cause I had niver so much as given it a thought; for, ye see, my idea was to hire the lower story of some house, which might pass for a shuitable residence for a man in moderate circumstances, who was indivoring to live economically. Now, the momint that I saw this old rack of a house, the thought came to me that this would be the place. I need not take it as a lodger, but I might jint the intire structure. It was a large, quadrangular idifice, and was crammed and crowded with the lowest class of the population. I went to the owner, and riprinted that I wanted to instichoot a manufactory there of a new kind of maccaroni, and offered to rent the whole building. There was no difficulty about that. I offered him a good price, and he accepted it; but the real difficulty was with the tintins, who were unwilling to go. Howandiver, they were all poor, and tintins by the week, and a few baiocchis apiece sufficed to make thin, one and all, leave very contintedly. So at last the big house came empty into my hands, but the delay in gitting the tintins all moved out was so great, that it was not till a week ago



that I was able to enter in and take forranel possession.

"Well, sir, there niver was a luckier chance in the wide wurruld than the one that put me in possession of that particular house. It was four stories high. It was at least five centuries old, and maybe tin. The walls were solid and massive; the windows small and iron-grated; on the lower stories the windows worn't open to the street at all, but looked out on the court-yard. Only the upper stories had windows on the street, and these were barred and grated, as I said. It was quadrangular in shape; and the dure was of massive oak, studded with iron spikes. I had a bit of a hinge put on one the first day, and that's about the tint of the repairs which I've put on it thus far. Ye see, when I open my macerouli manufacture, the repairs can be enlarged. Deed, thin, but repairs are needed; the roof is open in half a dozen places, and the plaster everywhere is tumbling from the walls. But the massiveness of the house is wonderful. It was undoubtedly built in the old days of faction and street-fighting; perhaps in the days of Boniface VIII., or maybe in those of old Hildebrand, or maybe as far back as the times of Theodora and Marozis. Ye may depind upon it, I was the happy man that day as I saw this.

"Thin, spart from this, the situation was the very one that was best shuited to my purposes. In the seclusion of this obscure street, one's operations need not be inquired into, nor need they be so carefully gyarded as they would have to be elsewhere. Thin, it lies in the rear of the Monastery of San Antonio. Take a point in the middle of the west wall of the monastery as one point, and thin take the Arch of Titus as another, and between these two points draw a straight line. Well, the north wall of this old house won't be more'n a few feet distant from that line. What d'ye think of that, now? Wasn't that luck? Wasn't that worth waiting for?"

"Well, of course, my only idea was to examine without delay the lower portions of the house. So, first of all, I had the bit of a hinge put on, and thin had the bolts fixed so that I could shut the dures and bar thim. When I did that, I could defy the wurruld. Before I did so, I had a bit of a pick brought in, and that was all, barrin' lights, and a bit of food and drink. Ye may depind upon it,

when I shut meself inside, thin I felt safe. It was a fortress. No one could spy me, no one could assail me. The walls, of schupindous thickness, enclosed me; and, if the old roof was a bit dilapidated, sorra a bit of difference did that make.

"Well, now, you must know this, and it's a great thing in our favor. The monastery of San Antonio is on ground that is a little higher than that on which the old house stands; about six or eight feet, no more. That was another thing I deticted at a glance, and, of course, congratulated meself about it. For why? Why, ye see, the cellars of the house would then be thereabouts on somewhere the same general livil with the livil of the lowermost vaults of San Antonio. Of course, my first visit was made to the cellars. They were very spacious, and ran all underneath the house. I merely wished to see their tint, and also to test the rock, to try how hard it was, whether it would yield easily to the pick, or whether I would have to make use of gunpowder. If it was the same rock as that in which the Catacombs are excavated, of course I knew I should have no difficulty; but, unfortunately, I couldn't be sure of that; for there's another stratum of rock that lies under Rome, of a very different character. This is travertine, a stone of wonderful nature, as porous as a sponge, looking like the petrifications of innumerable little twigs, yet as hard as flint; and, with stone like that, I knew I couldn't do any thing. I also wished to peep upon the walls of the cellar to find out if there might be excavations or hollows between the walls on either side; for there was another thing I wanted to show me that the Catacombs were near.

"Well, ye may be sure I wint to the south wall first and forrumost. I wasn't going to waste any time on other places. Well, the south wall was all built up of stones of different sizes. This surprised me a little at first, for I had a vague idea that I'd find solid rock, but such an idea was shuperlatively absurd, for what could they do without a regular, firmly-built foundation? Well, I pounded along this wall all the whole length without obtaining any satisfactory results, for there was the same sound all along, and, if there was any hollow behind, it didn't show itself that way. My chief hope was that I might break away the wall and git to the soft Catacomb rock; my dread was that I should

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find the hard travertine, or the soft sand. Under Rome there are these three strata: the hard travertine, such as is used for building purposes; the soft sand, out of which the Roman cement is made; and the soft sandstone, where the excavations were made for the Catacombs. It is only where this last occurs that the Catacombs exist, and so all my hopes depend upon the kind of ground that I might encounter behind the wall.

"I went to work vigorously. The stones began to give way after a few blows of the pick. I got out the small ones first, and then went to work at a good-sized bit of a rock, and, after about two hours' hard work, I fetched it out on the flure.

"Well, there was plaster behind that again, and other stones, so I had to enlarge the breach to an extent commensurate with what now appeared the evident thickness of the wall. It was the foundation-wall, ye'll understand, of an edifice, built in the middle ages, when every house had to be a man's castle, and this was as strong as a castle. I worked all night long, and still the more rocks I pulled out the more there were behind. By morning I had a hole six feet wide and six feet deep, and still there were no signs of any end. Well, I had to leave off and seek some repose. I slept, rested, and refreshed myself all that day, and on the following night returned to my work. I had worked out another big stone that lay at the end of my excavation. It rolled down the slanting line of the rubbish that lay in the hole, and it was a wonder it didn't take me with it. As it left its place, I discerned something dark. I rushed forward, and held my light far in. It was an opening. I thrust my arm forward. I could feel that I had reached the outside of the foundation-wall, and that beyond this there was emptiness.

"Tare and ages, Blake! but I was the wonderful man at that moment. I fell to trembling all over. My hand shook to that extent that I had to leave down the light on the flure, and stand still, panting and suffocating, with my eyes fixed on that same. My head seemed as empty as that emptiness beyond, and inside of me skulked my brain went round in a wild whurrul, and I was for a few moments reduced to a state of prostration so extreme that I couldn't resume my work for ever so long. Howandiver, I picked up my scattered senses at last, and my lamp too, and

thin, returning to the hole I'd made, I tried to enlarge it. It was rather dangerous work just then—and, indeed, it had been so for some time past—but I was too excited to think much about it, and so I succeeded, after a half-hour's desperate work, in making a hole large enough for me to put my head and shoulders through. By that time I had got over my excitement altogether, and I wasn't going to let myself be thrown off my guard again. So I took me bit of a light and stuck it through, and then pushed my head and shoulders in after it. Well, my first feeling was one of deep disappointment, but this was instantly succeeded by one of wonder. The emptiness that lay there was only of a small extent. It was a hollow cavity, that was all; horizontal; about six feet long, and three feet wide, and two feet high. Beyond this, on the other side, was the rock, which here was white and smooth. I say I first felt disappointment, but, after about seventeen seconds, as I said, I was filled with wonder. There could be no doubt that it was a grave, and, as I believed firmly, a Catacomb grave. But how had it come here? I accounted for it at once in the easiest way possible. The builders of this house, in digging for a cellar, had come to this grave, and perhaps even to one of the passage-ways with many other graves. They, no doubt, considered them as the graves of the old pagans, and scattered their ashes to the winds; or, if any one of them could read—or, if they sent for a priest to decipher the tablets, they, no doubt, saw that they were Christian dead, and had them all riverentially removed to another place, after which they continued their work of building. That was the way I accounted for it in my own mind during the few minutes that I lay there with my head and shoulders poked through, looking at this empty sepulchre.

"Well, as I lay there, staring all around, my attention was suddenly arrested by the great difference that there was between the stone that faced me, forming the back of the sepulchre, and the rock in which the tomb was cut; for the rock was brown sandstone, quite rough, too, with the marks of the chisel plainly discernible; while the stone at the rear was white and smooth, with no chisel-marks in particular. A closer look showed me that it was marble, and that it was joined on from another side which lay outside of this where I was. In a moment I compre-

hind the facts of the case. The excavations had been cut in the rear of the grave; that slab showed the front of it. If so, there must be a passage-way on the other side. The moment that this thought came to me, I scrambled back, seized the pick, returned once more to the hole, and then dealt a dozen punches with all me force at the marble. I was right. The marble yielded; a few more blows forced it farther away; and, finally, with a dull thud and a low crash, fell in. In another minut I was in after it, with me lamp in me hand, looking around me with wild eyes. And oh, but wasn't that the moment of all moments! Holy saints and angels! but wasn't I the frantic and delirious man! It was a passage-way; with all the marks, and signs, and appurtenances, which characterize the passages of the Catacombs; with the slabs, and the inscriptions, and the tiers of tombs, and the black darkness in the distance, into which the faint lamp-light only struggled a few feet or so, and then died out. And, oh, but I was fairly overwhelmed once more, so that I just sat down there and bint me head down, and cried like a child!"

O'Rourke hastily poured out another glass of cognac, which he gulped down, and then went on:

"Well, there I was, in the Catacombs, in the very part of the Catacombs I wished to be, that is, the Palatine Catacombs, and in the rear, that is toward the west of the Monastery of San Antonio. Still, the question remained—what the passage was. No doubt, as I had all along considered, there were numerous passage-ways here, just like the one which I wished to find. I could not be satisfied till I had learned something more about this. So I tuk me lamp, and I started to walk along on me left, for I knew that the Monastery of San Antonio lay in that quarter. Well, as I wint along, I saw nothing but the slabs that covered the tombs and bore the usual inscriptions. They were familiar enough to me; for I'd seen the likes of them over and over in the Lapidarian Gallery, or the Vatican Museum. So I strolled along without paying any special attention to any of them. I was surprised to find that there were no transverse passages, and thought this was a good sign. At length, I began to wonder at the distance I had gone, and to fear that, after all, this was the wrong passage-way, when suddenly I found meself brought up full

in front of a wall. The ind was walled up. I could go no farther. There was no doubt about it. This was the Monastery of San Antonio; this was, injubitably, the intrance into the vault—walled up—and this was most certainly the *Passage of Aloysius*.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### BLAKE TAKES LEAVE OF HIS FRIENDS.

DURING this account of himself, O'Rourke had watched Blake very intently, to see the effect produced upon him. If he had wished to create an excitement in Blake's mind, he certainly had every reason to feel gratified. Already, even before he had come, Blake's tumult of hopes and fears had been excessive; and now, during this singular narrative, his emotion reached its climax; so great was it, in fact, that it seemed to deprive him of the power of speech; and he had sat there spell-bound and mute. Not one word did he say all this time; but, by his rigid attitude, his clasped hands, his heightened color, his glistening eyes, he plainly showed how intense was the excitement within him. Yet the story of O'Rourke had been so narrated that he had all along been kept in suspense, and therefore his attention had been quickened, and his excitement increased, all through, until finally it reached its climax at the end, when O'Rourke came to the convincing proof, and the plain declaration, that he had discovered and traversed the passage of Aloysius.

"By Heaven!" he burst forth; "I swear, O'Rourke, all this seems almost incredible." O'Rourke smiled.

"I've got something," said he, "that'll settle the doubts of any man. Look here." And he slowly produced from his pocket a rosary. It was old, and stained, and discolored. It seemed as though it had been exposed to damp for a long time.

"What's that?" asked Blake.

"Well, that's more than I can say, for certain; but I'll tell you how I got it. I've told ye how I got to the end of the passage—by the Monastery of San Antonio. Well, I stayed there a few moments, and then returned to the place of entrance. Arriving there, I did not feel inclined to leave just yet, so I tuk to wanderin' along, thinking that I

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asked Blake. e than I can say, for u how I got it. I've e ind of the passage— San Antonio. Well, I oments, and this re- of interance. Arriving olined to leave just yit, along, thinking that I

might go at least as far as some transverse passage, especially as this had been mentioned in the manuscript. So I walked on, and, at length, after I had gone about as far from the interance as it was from that spot to the monastery, I found another passage crossing, and, looking forward, I could see where the passage of Aloysius still ran on, losing itself in the darkness. Well, I wasn't prepared for an exploration, so I felt satisfied, and returned in a leisurely way. This fust transverse passage corroborated, as you see, the manuscript story, together with the story of me cousin Malachi, in ivory particular. And now, as I walked back, I noticed the slabs with the inscriptions. I stopped to look at a few. I noticed the mixture of letters which Aloysius mentioned; that is to say, Greek characters were mingled with Latin, and Greek names and words were spelled with Latin letters. It was this that confused Aloysius, no doubt, who couldn't have known a word of Greek, nor even the Greek alphabet. Most of these slabs were dingy and grimy, and the letters were not very deep out or well formed. At length I noticed one that was less dingy. It was the second from the floor, in a tier of four, and the letters were deep out and well made. I stopped, and held up my lamp to read it. Well, there I saw the usual monogram, which I described to you before, ye remember, and under it I read these words:

"*In Christo. Pax. Antonino Imperatore, Marius miles sanguinem effudit pro Christo. Dormit in Pace.*"

"By Jove!" cried Blake. "You didn't though, did you? Why, that's the very inscription that Aloysius mentioned!"

"The very inscription," said O'Rourke, solemnly. "You may imagine how I felt. I can't describe. Anyhow, there I stood, leaning forward, and reading this, when suddenly I trod on something that gave a dull rattle like gravel. I stooped down, and saw a lot of these beads. Some were lying in a line, others had been thrust aside by my feet. The string that had fastened them together was gone. It had, no doubt, mouldered away. Now, whose could that have been? Not the rosary of an ancient Christian, for they didn't have them. Not the rosary of me cousin Malachi, for the string couldn't have rotted away in so short a time; it must, then, have been

the rosary of the monk Aloysius, or of the poor Onofrio; one of those two, no doubt; and, perhaps, when they stopped to read this epitaph, it fell from the one it belonged to without its fall being noticed. I picked up all the beads, and I put a bit of a string through them, for convenience' sake."

Blake took the rosary, and looked at it with indescribable interest.

"Yes," said he, "it must be, as you say, the rosary of Aloysius."

"Of course, it must," said O'Rourke.

"It's perfectly amazing," said Blake.

"Excuse me," said O'Rourke, "it's all perfectly natural. The only wonderful thing about it all is, that I should have been lucky enough to break into the grave. If I had come to the solid stone, I might have had a month's hard work, at least. But, when once I got inside, it was quite natural, when you think of it, that I should find this very passage of Aloysius."

"I suppose it is," said Blake, still looking at the beads.

O'Rourke now poured out another glass of cognac.

"Well," said he, as he sipped it, "what are ye going to do? Are ye ready?"

"Of course," said Blake, "not only ready, but eager. I'm ready to start off now, this very instant."

"That's right," said O'Rourke; "and ye haven't told any one?"

"Not a soul—of course not."

"Well, I didn't know; a man sometimes has connections that it's difficult to keep a secret from. Ye're a young man, ye know; handsome, and mighty taking with the ladies; and, if ye had one in tow, she might see in yer face that ye were after something, and worrum it out of ye."

"Oh, no; there's nothing of that kind going on," said Blake, with a mournful thought of Inez.

"Well, I'm glad to hear it, for it would spoil all," said O'Rourke. "At any rate, here I am, and here you are, and every thing's ready. We needn't leave this moment, but we'd better start as soon as we can. Will ye be able to go by the mornning's train?"

"Yes."

"Any letters ye have to write ye can write to-night, and mail as we go to the station, only ye won't say any thing about what it is ye're after?"

"Of course not. I shall simply write one or two letters, and mention that I am going out of town on business for a month or so."

"That's right," said O'Rourke, with evident gratification. "Thin, if nothing does come of it, ye won't git laughed at. We'll keep our own secret, and, if we fail, there'll be no harrum done at all, at all. I'm glad ye kept the secret so well. It shows that my judgment about ye was right, and I'm glad of it. A companion and assistant I must have, and I'd rather have you than anybody I know of. Ye'll be not only a fellow-laborer and business partner, but also a friend in case of need. I couldn't get on alone at all, at all. I'm not timid, and I'm not what you'd call shuperstitious, but working alone down there in a place like that is a test of a man's nerves that I don't care to impose on myself. Besides, apart from that, there's worruk required down there that one man wouldn't be enough for. We've got to take ropes, and ladders, and lights, and, in the event of success, we've got to carry some store of articles that'll be likely to have some weight in them for a long distance. There ought to be enough down there to satisfy two men, or, for that matter, two thousand, so I don't object to go halves with ye for the pleasure of yer company."

"Well, old fellow, come now, it don't seem hardly fair to you to come in for so much, when you have had all the trouble thus far, and the secret is yours, too."

"Pooh! we needn't talk now about the division," said O'Rourke; "that's counting the chickens before they're hatched in the worruk way. It may be a total failure, so it may. Ye'd best be after trying to prepare yourself for any disappointmint."

"Oh, well, of course I shall do that, you know."

"And ye'll have time to write to yer friends."

"Yes."

"How many letters did ye say ye'd have to write?"

"Two."

"Two? Him! and ye'll have to be ready to start at five, and it's now half-past one," said O'Rourke. "I must be after going."

"Half-past one!" said Blake, in surprise. "Why, so it is; I had no idea it was so late."

"Well, I'll be goin'," said O'Rourke; "so ye'll write yer letters at once to yer two friends? I hope they're not both ladies?"

"Oh, no, only one of them is a lady."

"And ye'll be very guarded, so as not to let on what ye're after doing?" said O'Rourke, cautiously.

"Oh, you may trust me for that."

"Well, I'll be going, and let me advise ye to try to get some sleep. Ye're too excited, man. Write yer letters, go to bed, and sleep the sleep of the just. Thin ye'll be better prepared for future worruk and future excitement. Ye're altogether too flushed, and excited, and feverish-looking just now."

"Well, I dare say I am just a little more excited than usual," said Blake; "but it will pass away soon enough."

"Well, I'll be going," said O'Rourke again. "I'll come here for ye in the mornning. Good-night."

He wrung Blake's hand with his usual heartiness, and then left.

After his departure, Blake sat for some time without moving. The intense excitement into which he had been thrown by O'Rourke's story still affected him. His heart beat fast and furious, and a thousand dazzling visions of endless treasures swept before his mind. All the accumulated fancies of the last few days now arose up together in one vast assemblage, till his brain fairly reeled beneath their overmastering power. He was confounded by the magnitude of his own hopes; he was bewildered by the immensity of the treasure which O'Rourke had suggested.

He sat motionless for about an hour, when suddenly he started to his feet.

"This will never do," he murmured; "I must write those letters."

He then went to the table and poured out some cognac, which he drank off hurriedly. Then he procured writing-materials, and sat down to write. But it was a very difficult task. His mind was so full of other things that his dazzling thoughts intruded themselves into his letter, making nonsense of it. Three or four were torn up and thrown aside. At last he managed to write out a rough draft, full of corrections, and, after reading this over, it seemed as well as any thing else that he could write under the circumstances. This, then, he copied out, and what he wrote was the following:

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"Ye are not."

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"He sprang up, and saw O'Rourke, who burst into a shout of laughter."—Page 99.

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"MY DEAR HELLMUTH: I intend to start off in the first train to-morrow on business. I have heard of a chance of doing something in the South, and think it advisable to try. I may be gone some time, and I may return in less time. A party is going to accompany me, with whom I propose to associate myself. Nothing may come of this, but I think it is best, under the circumstances, for me to try what can be done. On the whole, I think it is advisable to try. It is somewhere in the South, and my friend who goes with me will do what he can. I may return soon, but I don't know, and if I can do anything I may not come back for some time.

"Yours very truly,  
"BASIL BLAKE."

On reading this over, it struck Blake as a most absurd production, but he had already made some half-dozen previous attempts which were even worse, and so, in despair, he concluded to let it go as it was, and not attempt another. It was better to write something than to vanish suddenly without a word, and, at any rate, in spite of the absurdity of the note, it did convey a friendly notice to Hellmuth of his departure. So Blake folded this, and addressed it to Kane Hellmuth.

The next letter was even a greater task, for the effort to write the first one had in some measure increased his confusion of mind, and caused him to express himself even more awkwardly. After over an hour of hard work he accomplished the following:

"MY DEAR MOTHER: I have not heard from you for some time. It is more than a month since I have heard from you. You informed me that you were going to go to London, and I have not heard from you since. I would go home and see how you are, for I feel some anxiety about you, but just now an event has occurred which seems to promise something in the way of professional advancement. If it turns out well, I may stay there some time. If it does not turn out well, I may not stay there some time. The party who is going there with me is a friend of mine, and a professional friend of mine. He thinks the chances there are good, and, if so, we shall both of us probably remain there some time probably. However, I do not know exactly how long we shall stay there; some time, however, in case of success; but,

if not, of course not. You need not write unless you write to me; however, we may not be gone very long probably.

"A party has mentioned a good prospect of success in the South—a professional friend of mine, and we shall probably work together. I shall not probably write to you again until the next time I write. I think, therefore, that I had better leave in the first train to-morrow morning; but, if we are not successful, of course I shall probably be back soon. Unless we succeed, I shall, however, not make a very long stay. However, that depends upon circumstances to some extent.

"You will probably be surprised, dear mother, to learn that it is my intention to leave this city by the first train to-morrow morning for the South. The reason of this somewhat sudden departure is this: there is a professional friend of mine who has been talking to me about that country, and he would like me to go with him. If we are successful, we may not, however, return long. I have decided to go in the first train to-morrow morning to the South with a party who is a professional friend of mine, and we both hope to find a place there where we shall be able to do better for ourselves. In case I am successful, I hope, of course, that you will write me as often as you possibly can, for I am beginning to feel quite anxious about you. Hoping soon to hear from you—I shall, therefore, go and see for myself. Write me often, dear mother, and believe me your affectionate son,

"BASIL."

Blake did not read this letter over, but managed to fold it and put it in the envelop. He had not enough of consciousness left to address it; but, having gone that far, his head fell forward on the table, and he slept profoundly.

He had not been sleeping long before he was roused by a rough shaking. He sprang up and saw O'Rourke, who burst into a shout of laughter.

"So this is the way you sleep, is it?" he cried. "Your head on the table and your door open to the public. So you've got your letters written, though one of them isn't addressed. It might go straighter if you were to address it."

Blake stared and stammered, and it was some time before he could collect his scattered faculties.

"He sprang up, and saw O'Rourke, who burst into a shout of laughter."—Page 99.



"Why—why—you just left—"

"Tare and ages, man! why, it's five o'clock," cried O'Rourke.

"Five o'clock!" gasped Blaké.

"Yes. Are you ready? Are your trunks packed? Ye needn't take mor'n a valise with ye. But ye'll be after gathering up yer duds, and not leaving thim scattered about."

Upon this Blake hurriedly went about gathering some things which he threw into a valise. Those which he did not want to take with him he flung into a trunk, and then locked it. Then, at O'Rourke's suggestion, he addressed the letter to his mother, and stuffed the two in his pockets. Then, hurriedly attending to his toilet, he announced that he was ready.

They then went down. A cab was ready. Blake told the *conciierge* to take care of his trunk.

On their way to the station he dropped his letters in the post-office box.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### DESCENSUS AVERNI!

It was Blake's first visit to Rome. Under any other circumstances, he would have yielded to that manifold charm which the Eternal City exercises over every mind that possesses a particle of enthusiasm, and would have found himself at once examining the treasures which here, more than in any other part of the world, are stored up, and serve to illustrate and to emphasize the teachings of antiquity, of religion, and of art. But the circumstances were unusual, and Blake's mind was all preoccupied with thoughts of a treasure of a different kind. Already the wonderful story of Aloysius had borne fruit within his mind, as we have seen; and, since his departure from Paris, O'Rourke had left nothing unsaid which could stimulate his imagination, or excite his most sanguine hope. His efforts in this direction were not made by means of any attempts at direct description, but rather through what might be regarded as dry details or formal statistics. He talked learnedly about the revenue of the Roman Empire; of the arbitrary modes by which the emperors extorted money; of the wealth of Rome, created out of the plunder of the world; of the immunity from plunder

which Rome itself had enjoyed; and of the condition of the city at the time of Alaric's approach. He made estimates of the wealth of the imperial palace, and other estimates of the probable value of the plunder which was carried away by the army of Alaric. All his figures were in millions. He assumed a confident air in speaking about the treasure which was concealed in the Catacombs, and sometimes allowed himself to speculate on the value of that treasure.

By this means he kept Blake's mind strung up to the proper degree of enthusiasm and excitement; so that at length, on reaching Rome, he had no other thought or desire than to enter upon the search without delay. Indeed, so eager was he, and so much did his excitement surpass that of his friend, that he would have hurried to the spot at once, had not O'Rourke objected.

"Sure and this'll niver do entirely," said the latter. "Don't ye remember the proverb, 'The more haste, the less speed?' D'ye think we're in a fit state to begin a laborious task like ours, whin we're overwhelmed by fatigue and starvation? For my part, I want a good dinner, a good night's rest, and a good breakfast. We have also to make j'ue preparations. I've got a list of things that we require, that we can't get till to-morrow. So ye'll have to make up yer mind to wait. It's lucky that ye've got me to think for ye, so it is."

Blake's impatience rebelled against any delay, however necessary; but he had to yield to the sober sense, the prudent counsels, and the wise forethought of his companion. In fact, there was no help for it, as O'Rourke had the matter all in his own hands, and no movement could be made without him. By this delay Blake's impatience and excitement were, if possible, only increased. He had scarcely slept since O'Rourke's last meeting with him; and this night of waiting, from the very fact that it separated him from the wonders that awaited him on the morrow, afforded too much stimulus to his fancy to allow of any thing like real sleep. His brain was in a whirl, and the fitful snatches of sleep that he caught in the intervals of his wild speculations were filled with dreams that were, if possible, wilder still.

On the following morning, Blake arose at a very early hour, and waited with much impatience the movements of O'Rourke. The

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enjoyed; and of the time of Alaric's estimates of the wealth and other estimates of the plunder which army of Alaric. All ons. He assumed a eg about the treasure in the Catacombs, and self to speculate on re.

at Blake's mind strung ee of enthusiasm and length, on reaching thought or desire than h without delay. In- and so much did his e of his friend, that he e the spot at once, had

river do entirely," said remember the proverb, less speed?" D'ye e to begin a laborious re're overwhelmed by For my part, I want ight's riot, and a good also to make j'ue prepara- of things that we rec- et till to-morrow. So yer mind to wait. It's e to think for ye, so it

rebelled against any ry; but he had to yield prudent counsels, and of his companion. In for it, as O'Rourke had v'n hands, and no move- without him. By this ce and excitement were, used. He had scarcely last meeting with him; ting, from the very fact from the wonders that morrow, afforded too s fancy to allow of any His brain was in a matches of sleep that he nals of his wild specula- a dreams that were, if

morning, Blake arose at waited with much im- ments of O'Rourke. The

latter, however, seemed in no hurry whatever. Several times Blake knocked at his door, but received only a half-sleepy assurance that he was not awake yet. It was as late as ten o'clock when O'Rourke made his appearance.

"Salve!" said he; "in Room I salute ye as a Roman. In other terrums, the top of the mornning to ye."

"Good-morning," said Blake. "Shall we go now?"

O'Rourke looked at him for a few moments with a reproachful gaze.

"How impatient ye are," said he, "to go down to the tomb!"

"Don't you think we're losing time?" said Blake, a little disturbed, in spite of himself, at an indescribable quality in O'Rourke's tone.

"Losing time, is it? Gaining time, I call it. Let's not go down there till we've seen the sun set in glory from one of the divin hills of Room. For my part, I'm not going down till night—and there ye have it."

This resolution Blake found it impossible to change; so he was compelled to smother his impatience as best he might, and wait for O'Rourke to lead the way.

All that day O'Rourke obstinately refused to say one word about the Catacombs, or the treasure of the Cæsars, or the history of the middle ages. He frowned whenever Blake introduced those subjects. He sought pertinaciously and resolutely to keep his own mind and that of Blake fixed upon other subjects, as far removed from these as possible.

"Ye'll have enough of it when ye get down there. Sure, it's bracing yer mind that I am, in preparation for the orjeal that's before ye."

O'Rourke took him first to the Pincian Hill, and insisted on showing him the view from that place. After this he dragged him to the Villa Borghese, and thence to the Coliseum. Here he pointed out the peculiarities of the structure, regarding it both from an archeological and an artistic point of view. From this place he set out for St. Peter's.

"I wish ye to notice," said he, "the sharp contrast existing between each of these schupindous monimints. The one is the im- him of pagan, the other of Christian Room. They are each symbols of the instichutions out of which they sprung. The one is the fit exponent of that material Room that wield- ed its shuprimacy through the mejium of

brute force; the other the exponent of that spiriual Room that exercised its shuprimacy through the higher mejium of the abstract, the immaterial, the supernatural. And, as this mighty fane is grander and nobler thin the pagan amphitheatre, so also is the Room of the popes a grander and nobler thing thin the Room of the imprors."

To most of these discourses Blake was not in a mood for listening; but the manner of O'Rourke surprised him and impressed him. He felt puzzled, yet he tried to think that it was some eccentric plan of his friend's to draw his mind out of its too-excited state, and reduce it to a common-sense calm and self-contained repose. This O'Rourke announced as his purpose, and, as no other explanation was forthcoming, Blake was forced to accept it.

At length the day began to decline, and O'Rourke announced his intention of going to their place of destination.

The darkness came on rapidly, as is the case in this southern clime, and Blake noticed but little of the scenes through which he passed. Even had it been light, his ignorance of Rome would have prevented him from observing any thing with intelligent interest. Once O'Rourke pointed to a large building and said, "We're coming near, that's the Monastery of San Antonio." Blake saw a gloomy and shadowy pile in a narrow street, but could not make much out of it. They had not much farther to walk after this, but soon reached a dilapidated house of ancient architecture and large size, corresponding in appearance with the description which O'Rourke had given of the house that he had rented. The doorway was low, and consisted of an archway of massive stones. The doors were massive, and studded with large iron bolts. The street in which it stood was narrow and dark, and the exterior of the sombre edifice threw an additional gloom over the scene around.

O'Rourke opened the door in silence, and motioned to Blake to go in. Blake did so. Thereupon O'Rourke followed, and carefully bolted the massive door. Blake threw a glance about him. He saw that there was a court-yard, around which appeared the sides of the gloomy edifice, from which a deep shadow was thrown down. O'Rourke did not allow him to look long upon this unwriting scene, but went to a door which he unlocked.

Blake followed him. They entered a garrow hall, and O'Rourke carefully closed the door behind him and locked it.

He then lighted a lantern, and, without a word, walked along the hall till he came to a narrow stone stairway. Blake followed him. Down this narrow stone stairway the two went, and at length reached a chamber underneath. This chamber was vaulted, and the walls were composed of large stones, white-washed. O'Rourke did not wait here a moment, but walked on, followed by Blake. A narrow arched passage led from this vaulted chamber, and, passing through this, they came to a large cellar, from which the chamber had evidently been walled off. The cellar was about eight feet in height, and was formed of solid piers, which were vaulted over, so as to support the massive structure above. These piers and the vaulted roof were all grimy with dust and smoke, and covered with mould. The floor was formed of large slabs of stone.

O'Rourke still walked on, and, after passing several piers, at length stopped.

As he stopped, he turned and looked for a moment at Blake. Then, without a word, he pointed toward his left, holding up his lantern at the same time, so that its light might shine upon the place. Blake looked, and saw a pile of rubbish. The next moment he sprang toward it, and O'Rourke, moving nearer, held his lantern so as to light up the place.

Blake stooped down and looked forward with a new outburst of those excited feelings which had been repressed all day. The pile of rubbish lay against the wall in which there was a large excavation, terminating in a black hole of oblong shape. It was the hole that O'Rourke had told him of. This was the place, and this was the entrance to those dazzling fortunes that awaited him.

Carried away by a sudden impulse, he hurried forward, and would have gone through that black opening; but O'Rourke laid his hand upon his shoulder, and drew him back in silence.

O'Rourke now went to the middle of the cellar to a place about twenty feet from the opening, and put down his lantern on the stone floor. Blake came up to the place and saw a number of articles lying there. Prominent among these was a light wooden ladder about ten feet long. There was also a box

of solid construction on four small wheels; a stout wicker basket with two handles; a coil of rope; a roll of canvas; a small furnace; a crucible; three lanterns; a vessel of oil; two pickaxes; two crow-bars; an axe; several balls of twine; together with some smaller articles of a miscellaneous character. O'Rourke had already informed Blake that he had made a hurried collection of all the articles of immediate necessity before he had left Rome for Paris, and the present spectacle showed the latter how diligent he had been. These served as eloquent reminders of O'Rourke's story, and as forcible suggestions of the work that lay before them.

Blake's first act was to take one of the lanterns. He drew some matches from his pocket, and proceeded to light it. Being a smoker, he always carried matches. These were destined to be useful afterward. Having succeeded in lighting his lantern, he looked at O'Rourke, and waited for the next movement. He caught O'Rourke's eyes fixed on him with an intent air of watchfulness. For a moment Blake felt a slight uneasiness, but at once shook it off. O'Rourke's look had struck him as being slightly unpleasant, but the thought immediately came to him that his friend was merely watching to see whether he was cool or excited. So the only effect of this apparently-sinister glance was to cool off a little of Blake's excitement.

O'Rourke now took the ladder and walked toward the excavation in the wall. Blake followed him, carrying his lantern, and nothing else. O'Rourke crawled through the oblong opening, and then drew his ladder after him. Blake followed in silence. He put his feet through first. About four feet below the opening, his feet touched a foothold, and then he drew himself altogether inside, and, holding up his lantern, stared eagerly around him.

It was not much that met his view. He found himself inside a passage-way excavated in the solid rock. The rock was a species of sandstone. Its hue was dark, and its surface still bore rough marks made by the tools of the ancient excavators. The height was about seven feet, or a little over. The wall was covered with slabs which bore rudely-cut inscriptions. These slabs were of a lighter color than the wall, and of a smoother finish. They were placed against the wall, one over the other. Immediately opposite him were

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three, and above and below the opening through which he had come were two others. Before and behind him was thick and impenetrable darkness.

Before him O'Rourke was standing. His back was turned toward him. The ladder which he had brought was standing on the ground, and the upper part resting against his shoulder. He seemed not to be looking at any thing in particular, for his head was bent forward as though he was in deep thought—as though he was meditating the best plan of advancing. Blake waited for a few moments, and then, feeling eager to go on, he touched O'Rourke's shoulder.

Thus far O'Rourke's behavior had been most extraordinary. From the moment that he had locked the outer doors he had not spoken a word. Blake had been impressed in spite of himself by the silence of his companion, and had said nothing. Now, however, as Blake touched O'Rourke's shoulder, the latter started and half turned.

"Well, Blake, me boy," said he, in a cheerful tone, "here we are at last amid the mouldering remains of the apostolic marchures that deposited their bones and raised them up again; sure, but it's meself that would be the proud man to linger here and dally with me archaeological reminiscences. It's a fine field, so it is, for classical enthusiasm. The actual fact bangs all the ilivativid splindors of Virgilian diction. Sure, but it's careful we've got to be here; it's easy enough, so it is, to go, but we've got to take precautionary misures about securing a return. Sure ye know yerself how it is:

.... 'Facilis descensus Averni;  
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis;  
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad  
antras

Hoc opus, hic labor est. Pancel, quos aequus amavit  
Jupiter, aut ardens exivit ad aethera virtus,  
Dis geniti, potuere."

"By-the-way, now that I come to think of it," he continued, "it would be an iligant question iotirely whither Virgil didn't get some of his conceptions of the under worruld from these Catacombs; but thin, howlding, as I do, the theory of their Christian origin, that position would be altogether oninblinle."

"Oh, yes; I dare say," said Blake, indifferently; "but don't you think we had better be moving?"

At this O'Rourke turned and looked at him with a fixed gaze and a slight smile.

"Blake, me boy," said he, "I have detected in you all this day and evening a deplorable cindincy to undue excitement. Now, if one thing is prayiminintly necessitatid in an exploration of this discription, it's perfect coolness and sang-froid. Ye are too feverish; ye must git cooler. Ye'll lose yer head like poor Onofrio, and vanish from me gaze in some of these achupindia labyrinthine wildernissis. Try, thin, if ye can, to banish from yer mind the dazzling visions that are luring ye out of yer senses. The conversation that I mean to maintain here isn't going to be about any thing icciting or sissational, but rather upon those august subjects that give tone and energy to the mind. Let us wander onward, thin, not as vulgar money-diggers or triare-hunters, but as learned archaeologists."

With these words O'Rourke shouldered his ladder, and walked on at a moderate pace. Blake followed. The passage as they went on continued to preserve the same dimensions. On either side appeared the tablets that covered the tombs, bearing their inscriptions. Its course was not exactly straight, yet the curve was a gentle one. No side-passages or crossings appeared for some time.

At length a crossing appeared, and here O'Rourke paused. This crossing consisted of a passage of about the same size and general appearance as the one which they were traversing; and the eye, in glancing into it from either side, soon lost itself in the impenetrable gloom. Here O'Rourke put down his ladder and the lantern, and then taking a ball of twine from his pocket, he fastened one end to an iron bolt which he had brought for that purpose. This he placed on the floor. It was to be their clew. Thus far all was plain; but beyond this he dared not trust himself without this safeguard. He now took up his ladder and his lantern. Blake insisted on carrying the former, and, after some friendly altercation, succeeded in doing so. O'Rourke now held the lantern in one hand, and, putting the ball in his pocket, he prepared to unroll it as he walked, so as to leave the clew behind him.

"Sure, Blake, me boy," said he, "but this is the descent into the infernural worruld that we've read about at school. Here we are, we're Aeneas and Achates, or, better yet, we're Alcides and Theseus—we won't dispute which is which.—Have ye ever read the 'Hercules Furens?' I warrant ye haven't.

Well, it's a fine worruk; and I've been maunding and soliloquizing over some of its lines that are mighty appropriate to our prisint adventurous journeyn :

Non prata viridi lacta fiele germinant,  
Nec adulta leni ductant zephyro seges ;  
Non ulla ramos silva pomiferos habet ;  
Sterilis profundi vaaitas squalet soll,  
Et foeda tellus torpet aeterno siltu,  
Rerumque moestus finis et mundi ultima,  
Immotua aer haeret, et pigro sedet  
Nox atra mundo ; cuncta moerore horrida,  
Ipsaque morte peior est morit' loca.

"Now, that's what I call mighty fine poetry," said O'Rourke, "and I'll jist invite ye to projuice any other passage in ancient or modern poetry that'll beat it. Yes, Blake, me boy, that's it—'ipsaque morte peior est morit' locus !'"

He stopped abruptly, and then, unwinding the string, went forward.

Blake followed.

Yes, O'Rourke was trying to quiet his nerves by quoting Latin. Now if that Latin had been pronounced Oxford-fashion, it would not have been very intelligible to Blake, but, being spoken with the Continental pronunciation, and with a dash of Irish brogue running through it, he did not comprehend one single word.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

O'Rourke thus went first, unwinding the string, while Blake followed, carrying the ladder. The strange silence, that O'Rourke had maintained while in the house had been succeeded by a talkativeness which was equally strange.

"For me own part," said he, as he walked along, "we may as well beguile the solichude of the journeyn by cheerful though not exciting conversation ; and, by the same token, I may remark that I have always taken a deep interist in the Catacombs. Here we have an unequalled opporchunity of seeing thim in their frish virgin condition. These interesting subjects are very useful to keep us in a cool state of mind, and to act as a privintive against unjue excitement.

"It's ividint," he continued, "that these are all Christian tombs, for on most of thim ye may see the monogram that I mitioned to you. Here, for instince, is one."

He stopped in front of one of the tombs, and held up his lamp. Blake stopped, also, and looked at it, though with much less interest than that which was felt, or at least affected, by his companion. There were four alabs here, one above another, enlosing four graves. The inscriptions were rudely cut in all these. Some of the names, which were Greek, were spelled with Greek letters.

"Many of these tombs are ividently occupied," said O'Rourke, "by min of the lower classes, but it doesn't follow that the Christians of the age which buried these bodies had no sheparior min. Of course, the majority among thim, as in all other communities, was ignorant, and the majority asserts itself even in this subline nycropolla. Still, that's a fine epitaph," said he, pointing to the one before him. "It's laconic, and yet full of profound meaning. Spartan brivity with Christian pathos."

The epitaph to which he pointed consisted but of a few words. They were these :

*"Faustina, cruciata, dormit, resurgat."*

Another bore the inscription :

*"Dormitorium Cæoli."*

Another :

*"Aelus dormit in pace. Valeria fecit."*

O'Rourke walked on farther, stopping at times in front of those tablets which bore longer inscriptions than usual, and translating them for the benefit of his companion, of whose classical acquirements and intelligent appreciation of the scene around him he seemed to have doubts, which were probably well founded.

"Here," said he, "is one that reminds me of that one of Marius behind us, that I forgot to show you :

*"Lavinia, of wonderful amiability, who lived eighteen years and sixteen days. Lavinia sleeps in peace. Her father and mother set up this."*

"Here, Blake, is a long one :

*"Adesfor, our son, is not dead, but lives in heaven. An innocent boy, you have already begun to live among the innocent ones. How gladly will your mother, the Church of God, receive you returning from this world ! Let us restrain our tears and cease from lamentations."*

"Here," said O'Rourke, as he stopped in

front of another, "is one of the most interesting. It is a *desonum*. D'yo happen to know what a *desonum* is? Well, it's a place where two are buried—or sleep together, as the holy Christians called it."

A few steps farther on, the attention of O'Rourke was arrested by an inscription which was far longer than any which had yet met his eyes.

"See here," said he, "this one tells a long story." And then he read it:

*"Flucius sleeps here. A faithful bishop. He ended his life under the Emperor Decius. On his knees, and among the faithful, he was arrested and led away to execution. His friends placed him here, with tears and in fear. Oh, sad times! in which even among sacred rites and prayers, not even in caverns and among tombs can we be safe. What can be more wretched than such a life, and what than such a death, where they cannot be buried by their friends and relations? He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times."*

O'Rourke stood for a few moments musing.

"It's been a theme of frequent meditation with me," said he, "the wonderful difference between these Christians and their pagan contemporaries with reference to their regard of death. Go read the inscriptions on the pagan tombs. What are they all? Terror unspeakable, mourning, lamentation, and woe. Not a ray of hope. 'I lift up my hands,' says one, 'against the gods, who have snatched away me innocent.' But what do we see here? Not a sad longing after the vanished pleasures of life, but a confident expectation of a better life to come."

O'Rourke here gave a deep sigh, and again resumed his walk. This time he paid no further attention to the epitaphs. It seemed to Blake as though he had been carried away beyond himself, and beyond all immediate recollection of his errand here, by the solemn memorials of the sainted dead. For such feelings as these Blake felt nothing but profound respect. It heightened his estimate of O'Rourke's character; and, though the conversation was one in which he had not felt able to take part, yet it had produced a marked effect upon him. The translations of these epitaphs drove away the wild fever of excitement which had so long clung to him. In the presence of these solemn memo-

rials of Christian suffering and constancy and faith, his longings after treasure and riches appeared paltry and trivial, and there was communicated to his mind a feeling of shame at coming on such an errand to such a place. With the cessation of his hot excitement there came, also, a feeling of something akin to indifference about the result of his search, and he began to contemplate a possible failure with equanimity.

Already as they advanced they had come to places where other passage-ways crossed their path, and disclosed depths of viewless gloom on either side. There was something appalling in the suggestions which these afforded of endless labyrinths, in which to venture for even a few paces would be a death of horror. They served to remind Blake of the terrible fate of Onofrio, and gave to that slender thread which O'Rourke was unwinding an inconceivable importance. Upon that slender thread now hung their two lives—that was the tie that bound them to the world of the living, and by the help of which they could alone hope to retrace their steps to the upper air.

For already the passage-way had wound about in various directions, and they had come to other passages which led into this at such an angle that it would be only too easy to choose the wrong path on returning. None of these passages were crooked, but the difficulty lay in the way in which they opened into one another, and in the confusion which their general similarity would create in any mind.

"I think I'm going right," said O'Rourke; "but that last passage-way may have been the proper course for us. Howandiver, we're on the way to the Painted Chamber. That's the next objective point to aim at. Once there, the opening in the flure'll be a guide."

They walked on for some distance farther, and then O'Rourke stopped and half turned. Blake came up and found that the passage-way here had been enlarged. There was a species of chamber—the roof was vaulted—the sides were covered with a thin coating of stucco, upon which were some faded pictures, roughly drawn and rudely colored. At once he recognized the place as the one which had been mentioned in the story of Aloysius.

"The Painted Chamber!" exclaimed Blake



O'Rourke smiled.

"True for you," said he. "And so we're right thus far. It's mighty encouraging, so it is—and I must say, ye see yersilf, how much better it is for two to come than one. I confess, Blake, me boy, there's a solemnity about this place that overawes me; and, if I'd been alone, I'd have—well, I'd not have come so far this time. I'd have returned, so I would. And sure and this is a great place intirely, so it is. Sure, and the paintings are on the walls yit, as any one may discerrun, just as me cousin Malachi said they were—and what is this?" he continued, going up to the wall and holding up his lantern. "Sure, and it's the Noachian diluge, though rudely enough drawn—and here," he continued, going to another place, "is a galley with a sail. I've seen that afore, in the Lapidarian gallery, and they interpret it to ripsaint the immortality of the soul. Here's a palm-branch—here's another ship, and a fish—and a man—maybe it's Jonah they meant. I tell you what it is, Blake, me boy, there's a power of symbolical meaning in all this, and I'd be proud to explain it all to ye some time; but just now, perhaps, we'd better reshume our wanderings."

Upon all these, which O'Rourke thus pointed out, Blake looked with an interest which had been increased by the scenes through which he had been passing, and by the solemn thoughts which they had created within his mind. Not unwillingly would he have delayed a little to listen to his companion, who seemed to have such a wonderful comprehension of the meaning of these drawings, so rude and so meaningless to his inexperienced eyes; but O'Rourke's proposal to go on drew away his attention, and he at once acquiesced without a word.

"We've got to go straight on," said O'Rourke, "and we ought to come to the hole before long."

The chamber was circular, and about twelve feet in diameter. It seemed to be a simple enlargement of the intersection of two passages. Once enlarged, it had been decorated in the manner already noticed.

O'Rourke turned away, but still hesitated, in that manner which had marked his progress here all along. There was evidently something on his mind. Blake noticed it, but thought that it was simply his meditations upon the early Christians.

"It's a small place, too, for such a purpose," said O'Rourke, speaking as if at the conclusion of a train of solemn thought. "It couldn't have held many. It must have been crowded, so it must."

"What do you mean?" asked Blake. "What purpose?"

"Well, you see, Blake, me boy," said O'Rourke, "this place was ouce used as a Christian chapel."

"A chapel!"

"Yis. Juring times of persecution, the Christians had often to fly to these receptacles, and hide here. In these chapels they had to conduct their sacred crimonies. Here, too, they had their burial-services. Oh, sure, if these walls could but speak, what a tale they could tell! Mind ye, I don't hold with some that there iver was a time whin the Christian population came down here *en masse*; I hold that it was only the shuparior clergy—the bishops, and sich like—or the iminent min that hid themselves here. But they held their service here, no doubt; and on Sundays there would be a large crowd wandering about here, as they were being conducted to these chapels, or as they came to bury the remains of some frind. But what puzzles me is, that I don't see any remains of an altar, or any thing of that kind. If it had been used as a chapel, there'd have been an altar, and, if so, there'd have been some remains, unless they afterward removed thim to some church overhead. And that may have been—but the fact is, the quistion is a complicated one, and cannot be fairly and fully discussed on an occasion like this."

With this, O'Rourke turned abruptly away, and, unrolling the string, he walked out of the chapel through that passage-way which was a continuation of the path along which they had hitherto been advancing.

He walked on, unrolling the string as before, holding the light very carefully so as to see his way, and not saying a word. Blake followed in silence. In this way they went on for about fifty paces.

Then O'Rourke stopped, and looked earnestly downward at the pathway before him. Then he advanced two steps farther. Then he turned and held out his hand with a warning gesture.

"It's the hole! we've come to it!" said he, in a low whisper.

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"Where? where?" asked Blake, hurrying up.

"There!" said O'Rourke.

As he said this, he pointed to a blackness in the path before him. Blake looked, and saw an opening in the path, yawning immediately beneath them. An involuntary shudder passed through him, as he thought of the danger which this presented to the incautious explorer. But the danger here was not real, after all; for no explorers came to this place, except themselves, and they had been sufficiently cautious to avoid it.

"Me cousin Malachi was right," said O'Rourke. "He came as far as this. It now remains to see whether the monk Aloysius was right or not. If so—thin—soon—we—shall—know—all."

O'Rourke spoke slowly. Blake made no answer. He had reached this spot about which he had thought with intense excitement of late—this spot which seemed the last stage in the journey to endless wealth; but now his imagination, which but lately had so kindled itself at this thought, lay dull and dormant within him. Already there was a load on his mind, a dull presentiment of evil. He was conscious of this change. He wondered at it. He attributed it to various things—to the reaction consequent upon over-excitement long continued; to the sermonizing of O'Rourke, who had discoursed upon semi-sacred things ever since they had entered here; to the presence of the dead, whose holy lives, and glorious deaths, and immortal hopes beyond the grave, seemed to throw such contempt upon so mean a quest as this, for the sake of which he had violated their last resting-place. But, whichever of these was the cause, there he stood, not indifferent, but strangely melancholy, and disturbed in soul with vague alarms and dark forebodings.

O'Rourke stood looking down in silence into the yawning abyss beneath. Then, drawing a long breath, he put his lamp down on one side of the pathway, and, turning to Blake, he took the ladder from him.

This ladder he then proceeded to let down. He did this slowly and cautiously. In a few minutes it touched the bottom, and the top of it projected about one inch. The ladder, being ten feet long, showed thus the depth of the passage beneath from the place in which they were standing.

"My calculation," said O'Rourke, "was based upon the statements of the monk Aloysius. This proves that the statements were true. Every thing in that manuscript has thus far turrend out true, and I only hope the rest of our undertaking will be equally successful. So now, here goes!"

Saying this, O'Rourke began to descend. Blake watched him till he reached the bottom. He saw that the passage below was, in all respects, the counterpart of the one above. But he did not delay to look. The moment that O'Rourke had reached the bottom, he began to descend, and in a few moments stood by his side.

O'Rourke now went on very cautiously, unwinding the string.

"Shall I take the ladder?" said Blake.

"No," said O'Rourke; "if Aloysius is right, there'll be no need for the ladder; and, if he's wrong, thin our game's up—that's all. Besides, I don't believe there'd be any excavation beneath this. We must now be on a level with the Tiber."

Blake, upon this, followed his companion, leaving the ladder where it had been placed.

They walked about thirty paces.

Suddenly, O'Rourke stopped, and turned round with a blank expression, feeling his coat-pockets, one after the other.

"What's the matter?" asked Blake.

"Tare an' ages!" exclaimed O'Rourke, "if I haven't dropped me other ball of twine, and this one is nearly used up! I wouldn't trust meself a step farther."

"Why! did you leave it behind in the cellar?"

"Sure and I took it with me, so I did, and—by the powers! I have it—I moind pulling out me handkerchief in the chapel, and I moind hearing a thud on the fure. I must have dropped it. I'll go straight back for it, and you wait here—unless you're afraid of the ghosts—you wait here, and I'll be back in a giffy, so I will."

Saying this, O'Rourke brushed past Blake, on his way back to the chapel to get the ball of twine.

"Ye may be going on," said he to Blake, "till ye come to any new passage-way—it seems like a straight course—or ye may wait for me."

"Oh, I'll wait for you!" said Blake. "We'll find it, or miss it in company."

He spoke in a melancholy voice. He had

begun to feel half vexed with himself for his own indifference; yet he was indifferent. Nor was it unaccountable. Often does it happen, in the lives of men, that an object, pursued with absorbing eagerness from a distance, grows tame at a closer approach. Thus the lover's ardor is sometimes dispelled on the approach of the marriage-day; and thus Mont Blanc, which had inspired such a glow of enthusiasm when seen from the Vale of Chamouni, becomes a freezing mass of ice, killing all enthusiasm, when the climber approaches its summit.

So, in profound dejection, Blake stood still, waiting for O'Rourke. He had lost his enthusiasm; his excitement was gone. Avarice, ambition—even these feelings ceased to inspire him.

At length, it struck him that O'Rourke had been gone for a long time. A slight fear arose. It was instantly quelled.

He determined to go back in search of him.

He walked back for some time.

Suddenly, he stood still.

He was confounded.

He had walked back a distance greater than that which he had followed O'Rourke after descending the ladder, yet he had not come to the ladder. Only twenty-five paces or so! He had walked fifty.

Where was the ladder?

He looked along the arch of the vaulted passage overhead, holding up his lamp.

He walked back for twenty-five paces.

Overhead was an opening in the vault, black, impenetrable, terrible! Was that the place through which he had descended?

It was!

Where was the ladder?

*The ladder was gone!*

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### BETRAYED.

For a long time Blake stood staring at that black opening overhead. Not a vestige of any thing was there. The string had gone. O'Rourke had taken away from him not merely the means of return, but the clew which showed the way. And this was all of which he was conscious. Even of this he was only conscious in a vague way, for his brain was

in a whirl, and his whole frame tingled at the horror of his thoughts, and, in the immensity of this sudden calamity, he stood bewildered, incapable of speech or motion—incapable even of thought. Not a sound came to his ears. It was silence all around—the silence of death. Yet his attitude was one of expectancy. As yet he could not believe all, or realize the full extent of his appalling condition. His expectation rested on O'Rourke, and his ears tried to catch the sound of returning footsteps. But his ears listened in vain, and the time passed, and horror deepened in his soul, till, from this faint hope he descended slowly into the abyss of despair.

One thought now overspread all his mind, and this was that O'Rourke had betrayed him, and had lured him here for this very purpose. Why he had done this he did not at that time try to conjecture. He was not yet sufficiently master of his own thoughts to speculate upon this. He had only the one supreme and overwhelming idea of treachery—treachery dark, deep, demoniacal, far-reaching—which had laid this trap for him, and had brought him to it. To this feeling he yielded. His head sank down from that upward stretch into which, for a time, it had been frozen; the rigidity of his limbs, wrought by one moment of unutterable horror, relaxed; a shudder passed through him; he trembled like a palsied man, and his nerveless hands could scarcely hold the lantern. But this light now shone before him as his very last hope—if there was, indeed, any such thing as hope remaining—and to save this he clutched it with a convulsive grasp. This effort roused him from his stupor; and, though his bodily strength was still beyond his recall, yet the faculties of his mind were restored and rallied at the impulse of the instinct of self-preservation. Too weak to stand erect any longer, he seated himself, still clutching his lantern, with his back supported against the wall, and then, in his despair, began to think what might be the meaning of this.

Had O'Rourke really left him? Of this he had no doubt. But why had he done this? To this he could give no answer whatever.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet, and began to call in his loudest voice. His terror, after all, might be unfounded, and O'Rourke might, perhaps, return. At least he might answer and tell him the meaning of this. With this

hope he sounded his appeal, of his voice messages; but no reply returned from the combs. When he could not away at one of his cries, by and his treatise of done or was all was dark as he looked from O'Rourke's passage-way failed to dim a glimmer of was the black

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hope he called, and, for some time, his cries sounded forth as he uttered every form of appeal, of entreaty, of reproach, of despair. His voice rang mournfully down the long passages; but to him, as he listened, there came no reply except the dull, distant echoes returned from the gloomy recesses of the Catacombs. Whether O'Rourke heard him or not he could not tell. Perhaps he had hurried away at once, so as to be out of the hearing of his cries; perhaps he was waiting close by, and listening coolly to the despairing entreaties of his victim; but, whatever he had done or was doing, he gave no sign. Above, all was dark. Blake covered up his own light as he looked up, to see if there was any gleam from O'Rourke's lantern visible in that upper passage-way, but his most searching scrutiny failed to distinguish the slightest possible glimmer of light in that intense gloom. It was the blackness of darkness.

Once more Blake sank down into the despair of his own thoughts. With this despair there was mingled unspeakable wonder at O'Rourke's treachery. The motive that had impelled him to this was utterly beyond his conception. He had known him for a year. He had made his acquaintance in the most casual manner. They had gradually drifted into one another's way. What had he ever done, or what could O'Rourke have imagined him to have done, that he should plan for him so terrible a fate as this? Or what possible purpose of any possible kind could O'Rourke have before himself that could be promoted by such a crime?

It was no panic-flight of O'Rourke's. It was deliberate. He had taken the ladder so noiselessly that no sound had indicated what he was doing. He had even removed the clew.

It was, therefore deliberate; and this treachery joined itself to all that had gone before—formed the climax to it all. It was now evident that the whole story of the treasure had been planned for the purpose of luring him to this place and to this fate. The story of Aloysius had been, no doubt, a fiction of O'Rourke's, from beginning to end. His cousin Malachi had never existed. The Monastery of San Antonio probably was a fiction. The old manuscript was another. O'Rourke had never produced it. He had told an exciting story, and worked upon his credulity, his necessities, and his ambition, and

his avarice. As to the treasure, it was the wildest of dreams, if there had been any, he would not have been betrayed to this fate.

Such was the sudden awakening of Basil Blake from his dreams of boundless wealth.

But there remained the dark and inexplicable problem of the motives of O'Rourke. Could it be that he was mad?

This would account for it all. O'Rourke was certainly eccentric. His eccentricity might be madness. He might have been one of those homicidal madmen who plan crazily the deaths of others; and his very acquaintance with him might have been sufficient to suggest to O'Rourke a plan for his destruction. He recalled his strange demeanor since their arrival at Rome; his singular silence in the collar; his unprompted talkativeness on the way through the passages; his odd gestures, mysterious looks, and significant words. Were not all these the signs of a disordered brain?

On the other hand, if he were not mad, what possible motive could he have for his treachery? Blake could think of nothing whatever in his life that could account for any hostile plot against him. All his life had been commonplace, and his position was sufficiently obscure to guard him against the machinations of enemies. One thing only in all that life of his stood forth as beyond the obscure and the commonplace. That was the mysterious friendship of Mr. Wyverne, his mother's singular words, and, above all, the strange and incredible declarations of the dying man. But that had already been declared false by another authority. Even if it should be true, could there be any thing in that which could connect itself in any way with O'Rourke's plot, and be a reasonable cause for such a terrible betrayal as this? How should O'Rourke know Wyverne? How could he be benefited? Or were there others who wished to get him out of the way—by such a mode of destruction as would render it impossible that he could ever again be heard of? Alas! if there were any who had sent O'Rourke to do this, they had certainly chosen their agent well. Blake now remembered how completely he had concealed his movements; and he recalled those letters which he had written to Kane Hellmuth and his mother, in which not the slightest indication was given of the place to which he was bound, or the purpose for which he was going. He was now alone—no friend could

help—no one could ever track him here; and here he must die, and exhibit the fullest reality of that dread fate which O'Rourke had attributed to his imaginary Onofrio.

But now another change came over Blake—a reaction from this despair—a recoil from that paralysis of all his energies which had come upon him. He started to his feet. There was yet time. Could he not retrace his steps? How much time had already passed he did not know, but, if he could find his way back along the passages to that opening in the wall, he might yet save himself.

This thought at once restored all his strength of body and vigor of mind to the utmost. He started to his feet, and once more looked upward, scanning eagerly that opening above him. The distance was not great. Was it impossible for him to climb up there and regain that passage-way? True, there was nothing but the smooth wall, which presented no foothold just here, except the slabs that covered over the graves. He could not jump up, he was not sufficiently agile for that. How, then, could he contrive to scale that bare wall of ten feet between himself and the floor above?

The wall itself afforded a ready answer to this. On that wall there were three slabs, covering three tombs, one above the other, in the mode which has already been mentioned so frequently. If those slabs could but be removed, or if only one of them could be displaced, then Blake would have a foothold by which he could reach the upper passage-way. These slabs he now examined most carefully. He struck them with his hands; he tried to find some crevice by which he could get a sufficient hold of them to pull them from their places. But these efforts were vain; for, though ages had passed away since they were placed here, still the cement was firm, and none of the slabs would yield.

But Blake would not yet give up. Every thing now seemed to depend upon the promptness with which he worked. He drew his knife, and, opening the large blade, began to cut at the stone over the slab. His intention was to try to cut away the stone to such an extent that he could pass his fingers through and grasp the slab. He began with the middle slab. The rock was soft sandstone; and as he cut and dug with his knife he had the satisfaction of seeing that he was gradually working it away, so that he had the

prospect in time of making a hole large enough for his purposes. But his work was slow, and he discovered very soon that his knife was wearing away rapidly under it. At length, when his hand ached with the effort, and was bleeding from blisters, when so much of his knife was worn away that the prospect of continuing much longer at this task was faint indeed, he discovered that the thickness of this particular slab was too great to give any prospect of removing it in this way.

Yet the moment that he made this discovery, he made also another, which counterbalanced the first, and changed despair once more into hope.

The hole that he had made, though not large enough to enable him to remove the slab, was still large enough to assist him to scale the wall. All that he needed was a few others like it. Two more would suffice. If he could cut one over each slab, even smaller than this, he could then climb up.

Instantly he set to work once more, this time at the lower slab, and here at length he succeeded in cutting a small slit large enough for him to insert the toe of his boot. It was not so large as the first hole that he had cut, but suited his purpose quite as well.

He then turned his attention to the uppermost slab. The others were flush with the wall. This one, however, projected in one corner about half an inch. No cutting was therefore required, for he could grasp this with his fingers so as to draw himself up to some extent.

He now prepared to ascend. But first it was necessary to secure the safety of his lantern. In order to effect this, he tore up his pocket-handkerchief and his cravat into thin strips, and tied them all together until at length he had a line fifteen feet long at least. One end of this he fastened to the lantern, the other he tied to his knife. Then he flung his knife up through the opening. It fell on the floor there, and thus held the line that was fastened to the lantern below.

Blake now braced himself for this great effort to climb the wall. Grasping the upper slab, he put his right foot in the lower hole, and drew himself up thus till he was able to thrust his left foot into the larger hole that he had scraped away over the middle slab. Here there was a firmer foothold, and here, with one vigorous effort, he raised himself up

higher, clinched his right hand, and stepped up the floor. His firm footing was then, with an upward step, and, catching the ledge, he succeeded in opening and passing the passage-way. Then he put the line in case of any further emergency.

Once more he stepped up the upper passage-way, and, reaching the time he reached even if he had O'Rourke's trust, he had served the worst suspicion, and O'Rourke's trust was his string.

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higher, clinging to the upper slab with his right hand, and grasping with his left at the upper floor. He reached it, and, assisted by his firm foothold, raised himself up higher. Then, with a final spring, he threw himself up, and, catching his toe on the upper slab, he succeeded in working himself through the opening and on to the floor of the upper passage-way. Then he drew up the lamp, and put the line in his pocket, so as to use it in case of any further need.

Once more, then, Blake found himself in this upper passage, and now he proceeded to hurry back the way he had come. In a short time he reached the Painted Chamber. Here, even if he had felt any lingering doubts as to O'Rourke's treachery, the first sight would have served to dispel them, and confirm his worst suspicions; for the chamber was empty, and O'Rourke had taken his ladder and his string.

But there was no time to lose. Haste was needed, and yet, at the same time, the utmost caution was equally needed; for how could he find his way back? True, the pathway had not been very crooked, and therefore, if he were to keep in the straightest possible course, he would be most certain to find the true way; yet still there were places where, among several passages branching off in the same way, it would be difficult to tell the true one. But, until that place was reached, he might hurry on with less circumspection.

Accordingly, he advanced as fast as a vigilant outlook would allow him, and for some time had no difficulty. At length, to his intense joy, he discovered something on the floor. On stooping to examine it, he found that it was the clew. O'Rourke had apparently gone back, winding it up as he went; but at length, becoming perhaps weary of this, and feeling certain of the destruction of his victim, he had contemptuously thrown it down.

Blake now hurried on faster than ever, with nothing to prevent the most rapid progress, since he was guided by the string that ran along the path. Before long, he came to the ladder, which lay obliquely across the path, as if carelessly flung down by one who was weary of carrying it, and had no further need of it. This ladder was of no use, however, to Blake, though a short time before all his life seemed to depend upon it; so he hur-

ried on, seeing in it only a sign that he might yet reach the house before O'Rourke had left.

On he went, faster and faster. At length, the clew ended. Blake recognized this place. It was at that first crossing to which they had come, and beyond this he knew that there were no other crossings till he reached the aperture by which he had entered. To arrive at this point, at last, was almost like an escape; but still his escape was not yet effected, and so he hurried onward. The aperture for which he was now looking was on his left, and, as he went, he watched that side narrowly.

At last he saw it.

All the other slabs were in their places, but this one was off. It lay on the ground below. The aperture was all dark. Blake sprang toward it, and thrust in his lamp and his head.

The next moment he stood there, rooted to the spot, staring with wild eyes at the sight before him, while a new despair deprived him of strength and almost of consciousness.

For there, full before him, in the place where that opening had been through which he had crawled after O'Rourke, was now a wall of stone, presenting a barrier which stopped all escape. There were two large stones. They had been pushed up here from within—by the malignant and relentless purpose of his enemy—not fastened with cement, but lying there solid, irremovable, and beyond the reach of any efforts of his.

At this sight he reached the last extremity of his prostration and of his despair. The lamp fell from his hands into the stony sepulchre, and he burst into a torrent of tears.

And now, at this moment, while his lamp lay extinguished, and all around there was a darkness utter and impenetrable—a darkness, also, fully commensurate with the darkness of his despair—there came to his ears a dull sound from beyond that wall, as if some one was moving there.

At once Blake roused himself, and listened.

The sounds continued. Some one was moving. There was the rattling, shuffling sound as of some one piling up stones. It was as though O'Rourke had not been satisfied with any common barrier to Blake's escape, but had resolved to replace the whole wall in all its thickness, and leave it as he had found it. There, then, was his enemy,



within a few feet, yet inaccessible and invisible—not remorseful for what he had done, but actively malignant still, and still toiling to accomplish, in its fullest perfection, the terrible task which he had undertaken.

Blake listened in dumb horror, unable to speak a word, even if words had been of any avail. But no words were forthcoming, and he leaned there in that thick darkness, clinging to the sepulchre with a convulsive grasp, and all his soul centred in his sense of bearing. That sense seemed now to have taken an almost superhuman power and acuteness, as though all his other senses had lent their aid to this. The rattle, the sliding, the dull thud, the harsh grating of the stones as they were handled by the terrible workman on the other side, still went on; and still the sounds penetrated the wall, and came to the silent place of the dead beyond.

Blake listened, unconscious of time, and only conscious of the slow approach of his appalling doom.

At last all ceased.

Then there came the sound of a human voice—low, muffled, sepulchral, but, to Blake's acute hearing, sounding with terrific distinctness. There were but four words that thus came to his ears through the thick wall where the stones stood, piled up without plaster, and allowing the awful words to pass through.

*"Blake Wyverne, farewell forever!"*

Then all was still.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### FILIAL AFFECTION.

THE time passed pleasantly indeed with Bernal Mordaunt. The worn-out man felt this rest to be sweet after his weary life; and it was sweeter still, after so many years of loneliness and exile and wandering, to find around him once more the tender embrace of kindred and of affection. In his far-distant home, as missionary, the Abbé Mordaunt had not been without those lofty consolations which the active performance of a high duty, and zealous labor for the good of man, and fervent faith, can give to the soul, even when all earthly joys have been torn from its grasp; but such labors and such zeal were only possible in the days of his vigorous manhood.

Now, when vigor had gone, and such apostolic labors were no longer possible, his heart yearned for some close human tie, and some tender human affection. For this cause he had thought of his daughters, and had come home to find them. One was gone, but one was left; and that heart of his, which had so long been destitute of the treasures of human love, now expanded, and filled itself with that tender affection which was lavished by her whom he called "his own," "his only one," "his darling daughter," "his most precious Inez."

In spite of all his deep yearning for this filial love, Bernal Mordaunt was not exacting; and it has been seen how carefully he tried to avoid standing between Bessie and one whom he supposed to be the object of tenderer and stronger affections than any which she could bestow upon himself. It has been seen also how Bessie frustrated his self-denying plans, and met this sacrifice of love, by another sacrifice of love on her part, and refused to accord to Sir Gwyn any privileges which might draw her away from Bernal Mordaunt. This Bernal Mordaunt felt more than any thing that had occurred since his return home. He believed that it must be a sacrifice on her part; yet in his secret soul he was exalted over such a sacrifice, since it had been made for his sake. He deprecated it as greatly as he could to her, but Bessie met such deprecatory language in a way of her own which was thoroughly characteristic, by the profession of still greater love, and by the declaration that she would give herself up altogether to him, and for his sake cut herself off from all society. This, however, Bernal Mordaunt did not wish her to do. In his love for her, he regarded not only her present but her future, and he was not selfish enough to permit his own happiness to stand in the way of what he considered her permanent good. The regard which he had from the first conceived for Sir Gwyn Ruthven had steadily increased with the progress of their acquaintance; and it seemed to him that Sir Gwyn was in every respect a man to whom he might gladly intrust the daughter whom he loved so fondly, and for whose future welfare he was so solicitous.

Meanwhile, Sir Gwyn, though full of a sincere and devoted regard for Bernal Mordaunt, had not by any means lost sight of the great aim of his present life. Bessie, in her new

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role of affectionate daughter, appeared to him to be more charming than ever. It needed but this to complete her charms in his eyes, and to transform her into an angel. What was best, the cordiality and evident regard which Bernal Mordaunt always exhibited toward himself had placed him upon a footing of familiar and intimate friendship, and thus enabled him to see to the best advantage the tender, the incessant, the self-denying care of Bessie for the old man. Still, in spite of this surrender of herself, Bessie was not separated from him; in fact, she appeared to be drawn nearer to him, and never had Sir Gwyn more profoundly enjoyed himself. Bernal Mordaunt himself was willing to favor the lovers in every possible way; and often, when Bessie would not leave him, he pretended to be asleep, so as to leave an open field to Sir Gwyn. At other times he would occupy himself with reading, and watch those two who were both so dear to him, with a quiet smile, which showed with what tender human sympathy he noticed the progress of affairs.

Bessie showed herself in all respects a daughter beyond all praise. She walked with the old man, making him lean on her slender arm; she read to him all the daily papers; she assisted in finding out what books he preferred; and used to sit at his feet on a low stool reading to him for hours, while he rested his hand on her golden hair, and watched her with a look of unspoken love. She was quick to discover that he liked her conversation, and was amused with her little Hibernicisms, and occasional outcropping of the brogue which distinguished it; and so she took pains every day to have some amusing story to tell him, and to tell it too in her oddest manner, with her oddest idioms, well satisfied if she could succeed in raising a laugh at the point of this story, which she took good care to introduce always in the most effective way. When local events failed, she would fall back upon her early reminiscences, and these were invariably of so grotesque a kind that Bernal Mordaunt relished them more than any thing else.

Bernal Mordaunt thus was happy—more truly and calmly happy than he had been for years. It was not, indeed, so elevated a sentiment as some which he had known during his active missionary life; not that high spiritual rapture which had sometimes visited his soul; yet it was true happiness, tender and

human and domestic, a feeling well deserved, and well befitting the man whom years and hard labor and sorrow had enfeebled. For, in spite of the calm and quiet life into which he had passed; in spite of the pure and invigorating air; in spite of his own peace of mind and happiness; in spite even of the incessant and vigilant and most tender care of the devoted Bessie, Bernal Mordaunt's health did not improve, but, on the contrary, strange as it may appear, from the moment that he came to Mordaunt Manor, his health and strength gradually yet steadily failed. There was no visible cause for this. Every thing around him seemed adapted to build up a weakened constitution, and give tone and vigor to an enfeebled frame, yet still there was the mysterious fact, and Bernal Mordaunt himself knew it and felt it, accepting it, however, with solemn and placid resignation as the inevitable will of Heaven.

One morning, as he and Bessie were together, Sir Gwyn found them, and after a short time Bessie meekly withdrew. Bernal Mordaunt was struck by this occurrence, which was quite singular, for Bessie had always chosen to remain on former occasions; but at length it was explained, for Sir Gwyn, with all the embarrassment which is usual in such cases, proceeded to inform him that he had come to ask his daughter's hand.

The reception of this request was all that Sir Gwyn could have desired. Bernal Mordaunt pressed the young man's hand, and looked at him earnestly, with moistened eyes.

"My dear Gwyn," said he, addressing him in the familiar style which the young man had himself requested that he would use—"my dear Gwyn, the object of my dearest regard on earth is my sweet daughter Inez, and her future happiness. You know how dear she is to me, and how I live in her presence. You know, too, what a heart of love she has—how tender she is, how true, how devoted, how forgetful of self. I never cease to thank Heaven for the mercy bestowed upon one so undeserving as I am, in the gift of an angel upon earth, to be my daughter, to love me, to tend me, to devote herself to me, as she does. But still I am not forgetful of the future, my boy; and I know that the best thing for her to win is the heart of a brave, loyal gentleman, who may be her protector through life. I have seen all this in you, Gwyn, my dear boy, and I am happy in the thought that you

love her; and, if you can win her love, you have not only my consent, but my grateful and earnest good wishes. You have my consent, Gwyn, and more—you have my most affectionate sympathies; for it will give me sincere happiness to receive you as my son."

Gwyn was quite overcome at such a reception of his request, and murmured some words of acknowledgment. There was evidently something on his mind, however; and this, after some further conversation, all came out.

"I had to ask this first," said he; "but I've got something else that I'm anxious to tell you, before this goes any further. It's something that you ought to know, and I ought to tell. It's about my own affairs."

Bernal Mordaunt at this looked at him with a pleasant smile of encouragement.

"The fact is," said Gwyn, "there's some difficulty in my present position, some uncertainty as to my right, not only to my title, but also to my estate. I will explain. I am the youngest of three brothers. My eldest brother died a few years ago, leaving no heirs. Now, between me and him there was a second brother; and it is this one that makes my present position uncertain. About ten years ago, he vanished. He lived in Paris when he was last heard from. He had been very dissipated. As the second son, he had no prospects; and the wild life which he had lived had already exhausted what my father had allowed him. There was some talk of a hasty marriage that he had made with some *grisette* or some unworthy creature. Be that as it may, he vanished, and has never been heard of since.

"Well, you know, my elder brother died, as I have said; and, as my second brother was not to be found, I came in for the inheritance. As to my second brother, I have heard various rumors. Some say that he committed suicide; others, that he died in extreme poverty in Genoa; others, that he went to India, and died there. But, among all these rumors, no proof has ever been brought forward that he is dead. He may be living yet, and the only actual proof that I can adduce in favor of his death is the improbability of any man in needy circumstances allowing a great inheritance to pass into other hands, when he has only to come forward to claim it. At the same time, I know this, that he was always different from other men; and, if he had

chosen to be engaged in some mode of life that suited his tastes for the time, he would let the inheritance pass, and not come forward till it suited him to do so. As to my elder brother's death, he must have heard of that, for it was mentioned in all the papers at the time, and, what is more, notices of it were inserted in the leading journals on the Continent and in America. So, you see, as it is possible that he may be alive, it is also possible that I may not be the rightful owner of the Ruthven estates; and, if he should ever appear, I should have to give them all up to him. The probability of his appearance is certainly somewhat remote, but still I thought it my duty to explain this matter."

To all this Bernal Mordaunt listened with a pleasant smile.

"My dear boy," said he, as Gwyn finished, "I am grateful to you for your frankness and for your confidence. At the same time, all this makes not the slightest difference in my feelings. When I accepted the proposal which you made, it was not the baronet that I regarded, or the heir of the Ruthven estates, but the young man Gwyn Ruthven, whom I consider as a noble-hearted and loyal gentleman, and whom I esteem, not for what he *has*, but for what he *is*. I assure you that it makes no difference to me whether you are rich or poor. The life that I have lived, and the principles that have animated me, have all caused me to regard riches as of less importance than the world supposes. Inez has Mordaunt Manor; and, if you should be stripped of every thing, this would remain, and this would be enough. So do not let any considerations of this sort interfere with your hopes and plans. If you love her, go and try to win her. If she accepts you, I give you my blessing. But, as for this missing brother of whom you speak, of course you have duties there, which I am sure you have already tried to fulfil."

"You are right," said Gwyn, earnestly; "I have tried to find him. I have sent out notices, and have even communicated with the police in Paris, in Vienna, in New York, and in several other places. If he is alive, the place is his, and I am ready to give it up."

"My boy," said Bernal Mordaunt, in tones more tender than any which he had ever, thus far, used to Gwyn, "once upon a time, many years ago, your father and I made an agree-

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ment. We were very old friends. We were boys together. We were together at Eton, at Magdalen College, Oxford, and in the same regiment in the army for a few years. We married at about the same time. I lived here, he in London; but, though our families were separated, he and I saw very much of one another, and kept up our friendship. I remember your brothers. On my last visit to London, where his duties kept him for the greater part of the year, they were at home—Bruce and Kane, fine, manly boys, though Bruce was not much to my taste. It was Kane that I admired. You, Gwyn, must have been a baby. I didn't see you. Your father and I were speaking of our children. He had only sons; I had only daughters. We thought that it would be a good thing if one of his sons should marry one of my daughters, and thus join those two noble estates. We talked it over with enthusiasm, and we both agreed that it would be too desirable a thing to neglect; and we parted with the wish that it might eventually result in this. Alas! man proposes, but God disposes: our lives were strangely altered from what we anticipated, and I never saw him again. But in you, my dear boy, I see him; and, when I first saw you with my sweet Inez, I could not help wishing that the old hops of years ago might be fulfilled in you and her. Still, you must remember that it is not the union of the estates that I now regard; these things I consider as of small importance, in comparison with the welfare of my sweet Inez. As to your brother, if there is any mode of search that you can yet think of, you had better try it.—And that was the end of poor Kane? And such a noble boy! Poor lad! poor, poor lad!

"You may rely upon it," said Gwyn, "if there is any conceivable way by which I may hear of him, I will make use of it."

"I know that, of course, my boy," said Bernal Mordaunt, kindly.

After this there was a new tenderness on Bernal Mordaunt's part toward Bessie, which also extended itself to Gwyn. The two young people had evidently come to an understanding; and Bernal Mordaunt, in all his words and looks, showed plainly that he was well pleased for this to be so.

"Gwyn, my dear boy," said he, one day, taking advantage of an occasion on which they happened to be alone, "I wish to speak

to you about that subject which we were discussing the other day. You know how dear to my heart is the welfare of my beloved Inez. Every day I think of it more and more, and all the more as I feel that my own end is approaching."

"O sir!" began Gwyn; but Bernal Mordaunt checked him.

"No, no," said he, "I know well what you wish to say, but it is not necessary. Believe me, my own feelings in this matter are a sure guide. See how it is with me. See how much weaker I now am than I was when you first knew me. I came home somewhat broken in health, it is true, yet still not so much invalidated but that I might indulge in a reasonable hope of recovery. I had worked hard and suffered much, yet not more so than many of my brethren in the same holy cause. Under ordinary circumstances I might hope for a complete restoration to health from a return to Europe. Indeed, the voyage home proved wonderfully beneficial, so much so that, when I reached Rome, I was congratulated by every one on my vigor and energy. I went to Paris and to London, and my health continued to improve in spite of bad news which I heard, and distressing doubts, and great fatigue. When I came here I felt strong."

"Yet all these hopes which I had formed of renewed health and prolonged life, it has pleased Heaven to make of no avail. It may be that the purpose which lay before me called forth certain latent energies, the exercise of which was beneficial; and that, when all was gained, and there was nothing more to work for, the cessation of the play of these energies threw me back upon myself, and left me to sink helplessly into this weakness where I now find myself. I put it in this way, for I know no other way in which I may account for it, yet still, whatever be the cause, it is a fact that, since my return to Mordaunt Manor, I have grown steadily worse and worse every day. At this moment I feel a profound weakness and a failure of vital power, which I am sure must soon have a fatal result. There is no help for it. You know, for you have seen, how tenderly, how assiduously, how devotedly, my sweet Inez has nursed me and cared for me. My very food comes from her hands. Her deep love for me will allow no other hands than her own to prepare certain little dainties which

she knows I like. She watches me night and day. She hovers around me incessantly. And yet, what can she do? If tenderest love could restore me, hers would do it; but, as it is, Gwyn"—and Bernal Mordaunt's face assumed a look which afterward haunted Gwyn for many a day—"as it is, it really seems as if all her fond care and all her assiduous attention only served to draw me down more surely to death.

"And now, Gwyn, my dear boy," he continued, after a pause, "what I wish to say is this: My days I feel are numbered. I must soon leave her; but, before I go, it is the one desire of my heart to see her future secured; to see her, in short, under your protection before she loses mine. I mention this, my dear boy, because I have it so much at heart, and because it really seems to me that, if this were accomplished, I should die content. Will you not try to do what you can to persuade her to grant this desire of the father whom she loves so tenderly?"

"Oh, come," said Gwyn, "I really think you take too deponding a view of things, and, as to what you mention, I'm sure I'd give my eyes if I could only induce her to consent. Perhaps, if you mentioned it to her, she might be more willing to listen to me."

"I think I had better do so," said Bernal Mordaunt, thoughtfully.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### SELF-SACRIFICE.

THE matter upon which Bernal Mordaunt had spoken to Sir Gwyn was one which had been prominent in his thoughts before, and remained afterward a subject of still more absorbing importance. His deep love for his daughter forced him to dwell upon this idea; and the more he felt his own increasing weakness, the more anxious he was to secure his daughter's future before he should leave her forever. All that he had said to Sir Gwyn he felt to be true. It was true that his health had improved after leaving the East, and that he had constantly gained strength up to that moment when he had reached Mordaunt Manor. It was true that, since that time, a change had taken place for the worst, and that ever since he had steadily and uninterruptedly grown weaker; and, con-

sequently, if he looked forward to the worst, and confidently expected that death alone would end this, he was justified in his opinion. What might be the cause of this change for the worse Bernal Mordaunt himself did not know. It might be supposed that the pleasant surroundings of home, the perfect rest and calm, and, above all, the unwearied attentions of Bessie, would have had nothing but a beneficial effect upon him; yet Bernal Mordaunt had plainly stated his belief that they had produced upon him an effect which was the very opposite.

But his daughter's future was now the chief thing upon his mind, and soon he felt too impatient to postpone any further the arrangement which he longed to have made.

"My dearest Inez," said he, one evening, after Sir Gwyn had left them, "there is something that I wish to speak to you about."

"What is it, papa dear?" said Bessie.

They were alone together—he in an arm-chair, she on a stool at his feet—and, as he spoke, she put her little hand in his. He pressed it between his own, and went on:

"It concerns you, my dearest Inez, and is, therefore, the fondest wish of my heart. You see how I am now and how I have been, dear, since my return home. I grow weaker and weaker every day, and I cannot help looking forward to the time when I shall have to leave you."

"Leave me, papa dearest? Why, what do you mean? What are you going to leave me for? Are you tired of me? Are you going back to those horrid Chinamen and Turks? You shall never go near them, or, if you do, I will go with you, so I will."

Bernal Mordaunt shook his head mournfully.

"I meant a different journey, Inez darling," said he, "and one on which no earthly friend, however true and loving, could ever accompany me. It is a journey which I and you and all must go alone; and that journey is nearer, I think; now than ever it was before; and this is the journey that I speak of; and I do not wish to go on it until I accomplish something that is very important."

At this, Bessie withdrew her hand, and clasped this and the other together. Then, shrinking back, she fixed her large blue eyes on Bernal Mordaunt with a look of fear.

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"My dearest child," said Bernal Mordaunt, leaning forward and placing his hand tenderly on her golden, rippling hair, "my own Inez, these things must be said. If there is a sorrow to come, it is better to be prepared."

"But I don't want any sorrow to come," said Bessie, "and I can't bear it. If any sorrow comes, I'm sure I shall die."

Bernal Mordaunt sighed. The thought of her loving and tender nature was too much for him. She was so profound and absorbed in her affection. How could this slender young girl, whose whole nature seemed made up of tenderness, who lived only to love or be loved, bear the rude shock of affliction, of bereavement?

"My sweet child," said he, in a tremulous voice, "Heaven knows how gladly I would do any thing to save you from sorrow—how gladly I would put myself between you and every possible evil. But such things cannot be, and there are none so pure and so innocent but that they must bear their share of the ills of our common humanity. If I am to leave you, and if my loss gives you such sorrow, I might almost regret, for your sake, Inez dearest, that I ever came home, and called forth so much love from you, only to wring your tender heart; yet, for my own sake, I cannot but rejoice that I have found you and known you, and felt your tender love before I go."

At this Bessie bowed herself down and hid her face in her hands. Her form trembled violently, and gave signs of deep emotion.

Bernal Mordaunt was himself overcome by the sight of this, and therefore changed the conversation to something else.

A few days afterward, however, he returned to the point, and this time he did not dwell so much upon that mournful theme which proved so painful to Bessie.

"You see, my dearest Inez," said he, after some preliminary explanations, "how my heart is set upon this. I really suffer from the thought that your only protector and guardian is a feeble old man. Now, if

any thing should happen to me, what would become of you?"

"But nothing shall happen to you, papa dearest; and if any thing should, why—why—I—I—don't—don't want any thing to become of me at all. I want to lie down and die, so I do, and there you have it."

"I know well your devoted love, my own darling daughter," said Bernal Mordaunt, fondly, yet sadly, "but I am now speaking about my own feelings. I may be utterly in the wrong about myself and my health, as you say I am; yet still I feel this way. Now, my own child, you always think of my wishes and make them your law. Do you think that you would grant a request of mine which lies very near my heart?"

Bessie looked up with childish innocence.

"What is it, papa dear?" she asked.

"It is this, my child: I wish to see you with some protector—less frail and feeble than I am. I might nominate a guardian, but I know of none. Poor Wyverne is gone. None of my acquaintances here are congenial except one; and it is this one under whose guardianship I should like to see you before I—before I grow any worse."

"Who is he, papa dear?" asked Bessie, in the most unsuspecting manner.

"Our dear friend Gwyn."

"Gwyn!" exclaimed Bessie, "my guardian!" She looked at him in astonishment.

"Yes my dearest Inez. He shall be your guardian, the kind of guardian which his love for you and your feelings toward him would make most fitting. In short, the highest desire of my life is to see you his wife before I grow worse."

At this Bessie buried her face in her hands, bowed down, and said not a word.

"You are betrothed, why should you wait? Why not grant an old man's wish when it lies so near his heart? This is my strongest desire, Inez darling. You will not refuse it when I ask it so earnestly. And it is all for your own sake. Can you decide now?"

"Oh, papa! dear, dear papa! I do so wish that you would get this absurd idea out of your head."

"It's my wish, dearest Inez," said Mordaunt, earnestly.

"Oh, papa dear, how you do put things! You know how eager I always am to do even



the slightest little thing that you want me to, but this is like asking me to desert you, and how can I possibly do that? No, papa—my own papa—I know that poor dear Gwyn is awfully fond of me, and I like him too, and I have told him so; but if it comes to leaving you, papa dearest, why I won't, and I'd give him up before you, so I would, and there you have it."

Saying this, Bessie seized Mordaunt's hands, and, hiding her face in them, she covered them with kisses. Tears stood in Mordaunt's eyes; the devotion of this daughter was wonderful. His father's heart yearned over her with inexpressible tenderness; and yet out of that very tenderness he still was firm in his resolve to exert all his power to bring the marriage about. It was for her sake. Should he die, the marriage would be postponed for a long time, and during such a postponement it might be prevented altogether by some casualty.

All this he pointed out to Bessie, and, together with this, he brought forward other persuasives, but urged most of all his own wish, which, whether reasonable or unreasonable, was so set upon this that a disappointment would grieve him sorely. One by one Bessie's objections and scruples, and they were many, were argued away or set aside, and at last she had no other resource than to assent. Yet, even then, she made a most express stipulation that her marriage with Sir Gwyn should make no difference in their mode of life—that they should still live at Mordaunt Manor, and that she should be his nurse and his attendant as before. To these things Mordaunt consented, and Sir Gwyn was only too glad to win Bessie under any circumstances.

Having thus gained Bessie's consent, Mordaunt was urgent in pressing her to arrange it at an early date. His own health now declined even more rapidly, and this made him all the more impatient. Sir Gwyn, also, who saw Mordaunt's impatience, united his own ardent entreaties, and Bessie was unable to refuse.

The marriage thus took place about a month after Mordaunt had gained Bessie's acquiescence. Prominent among those who witnessed the ceremony was Mordaunt, who sat in a chair in the centre aisle, propped up with pillows. His strength had failed so much that he had come to this. But the ef-

fort was too much, and he was so exhausted that on his way home he fainted.

Sir Gwyn and Lady Ruthven went on a short tour through the Highlands, but were not gone more than a fortnight. Bessie's anxiety would not allow her to remain away longer. She had to fly back to her "dear, dear papa." Mordaunt seemed somewhat better, in spite of the over-exertion at the wedding. There was more strength in his frame, more color in his cheeks. When the bridal pair left, he was unable to stand alone. Now he could walk about the house, and up and down the piazza.

Sir Gwyn was overjoyed, and Bessie expressed herself in terms of the highest delight.

Encouraging as this improvement in Mordaunt was, however, it proved but temporary; and Bessie had scarce resumed her former fond attendance upon her "dearest, darling papa," when the strength that had begun to return, once more began to leave him. This created the deepest dejection in him. He had begun to hope. All hope seemed now to be gone.

Lady Ruthven received the congratulatory visits of the country people, who found her in her new dignity more charming than ever. But the universal popularity which she had gained in no way changed the simplicity of her character and manner. There was no affectation, nor was there any attempt to lay aside the little peculiarities which had always formed at once her distinction and no little of her charm.

Nor did the new social duties which now devolved upon her draw Lady Ruthven away from those duties to which Bessie had been so devoted. Mordaunt saw, with new tenderness, that her promise to him had not been a vain one; and that the husband had not eclipsed the father. To Mordaunt she allotted more time than either to her husband or to the world. The attendant physicians thought that her unremitting care had prolonged the old man's life beyond what would have been its term under other circumstances; and society, which already admired her for her beauty and amiability, now adored her for her tender devotion and her filial piety. Gwyn, also, in winning the daughter, had not forgotten the father; but, as the lover had been, so was the husband, and he found the society of his wife none the

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But Mordaunt's days were numbered. This was evident. He knew it himself. Gwyn knew it. Bessie tried to reject the belief, but it could be seen that she dreaded the worst. There was about her, at times, a hurried nervousness, a dreamy abstraction, a fearful, furtive glance, unlike any thing that had ever before been seen in her by her friends. Gwyn noticed this, and urged her in his loving way to take more rest, but Bessie turned it off with a smile and a sigh.

Mordaunt's days were numbered. Since the return of the newly-married pair, his strength began to fail him, and he descended by accelerated degrees down toward the last verge of life. But, with each succeeding stage of weakness, Bessie's care grew more and more unremitting. At length she had to deny herself to all visitors, and confine herself to Mordaunt's chamber.

As the old man descended deeper and deeper into the dark waters of death, his heart still turned with yearning affection and inexpressible gratitude to this bright young being whose love had so glorified the last days of his life. He had come home, as he now saw, to die; but how sweet it was to descend to death in such society; to feel her soft touch, to hear her voice of love, her low-breathed tones of tender affection, all the way! To the worn-out man death that came in this way could scarce be deemed unwelcome. Could any death be better or brighter?

It was Bessie who thus cheered his last hours. She read to him when he wished it. She sung to him the hymns or the chants which he loved—hymns and chants which she had already learned for his sake. He loved to listen to her voice as she thus sung, clasping her hand the while as though he gathered strength from her. She also, as always before, poured out all his draughts, and administered to him all his medicines. This was a privilege which she had claimed from the first, and the old man expected it; and, during her absence on the bridal tour, he missed this tender attention, even though his health had been better without it.

So the days passed, and Bessie showed her tender and solicitous love.

Thus the last hour drew near.

For a whole day he had been at the verge

of dissolution. Bessie had refused to leave his bedside. She sat there, holding his hand, and wiping the cold dews of death from his brow. In that same room was Gwyn, watching the dying face of Mordaunt; watching also the pale face of his devoted wife, who in her deep love for a father thought nothing of herself. He was afraid of the reaction from all this; yet he did not know what to do. Bessie refused to leave the room till all was over; and he knew not what arguments to bring forward at such a time. The family physician was also there, counting the moments that might elapse till all should be over, and looking with unfeigned emotion upon the scene before him, where the daughter clung so to the dying father, as though she would drag him back from death unto life.

Suddenly the dying man opened his eyes, and fixed them on Bessie. His lips moved. She bent down low to listen.

"Inez," said he.

"Yes, papa dearest," said Bessie.

Mordaunt stared at her.

"You are not Inez!" said he, in a voice which was audible to all in the room.

Bessie shook her head mournfully, and looked at her husband.

"His mind is wandering still, poor papa! He is thinking of poor, dear, darling mamma, so he is. Her name was Inez, too, the same as mine."

Mordaunt's eyes closed.

After about an hour he opened them once more, and again they rested on Bessie. Those who looked at his face now saw that the last great change had come over it. Death-struck was that face now, yet the eyes were full of intelligence, and beamed with inexpressible tenderness as they rested on Bessie.

"Inez—dearest—best—daughter!" he said.

Bessie bent down low over him.

"Kiss—me—Inez!"

Bessie pressed her lips to his cold forehead.

Such were the last words of Bernal Mordaunt. He was buried in a manner worthy of the great house of which he was the last representative.

Lady Ruthven was greatly prostrated by this last blow, yet she rallied from it with unexpected rapidity. But the melancholy event that had just occurred made Mordaunt Manor distasteful to her now; and so she yielded to

her husband's earnest solicitations, and went with him to take up her permanent abode at Ruthven Towers.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

#### A STRANGE MEETING.

THE letter which Blake had written was delivered to Kane Hellmuth on the following day. It excited much surprise on the part of the latter, and for a twofold reason: first, because his friend's departure was so sudden; and, secondly, because the letter itself was so incoherent and unsatisfactory. The construction of the sentences was most confused and awkward; and it was impossible to find out where he had gone, and what he had gone for. Kane Hellmuth could not suspect so frank a nature as that of Blake of any thing like deceit; and, if the letter was ambiguous or unintelligible, he chose rather to attribute it to haste, or sleepiness, on the part of the writer. He had seen him on the previous day, and Blake had made no mention of any thing of the kind; nor did he seem to have any idea of going on a journey. He was certainly a little abstracted in his manner, for Kane Hellmuth's own cares had not altogether prevented him from noticing that; but this may have arisen from his anxiety about his mother, from whom, as he himself had said, he had not heard for some time. He could only understand this mysterious letter by supposing that some friend of Blake's had written to him, or come to him, and given him information of some sudden opening which he had to accept at once. Thinking, therefore, that Blake would either be back, or write more fully before long, he put the letter away, and waited in the expectation of hearing more.

Days passed, however, and weeks also, and even months, without any further communication. This surprised Kane Hellmuth, for he had expected different things; and, taken in connection with the incoherent letter, it gave him some anxiety. He also felt this another way, for he had conceived a strong regard for his friend, and liked to run in to see him, or have him drop in to his own apartments. The matter, therefore, took up a good share of his thoughts, and he could not help the suspicion that there was some

evil involved in this sudden and mysterious flight. What it could be he did not know; for he was not aware of any circumstances which might inspire any one with evil designs against him; and so, in default of other things, his mind dwelt upon that strange intercourse which Blake had held with Mr. Wyverne, which was terminated by the wonderful declaration of the latter, and his death. Although he had heard Father Magrath's explanation of that affair, and fully believed it, yet still, in spite of this, he could not help connecting it in some way with Blake's present disappearance, and the thought occurred to him often and often that if, after all, it were true, Blake might have enemies; though who they could be, and what motive for enmity they could possibly have, was utterly beyond his comprehension.

Thus the time passed, and as the months went by without any news from his friend, he began to fear the worst, though such was his ignorance of Blake's movements that he did not know what to do to search him out. The *concierges* of the house where Blake had stopped could tell him nothing except that on a certain morning he had gone in company with another person, and had left directions that his trunk should be taken care of. He did not know who the other person was, and the description which he gave of him afforded no intelligence to Kane Hellmuth. To the police it was, of course, useless to apply, for the meagre information which he could supply them with would not be enough to yield them any clue by which they might be guided to a search. His helplessness in this matter was therefore complete, and that very helplessness made the whole affair more painful to him.

Before this he had been the prey of one great and engrossing trouble, which arose from that mysterious and inexplicable apparition whose visitations he had described to Blake. Now this new trouble had taken up his thoughts more and more, until at length his own affair had come to occupy but a small portion of his attention. It was not forgotten by any means; it was only pushed over into a subordinate place, and ceased to be a supreme care. The possible evil impending over Blake seemed to him more formidable than any thing that could arise from his own experiences; and so it was that, in the mystery which had gathered around Blake,

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Such was the state of Kane Hellmuth's mind, when one day he was wandering through the streets on the way to his rooms. He was approaching the street up which he intended to turn, and was about six feet from the corner, when suddenly at the opposite corner he caught sight of a figure which at once drove from his mind all thoughts of Blake, and restored in its fullest intensity all those mysterious feelings which he had described in narrating his story of the apparition. It was a female figure. The face was thin, and pallid, and careworn; the eyes were large and dark, and rested for a moment upon him. The very first glance showed him that this was the face of his "apparition" in very truth, and beyond a doubt; and so profound was the shock that, for a moment, as he stared back, he felt rooted to the spot.

But about this apparition there were certain peculiarities of an important kind. The face was precisely the same—the same pallor—the same deep, dark eyes—the same fixed, unfathomable gaze; yet in other things a change was observable. The expression was no longer one of reproach; it was rather one of sudden terror—a terror like his own; the glance was not long and sustained—it was rather furtive and hasty. Moreover, though this apparition was dressed in black, it was not the costume of a nun; it was simple and sober, yet it was the fashion of the day; and this change from the weird and unfamiliar, to the commonplace and familiar, of itself went far to steady Kane Hellmuth's nerves, and prevent him from sinking into that lamentable weakness which had characterized his former meetings with this mysterious being.

He stopped there for a moment, rooted to the spot, with his brain in a whirl, and all his former feelings overwhelming him; but the emotion was more short-lived than before, since these changes in the form and fashion and expression of the figure were noticed at once, and went far to reassure him. The figure threw one hasty, furtive look at him, and then, sharply turning the opposite corner, walked quickly up the street.

In an instant Kane Hellmuth started in pursuit. It was an irresistible fascination that drew him on. He was resolved now to do what he could to fathom this mystery that so long had troubled him. Every step that he took seemed

to bring back his presence of mind, and drive away those feelings of superstitious terror that had at first been thrown over his soul. Every step that he took seemed to show him that he was the stronger, and that the other was the weaker. Surrounding circumstances favored him. It was broad day. It was a public street, on which people were passing to and fro, and the ordinary every-day traffic was going on. There was no chance here for any of that jugglery which might deceive the senses; or any of those associations of night, and gloom, and solemnity, which on the last memorable meeting had baffled his search. Moreover, the face of the Figure was turned away. It was its back that he saw. The Figure moved rapidly on, yet not so rapidly but that he could keep up with it, or even overtake it. It seemed to him that he was the pursuer, and the Figure the pursued, and that now, if he followed vigorously, all might be at last revealed.

Kane Hellmuth thus followed from one corner to the next. Then the Figure crossed the street to the opposite corner. He followed. Then the Figure turned, and fixed its eyes again on Kane Hellmuth. It was the same glance as before, intensified. It was a sudden glance, and one, too, which showed signs of unmistakable fear. Yet the face was the same—it was the face of his apparition—the face that had haunted him for years—the face that was associated with the brightest and the darkest hours of all his life. The look of fear was something new, yet it seemed to heighten his own resolution and strengthen his own heart; for now it seemed as though the tables had been turned, and all the fear which once had been felt by him had passed over to the other.

The Figure now walked on faster. Evidently it was trying to fly from him. He himself increased his pace. Easy enough was it for him to keep up even with this utmost exertion of the other. In a race like this he was the superior. He saw it; he felt it. There was nothing of the supernatural here. Could it indeed be? Was she, then, alive? But, if so, why did she fly? What did she mean?—It was a living woman that was before his eyes, fearing him, flying from him, overcome with human terror.

The woman hurried on. Kane Hellmuth hurried after. Suddenly she hailed a passing

cab. The cab drew up at the sidewalk. The cabman got down to open the door. Already the woman's hand was on the door, and her foot was on the curb, when Kane Hellmuth reached the spot. He did not stand on ceremony. Too deep was his anxiety to learn the truth of this matter for him to observe any of the petty courtesies of life. He was not rude or rough; he was simply earnest, and in his desperate earnestness, and in his deep longing to know all, he laid his hand suddenly and sharply upon the woman's arm.

She turned hastily and stared at him, showing a face that was filled with an anguish of terror. Her lips moved, but no sound escaped them. Then, while Kane Hellmuth's hand still clutched her arm, a low moan escaped her, she reeled, and would have fallen if he had not caught her in his arms.

The cabman stood by observing this scene calmly. It was no business of his. He did not understand it, of course, but then it was often his fortune to be a witness of unintelligible scenes like this.

Meanwhile, the woman hung senseless on Kane Hellmuth's arms. For a moment he was puzzled what to do. Where was her residence? He did not know. Where should he take her? No apparition was this—this being of flesh and blood of whose weight he was sensible; but rather a living human being. But oh! who—and why had she sought him out?

He did not hesitate long. He lifted her into the cab, and then, getting in himself, he gave the cabman his own address. The cabman drove there at once, and, as it was not far away, they soon reached the place. Kane Hellmuth then took the woman in his arms, and carried her up to his own apartments. Then he sent up the women of the house, and waited the result.

The usual restoratives were applied, and the woman came out of her senselessness. She looked wildly around, and for some time was unable to comprehend her situation. Then a sudden look of terror came over her face, and she began to implore the women to let her go.

The women did not know what to say. Kane Hellmuth had hurriedly informed them that he had found her fainting in the street, and this they told her.

"Then I am not a prisoner here?" said the woman, eagerly.

"A prisoner!" exclaimed one of the attendants; "mon Dieu! no, madame. How is that possible? You may go when and where you please; only you must rest a few moments. It was a very kind gentleman who brought you here, and sent us up."

The woman gave a low sigh of relief, and sunk back again. She had been placed on the sofa in Kane Hellmuth's room. She was young, and seemed to have suffered much. She was evidently a lady.

Suddenly she roused herself.

"Who brought me here?" she asked, abruptly.

"Monsieur Hellmuth," said the attendant, pronouncing the name as well as she could.

"Hailmeet," repeated the lady, thoughtfully.

"Would you like to see him—perhaps he can explain—that there is nothing to fear."

"I am not a prisoner, then?" said the lady, earnestly.

"Oh, no—a prisoner? Mon Dieu! impossible!"

"And you are not employed to detain me?"

"Mon Dieu! but mademoiselle is rav- ing—that is a thing altogether impossible. But you must see the good Monsieur Hellmuth.

With these words the woman who had spoken left the room, and informed Kane Hellmuth that the young lady had come to her senses; telling him also, what she had said. Her words excited surprise in Hellmuth's mind, but he was eager to know all, and so he at once entered the room. The woman followed him, and waited there, together with the other attendant.

Kane Hellmuth looked earnestly at the pale face before him, and the lady raised her large, dark, melancholy eyes to his face, and regarded him with equal earnestness, though in her look there was an anxious scrutiny and timid inquiry. But the face that she saw seemed to have no terror for her now, and the first look of fear gave place to one of mournful entreaty.

"Oh, sir," said she, in English, "you are an Englishman; you cannot be capable of injuring one who never harmed you! I have suffered enough, and why I do not know."

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At this, Kane Hellmuth felt bewildered. This was, indeed, a strange address from her. He said nothing for a few moments, but regarded her with a solemn face, and a look in which there was nothing save tenderness and longing.

"You do not seem to know me," said he, at length, in a mournful tone.

"I do not," said the lady. "I never saw you before to-day."

"Are you not Clara Ruthven?" asked Kane Hellmuth, in a tremulous voice.

The lady shook her head.

"Is it all a mistake, then?" cried Kane Hellmuth, in a voice that was a wail of despair. "Are you not my Clara? Are you not Clara Mordaunt, who—"

He was interrupted by the lady. At the mention of the name of Clara Mordaunt she started from the sofa to her feet, and stared at him in amazement.

"Clara Mordaunt!" she exclaimed. "Clara Mordaunt! Who are you? What do you know about Clara Mordaunt? Clara Mordaunt!" she repeated, and again the frightened look came to her face. "Oh, sir, if you are in league with those who have so cruelly wronged me, have pity on me! Do not, oh, do not detain me! Let me go. My life is wretched enough, and my only hope is to have my freedom till I die."

"Answer me this," said Kane Hellmuth, in a hoarse voice, which was tremulous still with deepest emotion. "I am no enemy; I have no evil designs; if you are a stranger, after all, you have nothing to fear from me; if you are in trouble, I swear I will do what I can to help you, but only answer me. If you are not Clara Ruthven, she who was born Clara Mordaunt, in Heaven's name who are you, and why have you appeared before me in so many places?"

"I have never appeared before you," said the lady. "I never saw you before. You ask after Clara Mordaunt. I am not Clara Mordaunt. Clara Mordaunt is dead. She died ten years ago. Why do you ask me if I am Clara Mordaunt?"

"Dead!" repeated Kane Hellmuth, in a hollow voice. "Well, that is what every one says, but I swear I never saw in any human face such a resemblance to any other human face as there is in yours to the face of Clara Mordaunt! But what do you mean by saying that you never appeared to me before?"

Were you not at Père-la-Chaise Cemetery?"

"Never," said the lady. "I never saw you before."

"What! were not you the one that I saw at Notre-Dame, in the rail-cars, in the Boulevard where—"

"You are utterly mistaken," said the lady; "I never saw you before."

"Have you not been here all these years, appearing and disappearing like a phantom, reminding me of one who your say is dead?"

"Years!" said the lady. "I don't understand you. I have been in Paris only three months, though they seem like many, many years. But oh, sir! you look like one who would not willingly do a wrong. Your face cannot belie you. Will you tell me what you mean by asking after Clara Mordaunt?—what you mean by calling her Clara Ruthven, and tell me what she is to you?"

"To me? O Heavens!" said Kane Hellmuth, "she was so much to me that now it is better not to talk about it. But did you know her? Will you tell me how it is that you have such an extraordinary likeness to her? If you are not Clara Mordaunt, who are you?"

"My fright must have been a mistake," said the lady, looking at Kane Hellmuth with greater interest, "and I can only hope that it has been so. I will tell you who I am, for oh, sir, I think I may trust you. This Clara Mordaunt that you speak of was my own sister, and my name is Inez Mordaunt."

"Her sister! Inez Mordaunt!" cried Kane Hellmuth, in amazement. "Why, she said that her sister Inez was dead!"

The lady stared at him.

"Dead? Did she say that? Then she must have been deceived, like me, all her life. For I, too, lived a life that was all surrounded by deceit, and it was only an accident that revealed to me the truth. I was brought up to believe that my name was Wyverne, and—"

But here Kane Hellmuth interrupted her.

"Wyverne!" he cried. "Wyverne! Inez Wyverne! Are you Inez Wyverne? Oh, Heavens! what is the meaning of all this?"

He stopped, overwhelmed by a rush of emotion consequent upon the mention of that



name. He recalled the story of Blake, and Blake's love for this girl, who had thus so strangely come across his way. He recalled his conversation with Father Magrath. He had heard from him that Inez Wyverne had been left penniless, but how had she come here? Why did she take the name of Mordaunt? How was it that she called herself the sister of Clara Mordaunt, his wife? Who was the other Miss Mordaunt whom he had gone to London to see? Was she, too, a sister of his lost Clara? That this Inez was her sister might be proved by her extraordinary resemblance, which had led him to identify her with the apparition; and yet it was impossible that she could be identical with that other mysterious one, for she had disclaimed it. What was the meaning of this?

Such were the thoughts of Kane Hellmuth as he stood there staring at this lady whom he had brought here, and who, whether Inez Wyverne or Inez Mordaunt, was equally inexplicable in that bewilderment of his thoughts.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### THE STORY OF INEZ.

THE presence of the attendants acted as a check upon Kane Hellmuth, and he was quick to perceive that this was neither the time nor the place for that full explanation which he wished to have. There was much to be said on both sides, and he longed to hear her story, both for his own sake, and also for the sake of his friend to whom this Inez was so dear. Such a thing would, however, have to be postponed until another occasion.

Instead, therefore, of pouring forth that volley of questions which his first impulse prompted him to do, he checked himself, and began to apologize for bringing her to his room, on the ground that it was an utter mistake, which would have to be explained elsewhere. He informed her that the cab was still waiting, and would take her to her lodgings whenever she wished it. Inez at once accepted the offer with evident gratitude; the fear that Kane Hellmuth had but recently inspired was all gone, and she seemed to regard him as one who might be a friend. With her fear much of her weakness had passed, and she was able to walk to the cab without assistance.

Kane Hellmuth accompanied her, and Inez seemed to acquiesce in his offer of companionship with evident satisfaction. As the cab drove off, nothing was said for a few minutes, when at length Kane Hellmuth burst forth abruptly with—

"All this is the most astonishing thing to me that can be imagined. When you mentioned the name of Wyverne just now, I at once recognized you as one of whom I had heard very much from an intimate friend of mine, who also, I think, is a friend of yours—Dr. Basil Blake."

"Dr. Basil Blake!" exclaimed Inez, eagerly. "Do you know him?"

She spoke eagerly and with agitation, and her whole manner showed that Blake was not without interest in her eyes.

"Basil Blake," said he, "is my intimate friend. On his return from Villeneuve, he informed me of what occurred there."

Inez looked at him earnestly.

"Are you his friend? Then, perhaps, he mentioned your name to me. He used to talk about his friend Kane Hellmuth."

"I am Kane Hellmuth."

At this, Inez looked at him more earnestly than ever, and her face was overspread with a sudden expression of inexpressible relief.

"Oh, how glad I am!" she said, simply and innocently. "Oh, I cannot tell you, Mr. Hellmuth, how very, very glad I am. Oh, how fortunate for me this meeting is! I cannot imagine what I have suffered. This very day I have been in the darkest despair. Oh, how glad, how glad I am!—And is Dr. Blake here too?"

"Well, no—not just now," said Kane Hellmuth, with some hesitation. "He left here a while ago for the south, on business."

"Oh, how glad I am!" said Inez again, speaking half to herself, and in a tone of such innocent and unfeigned joy that Kane Hellmuth felt touched to the heart; and it seemed to suggest to him long and severe suffering on her part, out of which she now saw some means of escape by his assistance.

This assistance he hastened to promise her, and not long after they reached their destination. The lodgings of Inez were not very far from the place where he had first seen her, and were of a kind that seemed suitable to genteel poverty. The room into which he followed her seemed like a general parlor, and formed one of a suite on the second

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floor, hired, as she informed him, by the lady with whom she was lodging.

Situated as these two were with regard to one another, there was very much to be asked and to be answered on both sides; nor was it until several interviews that each became acquainted with the position of the other. The position of Inez was one of so painful a character, that she was eager to tell it all to Kane Hellmuth, so as to get his assistance; and he on his part was equally anxious to tell her his story, partly to explain his late conduct, and partly from the hope that she might give him some information about the mysterious apparition which had so troubled him. As far as that was concerned, however, Inez was not able to throw any light on it whatever, and indeed she knew less of that "Clara Mordaunt," whom she considered her sister, than Kane Hellmuth himself. There was no way in which Inez could account for the apparition. If it was ever explained, the explanation would have to be made in some way quite irrespective of her; and her story showed that she could not have been in Paris at all while those mysterious visitations were occurring.

Her own story, however, was one of such an extraordinary character, that it at once aroused his warmest sympathies, and occupied most of his thoughts. It was not all told at once, but in the course of various interviews; and, without reporting any conversation *verbatim*, it may be best to narrate that story now:

When Inez landed in France, she took the first train for Paris, and for some time had no other thought than to hurry on without delay, so as to see her father as soon as possible. At length she began to feel troubled about the meeting that was before her, and wondered how, in the confusion of a railway-station, she could recognize her father's messengers, or be recognized by them. Her anxiety to reach her father increased her anxiety in this respect, and at length she had to tell her troubles to her maid Saunders. She herself could not speak French very well, but Saunders could speak it as well as English, and no sooner had she learned the anxiety of her mistress, than she hastened to soothe her. She promised to speak to the guard, and did so to such good purpose that this functionary came in person to Inez, and with many gesticulations assured her that he himself

would look out for her friends, and see that they should find her. Reassured by this, Inez got the better of her anxiety in this respect, and at length reached Paris.

As the train stopped, Inez felt a strange sense of desolation in her heart. She was weak, too, and weary, for she had travelled all night, and it was a raw, gray, dismal morning. She looked out into the station-house, and saw the twinkling lights, and the crowd moving to and fro. The consciousness that she was in a foreign country, without a home, came to her with oppressive power; nor could even the thought of her father, with which she tried to console herself, enable her to overcome this sense of loneliness. There was also a time of waiting which seemed unusually long. She had anticipated an earnest welcome, but she was allowed to wait without any, and thus at the very outset her heart sank, and she felt herself a prey to strange, dark fears and forebodings.

At length, Saunders directed her attention to an advancing figure. This one was preceded by the guard, and looked as though he might be the messenger sent to receive her. As he drew near, Inez could see his face quite plainly; for it was turned toward the cars, over which his eyes wandered as though in search of some one. The approach of this messenger might at another time have quelled her rising fears; but the aspect of this man had in it something which Inez did not find at all reassuring; and the face on which she expected to see an air of respectful, if not eager, welcome, had in it now nothing which was not repellent. It was a commonplace face—a coarse and vulgar face—not the face of a man who might be a friend of Bernal Mordaunt. It did not seem bad or vicious; it was simply coarse and commonplace. Nor was the man a servant or a footman, for he was dressed as a priest, and looked like one who might claim the right to associate with Bernal Mordaunt on equal terms. But, though his garb was clerical, there was nothing of the priest either in his face, or attitude, or manner; and the cloth had in this instance failed most completely to contribute its usual professional air to the wearer. Such, then, was the man who came here to receive Inez.

Saunders had already risen, and went outside to speak to the priest. Inez followed shortly after. The priest introduced himself

as Père Gounod, and spoke a few words of conventional welcome. Inez was not sufficiently familiar with French to judge whether he was a man of education or not; but there was a certain clumsiness in his manner, and coarseness of intonation, which made her think that he could not be; yet how could she judge? Still, this was a thing of no moment, and her thoughts soon reverted to the one uppermost idea of her mind—her father; and all the deep anxiety which she felt was manifest in her voice as she asked after him.

The priest looked at her with a quick, furtive glance, and then looked away.

"He is very low," said he, slowly.

There was something in his face which frightened Inez. She would have asked more, but could not. She was afraid of hearing the worst. The priest said no more, but turned, and, with a silent gesture, led the way to the carriage. Inez followed. Saunders also followed. On reaching the carriage, Inez saw that it was a close cab. The priest held the door open. She got in, and was followed by Saunders. The priest then went to see about the luggage, and, after a short absence, returned. He then got on the box with the driver.

After about half an hour's drive, the cab stopped. On getting out, Inez found herself in front of a large and gloomy edifice. She followed the priest, who led the way in through a small door, and up a flight of steps, and along a gallery which looked out into a courtyard. He then opened a door which led into a room. It was meagrely furnished, the floor was tiled, and there was a depressing gloom about it which deepened the melancholy despondency that Inez had all along experienced.

The priest motioned toward a sofa, and asked Inez to sit down.

"But I wish to see papa," said she, anxiously.

"I will go and see," said the priest. "You must wait."

Saying this, he left the room. This strange proceeding seemed unaccountable to Inez, and only increased her fears. He was not long gone; but the time of his absence seemed long indeed to her. She did not sit down, but stood, where he had left her, motionless and terrified, and there he found her on his return.

"Will you not sit down?" he asked.

"But I want to see papa," said Inez.

"One moment," said the priest. "Sit down—I have something to say."

At this strange delay Inez grew more agitated than ever. The priest scated himself. She could not move. She stood thus, pale and trembling, and looked at him fixedly.

"I have something to say," repeated the priest, "and I am very sorry to have to say it."

He paused, and leaned his elbow on his knee, bending forward as he did so, with his eyes on the floor. Thus Inez no longer saw his face, but only the top of his head. Now, in moments of the deepest anxiety, and even anguish, it is strange how often the attention is attracted by even trivial circumstances. It was so with Inez at this time. Full of anguish, with her soul racked by suspense, a prey to the gloomiest forebodings, waiting with something like despair the communication of the priest, her eyes, as they rested upon him, noticed this one thing in the midst of all her agitation and her despair, and that was that this priest had no tonsure. His hair was a thick, bushy mass all over his head; and the characteristic mark of his sacred office was altogether wanting. She noticed this, and it was with an additional shock that she did so. Yet it was not till afterward that she learned to place any stress on this one fact, and see in it its full significance. At that time the shock passed away, and yielded to her uncontrollable anxiety about her father.

"Why don't you say what you have to say?" cried Inez at length. "I want to see papa."

The priest raised his head.

"I wish," said he, in a low voice, and speaking very slowly, "to break it as gently as possible."

Every one of these words was terrible to Inez. To such a saying as this, following after such strange actions, there could be but one meaning, and that one meaning must be the worst. Yet, so great was her terror at hearing this, that she dared not ask another question. She stood as before, with her eyes fixed on him, while he kept his eyes averted.

"I did not tell you before," said the priest. "I wished to prepare you. I wished to do it gradually. I must prepare you for the worst—the very worst."

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Inez stared at him.

“He—is—dead!” she faltered, in a scarce audible voice.

The priest looked at her with a significant glance, and in silence.

“When?” asked Inez, speaking with a great effort, but in a faint voice.

“Three days ago,” said the priest.

Inez gave a low moan, and sank down toward the sofa. Saunders sprang up and assisted her. She sank down upon it, burying her face in her hands, silent and motionless, yet an occasional shudder showed the suffering of her mind. Nor was this suffering without a cause. True, it was not like losing a father whose love she had always known; but still, ever since the discovery of the portrait, she had thought much of Bernal Mordaunt, and had conceived for him all a daughter's feelings. She had recalled many of the reminiscences of early childhood. Above all, his last letter to her had thrown around these feelings additional strength and tenderness. During her journey these feelings had increased, and all her life and all her hope seemed to refer to the meeting with him which she was seeking. Now, in an instant, all this tender love was blighted, and all this eager hope made forever vain. The blow was a severe one, and Inez wellnigh sank under it.

The priest looked at her with close observation, but with no particular sympathy. Thus far he had been somewhat embarrassed while subject to the searching gaze of Inez. Now, when that gaze was removed, and her head buried in her hands, he was able to speak with freedom.

“He died three days ago,” said the priest, speaking somewhat less slowly than before, and in what may be described as a wary and vigilant manner; watching Inez all the while most attentively—“three days ago. He wrote a long letter—a very long letter—too long a letter, indeed—to you, asking you to come here. Well, after that he fainted. It was an hour before he revived. Then we knew—and he knew, too—that he was—dying! But there was nothing to be done, for he was beyond hope. . . . Well,” continued the priest, after a pause, in which his eyes never removed themselves from Inez, who still remained with her head bowed down and buried in her hands—“well, then the poor man called for writing-materials again. We sup-

plied him with them. We raised him upon his bed, so that he might be in a position to write. He took the pen, and at first could hardly hold it. But at length he made a great effort, and wrote about a page. That was all that he was able to do, and, in my opinion, it was just one page too much; but we had to indulge him, for he was so eager about it—and what can you do with a dying man? Well, that was too much. He fell back exhausted, and never spoke one word more. In two hours all was over, and he had barely life and sense enough to receive the viaticum. That was three days ago. You received his letter, and waited till you could leave, and have spent this third day in travelling here. This brings you here at the close of the third day. It is a pity that you had not come before, for he loved you dearly. But still his last thoughts were of you, and his last words, too, for the letter that he wrote was for you.”

At this Inez started up.

“For me!” she exclaimed. “Is there—did he leave any message for me?”

“The letter that I have been telling you about was for you.”

“Have you got it?” cried Inez, eagerly.

“It is here—for you—if you wish to see it,” said the priest.

“Oh, let me have it—let me see it!” said Inez, in a tone of mournful entreaty.

“You shall see it, of course,” said the priest. “It is for you, and it is waiting for you. It is a pity that you have not come in time for something better than a letter. The poor Abbé Mordaunt would have been greatly cheered. We urged him to send for you before, but he was full of hope that he would recover and be able to go to you. He was unwilling to put you to the trouble of a journey. He never knew how ill he was till the last, and then it was too late. He came home from his mission with broken health. He allowed himself no rest. An affair at Villeneuve agitated him greatly, and preyed on his mind. It was something that occurred there, and of things that he heard of after his arrival here. He sank quite rapidly, poor man! And all the time he persisted in the hope that he would recover. At last the doctor told him the truth, and then he wrote for you. But it was too late. The effort of writing hastened the end, and so, as I said, he did not live out that day. Still he left his last in-

structions for you, and I have kept that letter to be given into your own hands. And here it is. I took it from his own hands, and put it in this envelop, and wrote your name on it."

Saying this, the priest drew forth a letter from his pocket and handed it to Inez. She took it with a quick, nervous, eager grasp. The envelop bore the address in a strange hand, simply—

"Inez Mordaunt."

This the priest had explained. But this she did not notice. All her thoughts were turned to the letter itself—the last words of her father, now lost forever—her father, found so strangely, lost so suddenly. With a trembling hand she tore open the envelop, and the last words of that father lay before her eyes.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### IN PRISON.

INEZ tore open the letter and read the following:

"MY DEAREST DAUGHTER: I have just written to you to come to me. It is too late. I am dying. I should have gone on to you. I have scarcely strength enough left to write this. There are many things which I wish to explain. But this explanation cannot now be given by me. My beloved child, I leave you, and forever, but I do not leave you friendless. I have one good and tried friend—the friend of a life; and, though I must leave you, I am able to console myself with the thought that you will be cared for. My dear friend, true and tried, Kevin Magrath, I appoint as your guardian. He will be to you, my daughter, another guardian. He will love the child of his friend as his own child. Trust in him. Love him as your father. He will do for you all that I could have done. He will tell you all about me, and about that past which has been so dark to you. You will have a great grief, but do not give way to it, my child. Trust in Heaven and in my friend Kevin Magrath—father to fatherless—go long journey—never again which—I have—formerly—in vain—mother—just the—last words—not at all—mission—broken—faint—wishes—love—Kevin—Kevin Magrath—forever—father—"

There was no signature. The letter ended with several lines of undecipherable writing, in which a few words were here and there discernible—words without connection and without meaning.

Inez read it all over many times, and was troubled in soul. It was not what she had expected. It was a letter that excited dark fears and anxieties. The circumstantial account which the priest had given her did not at all reassure her. For some time past she had been living in an atmosphere of mystery, and had learned to indulge in a suspicious habit of mind; and so it was that this letter added vague and alarming suspicions to the anxieties which it caused.

All those fears, anxieties, and suspicions, derived their origin from one name mentioned there. It was a name that was mentioned with emphasis—the name of a man that she had learned to regard as an enemy—and yet this man was indicated to her by this letter as her father's true and tried friend, and urged upon her trust and affection. He was to be her guardian. How was it possible for her to read such a letter as this without the darkest suspicions?

For the present, however, these gave way to a yearning desire to see, if possible, all that was left of the man whom she had regarded as her father—her father discovered so strangely, yet lost so suddenly. Was it too late for that? She turned once more to the priest:

"May I not see him?" she asked, in a tremulous voice.

"See him?" repeated the priest.

"Yes," said Inez, "my papa. If I could only see him—one last look—"

"See him!" repeated the priest, in a strange tone—"see him!"

He hesitated and looked away.

"If I only could," said Inez, "if it is not too late."

"Too late?" said the priest, shaking his head. "Alas! it's too late—too late. You've said it. That's what it is. Too late—yes, too late—too late."

"What do you mean?" asked Inez, despairingly. "Can I not have at least the sad satisfaction of seeing him as he is now?"

The priest looked at her with his usual furtive glance.

"But he's gone!" said he.

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"Gone!" repeated Inez, in a bewildered voice.

"Yes, gone," said the priest.

"But how?" said Inez. "What do you mean?"

"Buried!" said the priest, in a solemn voice.

"Buried!"

Inez repeated the word, but was so overwhelmed by the thought that she did not seem to know what it meant. "Buried!" she said again, in a low voice, as if to herself, and, as she said this, she shrank back with a frightened look.

Buried!

"It was three days ago that he died," said the priest. "He was buried this morning. You can never see him again."

At this overwhelming intelligence Inez stared at the priest with an expression in her face that seemed like horror. Then she looked wildly around. Then she once more bowed her head, and this time she burst into a torrent of tears. She had reached the lowest point in that abyss of sorrow which she had been descending, and there she found that the last faint consolation was denied her. The faithful Saunders rushed to her aid. The priest sat motionless watching her. But to Inez the faithful Saunders and the priest were both alike objects of indifference, for all her thoughts were now turned toward the sharpness of this sudden bereavement and the desolation of her present state.

For a long time Inez remained in that condition, overwhelmed by grief and racked by convulsive sobs that shook her frame. The priest watched her still with that vigilant gaze which he directed toward her whenever her eyes were not turned toward him. Sometimes he looked toward the faithful Saunders, and the eyes of the faithful Saunders met his; and, as the eyes of the good priest and of the faithful Saunders met, there seemed to be some kind of intelligence between them. But, if there was any such intelligence, it satisfied itself just then with a silent glance, and deferred any expression in words until a more convenient opportunity.

The blow which had thus fallen upon Inez was one from which she could not readily recover. Rousing herself at length from her first prostration, her only desire was for seclusion, where she might give herself up more entirely to her gloomy thoughts. The faith-

ful Saunders accompanied her to the place, which was pointed out to them by an old woman whom the priest sent, and who appeared to be a combination of char-woman, chamber-maid, and lady's-maid. The room to which Inez was thus shown had a greater air of comfort than the other, yet still it was furnished in a scanty manner, and the tiled floor, with one or two small rugs here and there, had a cheerless air. Here Inez found her luggage, and the faithful Saunders proceeded to open her trunks and arrange her things. But Inez paid no attention to her. She flung herself upon a couch, and the faithful Saunders, finding that she was not needed, finished her task, and silently withdrew.

Inez ate nothing that day, and slept none on the following night. In truth, her position was one which might have seemed gloomy indeed, even to a more sanguine temper. There was about it a dreadful sense of desolation, from which she could not escape. It seemed to her that she had lost her father, her home, her country, and every friend that she ever had. In her father's last letter she had read that which seemed to her to put a climax upon all her woes. Before that she had been simply friendless and in exile, but now she found herself banded over to the guardianship of one of whom she had learned to think with abhorrence. She could not forget the letter which had struck down Henrigan Wyverne at Villeneuve, and that this letter had been written by Kevin Magrath.

For several days she gave herself up completely to deep despondency; and, so strongly did it prey upon her spirits, that at length she became quite ill. In this condition she remained for several weeks, and the profound dejection into which she had fallen made her completely indifferent about her recovery. During this time the faithful Saunders nursed her. At length her youth and vigorous constitution triumphed over her illness, and the lapse of time familiarized her mind so much to her new position that, in the ordinary course of things, it began to appear less intolerable. Soon she grew stronger, and the buoyancy of her spirits led her to indulge rather in hopes for the best. At length she was able to go out of her room, and walk up and down the apartments and out into the gallery.

The house was old and gloomy. There was a small court-yard enclosed by its walls.



On the side where she lived was an open gallery, from which her *suite* of rooms opened. No one else seemed to be living in the house except the priest and the old woman, with herself and the faithful Saunders. This last personage was as devoted as ever. Of the priest she saw but little, and of the old woman still less. She was thus left very much to herself, nor did the solitude seem unpleasant. On the contrary, it was rather congenial to that pensive melancholy which had set in after the first outburst of grief and despair.

At length, one day, while thinking over her lonely condition, she reflected that there was one friend of hers in Paris who might be glad to know that she was here. This was Dr. Blake, whose place in her regards had not grown less prominent, in spite of the mournful events of the time that had elapsed since she left Villeneuve. It came to her like a very pleasant thought, and the idea occurred that, if she should go out, it might not be impossible to see him somewhere, or be seen by him. Her loneliness made this one friend seem now more valuable than he had seemed before; and she had no sooner thought of this than she at once sought to put it into execution. Accordingly, she dressed herself for a walk, and was about to go out alone, when Saunders respectfully interfered, and implored her not to do so. To the wondering inquiry of Inez, "Why not?" the faithful Saunders pleaded her weakness, and the dangers of the Paris streets. Finally, Inez consented to take a drive instead of a walk.

The carriage which took her out was not the most cheerful kind of a one. It was the same close cab which had brought her from the railway-station. The faithful Saunders went with her, though Inez at first seemed rather inclined to go alone. But this seemed so to wound the affectionate heart of the faithful one that Inez good-naturedly consented to let her go.

The drive did not result in any thing. On the whole, Inez felt very much disappointed in Paris. She had heard so much about its splendor that she had expected to find something very different. She mentioned several places whose names were familiar, to which she wished to be driven, but, on seeing them, she found that they did not come up to her expectations. She was driven through a number of narrow streets, finally along a wide but bare-looking place, then into the

narrow streets again; then out into the wide place, until she was thoroughly wearied, and did not care to continue her drive any longer.

After this she went out on almost every fine day, and with the same result. Saunders always went with her; she always saw the same commonplace streets; she never saw any one who looked like Dr. Blake.

And this was Paris!

She could not help feeling amazed at the reputation of so mean a city!

Once or twice she thought of shopping. But from this she was prevented by a circumstance which was at once paltry and humiliating—she had no money. The letter of Bernal Mordaunt had told her not to bring more than was needed for her trip, and the small amount which she happened to have in her purse had been exhausted. Even had she needed more, she would not have known at that time whom to ask for it. She could not ask Bessie. Mr. Wyverne, who had always before supplied her liberally, was dead; and she did not know any one else to whom she could apply. For this cause she had left her home thus ill-supplied with money, and now she felt, for the first time in her life, the helplessness of poverty.

It was this poverty, together with her loneliness and friendlessness, that brought the questions before her, over and over, What was she to do? What would become of her? How long would this life go on? She herself could do nothing, and did not know how she ever could do any thing. The world of the past was lost forever to her.

These drives at length became tedious to Inez. She did not like to be always accompanied by Saunders, and the sense of restraint which she felt in the close cab was irksome. She felt strong enough to go alone by herself, and one day resolved to do so. She simply informed the faithful Saunders that she was going out for a short walk, and wished to be alone. Saunders saw by her manner that she was resolved, and said nothing, but meekly acquiesced. Inez was soon ready, and went out into the gallery on her way down.

At the end of the gallery was a door which opened into a stairway. To the surprise of Inez, this door was locked. She had often before noticed that it was closed, but, having not had any reason for trying it, she had never known that it was locked; and, on the occasion of her drives, it had always been

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open. Now, however, she was vexed to perceive that her plan for going out alone was attended with difficulties. She stood for some time knocking, but to no purpose; and at length concluded that it must be accidental, or rather that it rose from an excess of precaution on the part of the stupid old woman. In spite of this simple mode of accounting for such an unpleasant fact, Inez felt not only disappointed but also troubled; and a vague suspicion arose that her surroundings were not so satisfactory as they might be. There seemed to be too much surveillance. Some one was always with her. The faithful Saunders was a trifle too faithful. Of that personage she knew but little. She had been her maid for not over three months, and Inez had never thought of her personal peculiarities. She had been satisfied with the faithful performance of the duties which pertained to the responsible office of Saunders, and had never had occasion to think about her more deeply. And, though she tried to drive away the thought as ungenerous, she could not help fearing that the faithful Saunders might be watching over her from other motives than those of affectionate and loyal solicitude.

Inez waited all day for that door to open, but it did not. She sat with her things on, and Saunders prepared lunch at the usual hour, but Inez was too indignant to touch it. At length, at about six in the evening, the old woman came up with dinner. The first impulse of Inez was to give her a sound rating, but this was repressed, and she contented herself with telling her about her disappointment, and directing her to have the door open on the following day. At this, the old woman stared, but said nothing.

On the following day, however, the very same thing occurred, and Inez, who had again dressed herself for a walk, was unable to go. This time she could not restrain herself.

"There's something about this that I do not understand," said she to Saunders as she returned to her room. "Do you know what it means, Saunders?"

"Oh, no indeed, miss!" said Saunders; "me?—the idea!"

"Perhaps you can get the door open, or make them hear you, Saunders; you seem to have some understanding with these people." At this Saunders rolled up her eyes.

"Me, miss! Me an understanding, that

never set eyes on them before in all my born days, and only follered you here to this town because you was wantin' me, and homesick now as I be in this gloomy den! Why, whatever you can mean, miss, beggin' your pardon, is more'n I can tell, and I only hope you don't see anything in me that's underhand—for, if so, I maybe better go away."

At this Inez was startled. To lose Saunders would be too much. She had spoken too hastily. Her suspicions were wrong. She hastened, therefore, to smooth over the ruffled feelings of the faithful one, and Saunders subsided into her usual calm.

That evening at dinner the priest came in. This man had always been distasteful to Inez, but now was all the more so, since she could not understand what he was or what his intentions were. She had not forgotten that he had no tonsure; she did not believe that he could be a priest at all, and the suspicion that he was disguised was a most unpleasant one. On this occasion Inez at once informed him about the door, and told him that it must not occur again. Her tone was somewhat haughty, and she unconsciously adopted an air of command in addressing him.

The priest looked down, avoiding her eyes as usual.

"You are mistaken," said he; "you have gone out whenever you wished. The door is kept locked—on account of thieves—as there are so few servants—and the woman is so old and stupid."

"Very well," said Inez; "I wish to go out to-morrow, and I should like you to tell the old woman, so that she need not make any more of those stupid mistakes."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## LIGHT ON THE SITUATION.

SAUNDERS had always been what is called a "faithful creature," and Inez had thus far found her quite invaluable. It was on the morning after her last interview with Gtunod, however, that Inez made the discovery that there were limits to the fidelity of her maid. On that morning the faithful Saunders did not make her appearance, and Inez, after waiting an unusually long time, concluded that she must be ill. With this idea

she went to see after her, but, on going to her room, found that no one was there. At this she felt annoyed, it looked like neglect, and she went immediately to the parlor in search of her maid, with the intention of administering a pretty sharp rebuke. Here, however, there were no signs of her; and a little further search showed her that she must have gone away. A sudden suspicion then crossed her mind. She hurried back to the trunk. On entering, the suspicion was confirmed. The trunk was not there. Saunders must have left her, for she had taken her trunk.

This discovery was so painful that at first she felt quite stupefied. She could not imagine how Saunders could have done it, or how Gounod could have allowed it; but, for the present, her mind was less occupied with speculations about the mode of her departure than with painful efforts to imagine the cause of it. Saunders had always been so profuse in her protestations of fidelity, and so unremitting in her services, that this sudden departure seemed to give the lie to it all. It seemed like treachery, and the ease with which she had gone made it appear as though Gounod had connived at it.

In the midst of these thoughts the old woman arrived, and began her ordinary routine of duties, which consisted in laying the breakfast table and making the beds. Inez did not think it worth while to say any thing to her, but waited patiently until she had finished her task, when she asked her to tell Gounod that she would like to see him. In about half an hour, Gounod came.

To her story about the sudden departure of the maid, Gounod listened respectfully, and at once explained. He informed Inez that Saunders told him, the evening before, that she had received sudden intelligence of the dangerous illness of her mother, and would have to go and see her at once; and that he had called on the Abbé, and taken her to the railway-station. The maid, he added, had told him that she did not like to tell her mistress about it; that she felt very badly at leaving her under such circumstances, and requested Gounod to make all necessary explanations. Finally, Gounod offered to procure her another maid, either a French or an English one, whichever she preferred.

Inez thanked him, but replied that for the present she did not feel inclined to have a

maid; and, after a few more words, Gounod withdrew.

Gounod's explanation had not altogether satisfied Inez. It was certainly a very natural and a very probable cause for the departure of Saunders; but still Inez could not help thinking that there was something else at the bottom of this. Either Saunders might have grown weary of her lonely life, or else, as she had thought before, she might be in some mysterious league with Gounod. The peculiar conduct of that personage had already seemed suspicious, and now it seemed still more so.

After all, however, in spite of a certain degree of inconvenience which resulted from it, Inez was not altogether sorry to be without a maid. She felt somewhat vexed at the manner in which Saunders had left her, and there were circumstances connected with her departure which excited vague suspicions in her mind; yet, on the whole, she was not particularly distressed about it. The fact is, the constant attendance of Saunders during the drives had grown to be excessively irksome. Her plea had been fidelity; but Inez had begun to suspect that it might be, at best, officiousness, and even something worse. At any rate, it had grown to be so unpleasant that Inez had about resolved not to go out again until she could go alone. The departure of Saunders seemed to leave her free to do this.

Accordingly, to prevent a recurrence of that mistake which had prevented her from going out the last time that she had tried, she sent for Gounod in the following morning. He came in a short time.

"I wish to go out to-day, at noon," said Inez; "and I want you to leave the key of that door in my hands, or, at least, to leave it open, so that I may not be prevented again by the absence of that old woman."

"Very well," said Gounod. "At what time do you wish to have the cab ready?"

"I do not want the cab," said Inez. "I wish to go alone."

"Alone!" exclaimed Gounod, in surprise. "You must, of course, have some attendant."

"I wish to go alone," said Inez; "that is the very thing that I most wish to have. I wish to go alone."

"Alone! But, Heavens! that is impossible. Why, you would be utterly lost. Paris

is a labyrinth. You could not find your way, I can assure you."

"But, danger being so great, I would not one moment leave a girl ever so well as her chaperone."

At these suspicious remarks, over girls in Paris, her idea in broad daylight did not occur to Gounod's mind to go, and then she said:

"I must go. This is imprudent, always watch me."

"Mademoiselle, I am not English. I have a home, a French home, like a French girl. You are the Abbé's daughter. It is painful to see the slightest request clearly unreasoning."

"I cannot do that," said Inez. "This shall die if I die." "Mademoiselle, you may go out if you wish. My jealousy is not a crime."

"Pardon me, I do not wish to use such language. I cannot believe in your jealousy."

"I have no jealousy," said Inez. "I have been allowed to go out since I was a child."

"Mademoiselle, what answer will you give me?"

"The Abbé's daughter, I said, Inez, fretful."

"Pardon me, I am not a guardian. I am a French girl. I wish to be a happy woman. I wish to do myself to do."

is a labyrinth. You never were here before. You could never find your way back."

"Nonsense!" said Inez. "I shall take the address of the house, and, if I lose my way, I can come back in a cab."

"But, mademoiselle, you do not know the danger here in Paris to a young girl, a stranger, unattended. You do not know, or you would not ask this. It is impossible. Some one must accompany you. Here no young girl ever ventures out into the streets without her *chaperon*."

At these objections Inez felt irritated and suspicious. There might be greater restraint over girls in France than in England; but to her the idea of danger in the streets of Paris, in broad day, seemed preposterous. Yet she did not know exactly what to say in answer to Gounod's strong assertions. She felt eager to go, and throw off this restraint.

"I must go; I insist upon it," she said. "This imprisonment is too painful. I am always watched. I cannot breathe freely."

"Mademoiselle," said Gounod, "this is not England. Do not talk of a prison. It is a home, a French home; you are simply living like a French girl. Be patient, I pray you. The Abbé Magrath will soon be here. It is painful to me to be obliged to refuse the slightest request of yours, but this one is clearly unreasonable—and what can I do?"

"I cannot understand this at all," said Inez. "This danger is purely imaginary. I shall die if I am shut up this way."

"Mademoiselle, you need not be shut up. You may go out with your attendants."

"My jailers!" exclaimed Inez, indignantly.

"Pardon, mademoiselle, I must ask you not to use such language; it wounds me, and I cannot believe that you have that intention."

"I have no intention of giving pain to any one," said Inez, "but I must insist on being allowed some slight degree of liberty."

"Mademoiselle, I dare not," said Gounod. "What answer could I make to the good Abbé Magrath if any evil should happen to you?"

"The Abbé Magrath is nothing to me," said Inez, fretfully.

"Pardon, mademoiselle. Is he not your guardian?—now he is engaged in your affairs, endeavoring to procure for you a happy home. I dare not let you expose yourself to danger."

This was Gounod's position, and in this he was immovable. Inez remonstrated, but her remonstrances were in vain. He offered again to find attendants for her, but the offer was of course rejected; and, when he at length took his departure, Inez found herself the lonely occupant of this suite of rooms, which seemed to her already nothing else than a prison-house.

In her deep indignation at Gounod's strictness, and in the impatience with which she chafed at these prison-walls, she imagined a deeper purpose beneath all this than those commonplace precautions which Gounod professed; and, in the effort to find out what this purpose might be, she found herself looking beyond Gounod to that other one who seemed to her to be the real master here—the one whom Gounod quoted, and whom he called the good Abbé Magrath.

This Abbé Magrath was no other than Kevin Magrath. His name was always associated in her thoughts with those mournful events at Villeneuve, of which his letter to Hennigar Wyverne had been the cause. That letter had ever since been in her possession. Its language was familiar to her memory. She knew every word. It seemed singularly ill-omened, and gave the writer the character of a dark intriguer, to her mind—and a partner with Hennigar Wyverne in his crime, whatever that might have been. This was the opinion which she had formed of Kevin Magrath from that letter of his, and she had never ceased to wonder how it had happened that her dying father had trusted her to the care of such a man. Either her father had been terribly mistaken in his friend, or she herself must have formed an utterly false opinion with regard to him.

Thoughts like these led her to examine these letters once more, so as to reassure herself about the nature of their contents, and to see if there would now appear in the letter of Kevin Magrath to Hennigar Wyverne all that dark and baleful meaning which she had seen in it at Villeneuve. In her eagerness to ascertain this, Inez brought forth this letter and the letters of Bernal Mordaunt from her pocket-book, where she kept them as her most precious possessions, and little else did that pocket-book contain. These she laid on the table before her, and then spread them all open.

And now, scarcely had she done this, when



father. From whom could he have obtained this knowledge of her thoughts and feelings? Could Saunders have been his spy and agent? She recalled the noise which had startled her on the night when she searched the cabinet, and wondered now whether she had been watched then, and if the watcher could have been Saunders. It seemed probable. No one was so likely as her own maid to give to Kevin Magrath such information.

It seemed to Inez now that these letters in Bernal Mordaunt's hand were forged. And what followed? A whole world of results—results so important that her brain reeled under the complication of thoughts that arose. If these letters were forged, then Bernal Mordaunt could not have sent for her. He might never have been in Paris. He might even now be searching for her in England. More; she might not be his daughter after all. How could she now believe any thing? How could she tell who she was? Thus there arose in her mind a doubt as to herself and her personal identity, out of which grew fresh perplexity. But this soon passed. Deep down in her heart there was an instinct, undefinable yet strong, which forced her to believe that she was Inez Mordaunt, the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt. Deep down in her heart there was a yearning love which had quickened into active life at the first sight of those portraits; strange feelings and memories had been awakened by the sight of those faces; and her heart claimed them as mother and sister.

The motive that might have animated Kevin Magrath toward weaving around her this dark plot was an impenetrable mystery to her; but that he had woven a plot was now but too painfully evident. His aim seemed evidently to have been to entrap her into his own power through her own consent and co-operation, and to accomplish this, he had been working most subtly and most assiduously. She recalled the language of his letter to Bonnlgar Wyverne, with reference to herself, that she (Inez) must be removed from Bernal Mordaunt's way. She now saw that the death of Wyverne had not changed Kevin Magrath's views, but had only caused him to take the matter into his own hands. She saw, too, that a plot of this kind, which had been so successful, and had only been discovered by an accident, could not have been carried out at all without the co-operation of

some of the inmates of the house—that one being, as she had already suspected, her maid Saunders.

In the midst of all this she saw that the death of her father in this house must be as false as the dying appeal to her. She considered the whole thing a deception. Affairs had been so managed that she had not caught one glimpse of her father either alive or dead. He had never been here! He was probably alive and searching for her, and she had fallen into the trap set for her. And now, since she was here in this trap, many little circumstances explained themselves—the stealthy journey from the railway-station, the strange behavior of the man Gounod, whom she had detected as not being really a priest, but only some common man in a priest's dress; the cautious drives out in a close cab; the locked doors; the constant watch—in all this the faithful Saunders was implicated, for she, under the mask of devotion, had contrived to be with her always. And now here she was, in this deserted building, alone, a prisoner, under lock and key, with the man Gounod and the old woman as her jailers.

What could she do? Could she hope ever to escape?

Dark, indeed, the prospect seemed; nor could she, with all her most anxious thoughts, discern any way by which escape might be effected. This she would have to leave to circumstances in the future. Perhaps she might be removed from this to some other place where an opportunity might arise. She could not hope for more than this, and she could only make up her mind to be as cautious as possible, so as to avoid suspicion, and throw her enemies off their guard.

Night came, but it was a sleepless one to Inez. These new circumstances kept her in a state of constant excitement. Yet, though the discovery which she had made was in one sense so terrible, it was not without its alleviations. Out of this discovery followed an assurance to her, or at least a hope, that her father might yet be alive, that he might be even now seeking for her, and might at last find her. Bessie would see him; she would tell him all that she knew about this journey to Paris. Her father would come here; he would employ the aid of the police; he would at last rescue her. Thus she tried to hope, and this hope was the brightest thing that had occurred to her since her arrival here.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## A FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

INEZ had now but one thought, and that was escape. Her situation was one which, in spite of its difficulties, did not prevent hope altogether. She was a prisoner, it is true, but the departure of Saunders deprived her of what she now felt to be the most dangerous of all the spies around her. Gounod and the old woman remained, but neither of these seemed capable of keeping up any very effective or very vigilant system of spying. Kevin Magrath was not here, and he had, probably been so confident in the security of this prison that he had sent Saunders away, or taken her away elsewhere.

All the thoughts of Inez for the next few days were directed toward her surroundings, in the endeavor to discover some way by which she might carry into execution her plan of escape. This endeavor, however, was not very successful. The house was uninhabited except by herself and her jailers. Her apartments were on one side; the windows of her rooms opened upon the gallery, and not upon any street. This gallery was also cut off from the rest of the house; and the door by which escape could be made from it was kept locked always. Twice a day the old woman unlocked it and made her appearance: once with breakfast, and also to make the beds and clear up the rooms; and a second time with dinner. Sometimes Gounod would look in during the day. His calls were, however, irregular, and Inez never took any notice of him.

Now, the policy of Inez was very simple, and at once the best and the easiest for her under the circumstances. She appeared quite content. She was wrapped up in herself. She never spoke one word, good or bad, to the old woman or Gounod. She ate her meals, slept at night, and, during the day, sat patiently in her room. Neither Gounod nor the old woman ever saw any sign of impatience in her. To neither of them did she ever hint that she was discontented or unhappy. She never asked to go out, or to drive out. As far as they could judge by outward appearances, she was content. They had every reason to believe that she had acquiesced in the plan of Kevin Magrath, and was now placidly waiting for his return so as

to accompany him to Rome. Gradually this conviction became strengthened in the minds of her jailers. The old woman, who at first used to look at her anxiously every time she came in, grew at length to accept her calm and peaceful face as a matter of course. Gounod became less vigilant, and his visits became more and more infrequent. Many little things, indeed, showed a relaxation of the strictness of their watch.

Meanwhile, though Inez thus succeeded in maintaining an outward calm so perfectly, as to impose upon her watchful jailers, she herself was by no means free from agitation and tumultuous feelings. It was one long state of suspense, and all the harassing conditions of suspense were experienced by her to the uttermost. Yet, Inez came to this task not without preparation. She had already endured much; already had she learned to subdue her emotions, and exercise self-control. This new task was, therefore, the easier to her from the preparation which she had undergone. Under cover, then, of profound calm and placid content, she carried an incessant watchfulness, an eager, sleepless outlook, a vigilant attention to all that went on around her. Not a change took place in the action or demeanor of her jailers which she failed to notice; and these changes seemed to promise something.

Already she had placed all her hope in the door at the end of the gallery. Through that only could she hope to escape. Her gallery was too high above the court-yard for her to let herself down. There were no other ways by which she could leave this story on which she was, either to go up or down. Since, then, this door was the only pathway to liberty, it became the centre of all her thoughts and watchfulness.

It was with reference to this, then, that certain things were noticed by her.

The old woman came, as has been said, regularly twice a day. At first she was most painfully careful and guarded in all her actions. Upon passing through the gallery-door, she always spent about a quarter of an hour in locking it, putting the key in her pocket, and in trying the lock over and over, to see whether it was really locked or not. Then she would come to the parlor, and look in with painful and eager inquiry.

But the cool and patient indifference of Inez affected the old woman in spite of her

self. Gradually she came to the door. The old woman then, while in her bedroom to attend to

Now, the woman became so confident in the gallery-door. She came exclusively some trifling. The old woman then, while in her bedroom to attend to

A few days ago occurred again which Inez had thought for which the old woman remembered. She turned and left the parlor very moment when her bedroom-door stealthily step to the parlor she unlocked and transferred it to there.

Thus the old woman

But for Inez the old woman opened at any moment the house, he therefore, hurried steps that was continually, and thus. Now there was for some distance flight of steps. the same way. found herself on the hall that ran across the bottom of this story. She opened into the hall ran back from the house, where

Inez stopped. She was back-door

self. Gradually, she spent less and less time at the door. This Inez noticed as she sat in the parlor. This parlor was near the door, and through the window, which opened out into the gallery, she could see it very plainly. The old woman would bring in breakfast, and then, while Inez was eating, she would go to her bedroom, at the other end of the gallery, to attend to her duties there.

Now, the decreasing vigilance of the old woman became a matter of immense importance to Inez, especially with regard to the gallery-door. Upon this all her attention became exclusively centred. Every day made some trifling change which was in her favor. The old woman, at length turned the key in the lock quite carelessly, and once even left it in the lock and walked into the parlor, leaving it there. Something, however, put her in mind of it, and she returned and took it out.

A few days passed, and the same thing occurred again. This was the thing for which Inez had been waiting. This was the thing for which she had been preparing. The old woman spread the breakfast, and never remembered about the key, and then, as usual, turned toward the bedroom. As she left the parlor, Inez started up, and, at the very moment when she disappeared through her bedroom-door, she stole with a swift yet stealthy step to the gallery-door. In an instant she unlocked it, snatched out the key, transferred it to the other side, and locked it there.

Thus the old woman herself was imprisoned.

But for Inez there was no time to lose. The old woman might discover what had happened at any moment; and, if Gounod was in the house, he would hear her cries. Inez, therefore, hurried along down a flight of steps; that was before her swiftly, yet cautiously, and thus she reached the story below. Now there was a narrow corridor that ran for some distance, and at the end of this a flight of steps. Down this she also went in the same way. Reaching the bottom, she found herself on the ground-floor, inside a hall that ran across the building. At the bottom of this stairway there was a door that opened into the court-yard, and this lower hall ran back from this door to the front of the house, where there was another door.

Inez stopped at the foot of the stairs close by this back-door, and peeped cautiously forth

at the front-door. In an instant she drew back. It was the *conciergerie*. There was a man there. It was Gounod. The front-door was open, but Gounod sat there, smoking, reading a morning paper, barring her way to liberty.

For a moment she stood still, overcome by despair, but in another moment it passed. Then, with the same swift resolution and presence of mind which had marked all her acts thus far, she stepped noiselessly out through the door into the court-yard. The stairway concealed her from Gounod, and she made no noise to betray her movement.

This back-door was double; there was an inner and an outer one. The outer one was of massive construction; the inner one was lighter, and had windows in the sides.

One look around the court-yard showed that there was no avenue of escape there. The main portal was closed and locked. There was only one hope, and that was through the *conciergerie*. Perhaps Gounod would move. Perhaps he would go up-stairs, or out into the street, or into the court-yard; perhaps he might fall asleep; perhaps, if all else failed, she might make a mad rush for liberty.

One of these things might happen. It was necessary for her to hold herself in readiness. The space between the two doors seemed adapted for a hiding-place. Through the glass of the inner door she could watch the movements of Gounod, while the massive outer door, as it swung back, would shut her in and save her from detection. The moment that this thought suggested itself, she acted upon it. Quietly pulling back the door, she slipped into the place, and then drew the door so as to shut herself in. The glass was dusty, but, by breathing upon it and rubbing it gently, she was able to watch the *conciergerie*, and see Gounod with sufficient distinction.

There she waited—watchful, motionless, scarce daring to breathe, looking with all her eyes, and listening with all her ears. She was straining her eyes to see if Gounod would move, or if any favorable change would take place in his position. But Gounod made no change for the better. He smoked on, and shifted and changed his position, and leaned at times back in his chair, and yawned, and read his paper, and smoked again, and so on, till Inez thought that hours must have passed,



and wondered what sort of a paper this could be which could thus take so long a time to read.

She had been listening all this time—listening to hear whether the old woman had discovered her flight. This discovery might take place at any moment. A long time had passed, and it seemed far longer than it really was; and, as it passed, the attention of Inez only grew the more eager.

Suddenly it came.

She heard it.

The cry!

Her flight was discovered. The old woman had found it out.

There was a wild, shrill, piercing yell from the upper part of the house—a yell so clear and penetrating that Inez actually felt it thrill through all her frame, and Gounod sprang to his feet, while the paper fell from his hands and the pipe from his mouth. He stood listening.

There came another yell—a yell of wild lament, intermingled with words, which, however, were quite unintelligible. Gounod threw a quick look around him, and then darted from the *conciergerie*, and ran hastily toward the back-door. He advanced straight toward the hiding-place where Inez was standing, and then, reaching the foot of the stairs, stood listening once more. At that moment he was not more than twelve inches from Inez.

Horror paralyzed her. She could not even breathe. It was terrible, beyond expression, to be so near to escape, and yet to have so near her the relentless jailer. But her suspense did not last long. Gounod waited, and then another yell, more impatient, more prolonged, and more eager, came down to his ears. Upon this he started, and, springing forward, rushed up the stairs, taking three steps at a time.

Now was the moment! Before Gounod had gained the top of that stairway, Inez had slipped out from her hiding-place; and, as he was running along the upper gallery, she was hurrying toward the *conciergerie*. Here a sudden impulse seized her to take some kind of a disguise, so as to prevent observation. In her present dress she would look strange in the streets, without jacket or bonnet. One quick look around the *conciergerie* was enough. There was an old water-proof cloak there and a hat, evidently the property of the old woman. Inez felt some reluctance about using

these things, especially the hat, but there was no help for it. She could not stop to reason. She seized the cloak, flung it over her, thrust the hat on her head, and then sprang out through the open door into the street.

Away and away! She was afraid to run, but she walked as rapidly as possible. At length this street ran into another which was more crowded. Here she mingled with the throng of people and soon lost herself. But it was not easy for her to feel safe. So terrible was her sense of pursuit and her dread of capture that she walked on and on, turning into one street after another, rounding corners, walking up lanes, and losing herself inextricably. The streets, as she went, grew more and more populous, the houses grew handsomer, the public buildings more stately. At length she came to a river, over which there were thrown numerous magnificent bridges, and beyond there arose the lordly outline of splendid palaces and noble monuments. In these she beheld, at length revealed, all the glories of Paris; and, in spite of the terrors of pursuit and the agitation of her flight, she could not help accepting this as a fresh proof of the vigilance of her jailers and the treachery of Saunders, who had never driven her near this part of Paris, but had diligently kept her in streets where she could see nothing of the splendor of the great city.

But there was no time now either to recall past treachery or to admire the splendors of the surrounding scene. Escape was her only thought—security in some place of refuge, where she might collect her thoughts and consider her future. On, then, she went, and still on. She crossed a bridge that was nearest, and then once more plunged into a crowd of streets.

At length, her attention was arrested by a notice on the window of a house. It looked like a place suited to one of moderate means. It was a notice to lodgers. She entered here, and made inquiries. She was pleased with the look of the place, and also with the appearance, the tone, and the manner of the landlady. Here, then, she took lodgings.

Her first thoughts now were about regaining her friends. She had no money, and therefore could not travel. She could think of only one thing to do, and that was to write to Bessie. Bessie would feel for her, and either send her money or fly to her relief.

Bessie also might this time, and would however, was Inez known that she did dress of her lodgings address the letter? her letter she inform come to Paris owing which she had received in great distress; a of her sufferings, in once as much money take her to England.

Having written this for an answer. Afraid herself, for fear of being captured by some agent, appealed to the landlady there. There was

Several days passed. Every day some of the landlady or the more other member of full of sympathy for girl who was so lonely days passed, and still

Then Inez wrote a more urgent and more before. She drew a picture of her sufferings and present distress, and moved the most pined Bessie not to delay assistance.

After this she again impatience. Day after day after week. No answer great was the anxiety mounted even the haunted and recapture; and, fear might have made a mistake ventured forth to the post she met with no better success.

There was no letter person as Inez Mordaunt for any such person nor for Miss Mordaunt, no Inez named herself in it but the end of it all was all had been sent to either

Upon this she lost all conclusion that she could Bessie herself had perhaps with by Kevin Magrath, so justifiable that it prey upon her mind, and finally

Bessie also might know about her father by this time, and would send him. So afraid, however, was Inez of letting her secret be known that she did not give Bessie the address of her lodgings, but simply told her to address the letter *poste restante* at Paris. In her letter she informed Bessie that she had come to Paris owing to false information which she had received, that she had been in great distress; and, after a brief outline of her sufferings, implored her to send her at once as much money as would be sufficient to take her to England.

Having written this, she waited impatiently for an answer. Afraid to go to the post-office herself, for fear of being discovered and recaptured by some agent of Magrath's, Inez appealed to the landlady, who sent her daughter there. There was no answer.

Several days passed.

Every day some one went there, either the landlady or the landlady's daughter, or some other member of the family. All were full of sympathy for the beautiful English girl who was so lonely and so sad. But the days passed, and still no answer came.

Then Inez wrote again. Her letter was more urgent and more full of entreaty than before. She drew a picture of her past sufferings and present desolation that would have moved the most callous heart, and implored Bessie not to delay in sending her assistance.

After this she again waited in a fever of impatience. Day after day passed, and week after week. No answer came. At length, so great was the anxiety of Inez that it surmounted even the haunting dread of pursuit and recapture; and, fearing that the landlady might have made a mistake of some sort, she ventured forth to the post-office herself. But she met with no better success.

There was no letter at all for any such person as Inez Mordaunt. There was no letter for any such person as Miss Wyverne—nor for Miss Mordaunt, nor for Miss Wyverne. Inez named herself in every possible way; but the end of it all was, that no answer at all had been sent to either of her letters.

Upon this she lost all hope, and the only conclusion that she could come to was, that Bessie herself had perhaps been foully dealt with by Kevin Magrath. This fear seemed so justifiable that it preyed more and more upon her mind, and finally became a conviction.

The picture which her imagination formed of the childish and light-hearted Bessie, drawn helplessly into the power of the unscrupulous Magrath, was too terrible to be endured. The sufferings through which she had passed since her flight reached a climax. This last disappointment broke down all her fortitude. Strength and hope alike gave way, and a severe attack of illness followed, in which she once more went down to the extreme verge of life. But the kind care of the landlady watched over her, and those good people showed warm and loving hearts. Their care saved her, and Inez was once more brought back to life.

As she found herself convalescent, she became every day more and more aware of the necessity that there was to get money in some way. Her debt to the landlady was heavy already; and, more than this, she was eager to return to England.

How could she do this?

There was only one way possible.

That gold cross which she had found at Villeneuve she had ever since worn around her neck, and had it still. There was no other way to save herself than by the sacrifice of this. It was a bitter thing, but it had to be done. It was necessary to pawn it, and thus get that money which alone could save her now.

She had, therefore, nerved herself up to this. She had set forth in search of a pawnbroker or something equivalent, and was on this errand at the time she met Kane Hellmuth. Full of terror, fearing pursuit and recapture, every one seemed a possible enemy; and the earnest stare of Kane Hellmuth was sufficient to rouse all her fears. He seemed some agent of her enemy, and, when she knew that she was being pursued by him, she lost all hope. As a last resource, she sought to take a cab, but at that instant her strength gave way.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### A FRESH INVESTIGATION.

THE story of Inez had been communicated to Kane Hellmuth in the course of several interviews. The confidence which thus began between them, soon became of the most familiar kind. From the first, the sore necessities

of Inez made her cling to this strange Englishman upon whom she had been thrown, and who had been so ready in the offer of his assistance; but, after she learned who he was, her trust in him became boundless. The confidence which she put in him was met with the fullest return on his part; and Inez, who had trusted in him, when she discovered that he was the friend of Dr. Blake, at length learned, to her amazement, that he was the husband of her elder sister Clara. This discovery she hailed with the utmost joy. This one fact gave her a friend and protector. More, it gave her a relative. Kane Hellmuth was thus her brother, since he was her sister's husband. Could any thing be more consoling than this? To this man, then, the friend of her lover, and the husband of her sister, she gave all her trust and confidence.

As brother of Inez, Kane Hellmuth took her at once under his protection. He redeemed her from her difficulties, and let her have sufficient money to extricate herself from her embarrassments without the sacrifice of the precious relic of her father. As her brother, he visited her at the house, and was received with smiles of welcome by the kind-hearted landlady and her daughter, who were filled with joy at this sudden improvement in the fortunes of the sweet young English lady that had become so dear to them.

In the course of their conversations Kane Hellmuth had mentioned to her what he knew of Dr. Blake, but did not show her his letter. It was so incoherent that he was afraid that it might increase her anxieties if, as he strongly suspected, she cared much for him. His own anxieties about Blake he kept to himself; and, indeed, these were now completely eclipsed by his anxieties about Inez.

The story of Inez had excited within him an extraordinary tumult of contending emotion. The new position in which it placed Kevin Magrath, was the most astonishing thing to him. He had a very vivid remembrance of that man, of his rollicking Irish extravagance, and his bitter denunciation of the "destroyer of Clara Mordaunt." He had been accustomed to think of him as a sort of accusing witness against himself; but now this accusing witness was transformed into a remorseless villain, who had been the framer of an infamous plot against a defenceless girl. A new motive for action was roused within him: to meet this man again, to ex-

port from him some satisfaction for his misdeeds, or bring him to punishment.

Apart from the villainy of Magrath, there stood forward, prominently, the contradiction between what he said to himself and what he communicated to Inez. To himself he had said that Inez was Inez Wyverne; that her father, Hennigar Wyverne, had left her penniless, and that she would be dependent. To Inez he had plainly declared, by his letters, that she was the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt.

To himself he had said that Hennigar Wyverne owed Bernal Mordaunt money; to Inez he had told a story of the most absurd and extravagant kind.

In short, all that Magrath had said to him was utterly opposed in every respect to what he had said to Inez.

As he had thus lied about Inez, might he not also have lied about Clara?

This thought started up in Kane Hellmuth's mind, and at once roused his eager desire to make new inquiries about the death of his lost wife. The theory that Dr. Blake had suggested had once before deeply impressed him; the statements of Magrath seemed to have destroyed that theory; but now, since Magrath had been proved to be a villain and a liar, his old feelings rose up, and, for his own sake, as well as for the sake of Inez, he resolved to enter upon a fresh search into the whole of this dark mystery.

It was a mystery before which he was completely baffled. It seemed to be a fact, after all, that Hennigar Wyverne's dying declaration was true. Inez was clearly the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt. Would it be equally true that Dr. Blake was the son of Hennigar Wyverne? He remembered how strongly Blake himself had at one time been inclined to this belief, and for whose sake he had refrained from entering upon a search. It was the statement of Magrath which had driven this belief out of Blake's mind, but now this statement had turned out to be a lie. More than this, Magrath himself had been shown to have a deep interest in this lie; he had come forward as an active persecutor, and, in intention, a destroyer of Inez. Would he have the same motive to act against Blake? Could Blake's extraordinary disappearance, and still more extraordinary silence, be due to the same subtle agency? Could the man who had beguiled Inez to Paris and

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Such were the thoughts that filled Kane Hellmuth's mind. The whole situation became a dark and inscrutable problem. It was impossible to solve it while resting inactive at Paris. It was necessary for him to act, and to act immediately, both for the sake of Inez and also for the sake of Blake.

Another also appeared to Inez to be involved in this mystery, and that was Bessie. About Bessie, Kane Hellmuth was greatly troubled. Inez had informed him of Bessie's own account of herself, and her belief that she was the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt. The name Mordaunt had struck him very forcibly once before, and now it afforded equal matter for conjecture. He was puzzled, but he could not help thinking that, as Inez knew her best, her conjectures about her were more just than his. The fact that she, too, was involved in this wide-spreading difficulty, only afforded a fresh reason for instant action on his part.

This decision he announced to Inez, who at once begged that he would take her to England.

To this, however, Kane Hellmuth objected.

"My dear Inez," said he, addressing her in that familiar manner which was justified by his near relationship, "you are really safer here than anywhere else. There are many reasons why you had better not go. Your enemies will think that you are in England even now, and will search after you there. In travelling there with me you would be certain to be discovered, and I also would be known as your friend and companion. They would know that I had found out all—our relationship, also—and would be in a position to baffle me in my search. You, too, would be watched; and, as I should have to leave you, I could never feel comfortable about you."

"But isn't this place far more dangerous?"

"No," said Kane Hellmuth; "on the contrary, it's the safest place in the world. They will never look for you in Paris. Then, again, even if they were to find you, they could do nothing. Paris is the best-governed city in

the world. The police here are omniscient; no one could be illegally carried off. You are absolutely safe. The moment you left that house, you were safe. If the old woman and Gounod had both chased and captured you, they would not have dared to take you back, unless you yourself wished. Any remonstrance of yours would have drawn the attention of the police. Gounod and the old woman would have been arrested and examined; and that, I imagine, is about the last thing that they would wish to happen to them. Men of Gounod's order are particularly anxious not to get into the hands of the police. The fact is, there is no place in the world where you are so absolutely safe as you are here. In London you would be in danger. In any small town anywhere you might be in danger. Here, however, no danger can befall you. I assure you, solemnly, my dear Inez, it is absolutely impossible for you to get into the hands of that miscreant again, unless you yourself voluntarily go there."

At this Inez smiled. Kane Hellmuth's tone completely reassured her. The idea of putting herself voluntarily into the hands of Kevin Magrath was, however, excessively amusing to her.

"You may laugh," said Kane Hellmuth, "but that is a real danger. Be on your guard. Don't let him entrap you again."

"I shouldn't go with him," said Inez, "not even if he should declare that my papa was dying, as he did before."

"Oh, well, he wouldn't use that trap again; he would have something else the next time."

"There is nothing else," said Inez; "there is no other living being through whom he could work upon me."

Kane Hellmuth looked at her earnestly.

"I am very much mistaken, my poor Inez," said he, "if that is not. There is, I think, one other human being. Be on your guard, dear; don't allow yourself to be deceived. You know whom I mean. Now, if it should happen that you should hear of him in any way that is not perfectly free, from suspicion, be on your guard."

Inez looked down on the floor with a heightened color, and in some surprise. She did not know about Kane Hellmuth's fears for Blake, or his suspicions about Magrath's possible intentions toward him also.

"I'm sure I don't see how that could be," said she.

"Well, no matter," said Kane Hellmuth. "Only promise me that you will not go anywhere without ample protection and security."

"Oh, of course," said Inez; "I'm sure I've learned too hard a lesson to forget it easily."

"I hope you may not," said Kane Hellmuth.

In view of this proposed journey, Inez would have been glad, indeed, if she could have given him any information which might assist him in the search. But this she was unable to do. She knew of no one who was acquainted with the past of herself, except, perhaps, old Mrs. Klein. That person had certainly given her some valuable information, but she did it incidentally, and in a haphazard fashion. An old creature, so sodden with drink as she was, could not be expected to give any coherent answers to a regular series of questions. Of this she informed Kane Hellmuth, who took down her name and address, and thought that it might be worth while to pay the old woman a visit.

When he bade her good-by that evening, it was with a certain solemn foreboding of indefinable evil that was possible—some evil that might happen to her or to himself, before they might meet again.

"Good-by, Inez, dear sister! Remember what you promised."

"Good-by, Kane!" said Inez, in a voice full of emotion.

She felt as though she was losing her only friend. A tear stood in her eye. Kane Hellmuth held her hand in his, and looked at her with a softened expression on his stern face.

Then he stooped, and kissed her.

Then he turned, and left the house.

On the following morning he left for London, and arrived there in due time. He had not been there for years, and his acquaintances in particular. The sons of his father were the ones from whom he hoped to find out something, though what that something might be he hardly knew. He did not know what course of action might be required on his own part. He did not know whether it would be best to carry on the work which he had before him in secret, or to break through that law of silence which he had im-

posed on himself since his wife's death. He held himself in readiness to adopt whatever course might be best for the fulfilment of the work in which he was engaged.

His first act was to go to the house in which Mr. Wyverne had lived. Upon reaching it, he found it closed. It was evident, therefore, that Bessie Mordaunt must be sought for elsewhere.

He then thought of Mrs. Klein, and at once drove off to visit her. The address which Inez had given him enabled him to find her without difficulty, as she was still living in the same place.

Although Inez had given him a very good idea of her interview with Mrs. Klein, still the sight of the old woman was somewhat disheartening to one who came, like Kane Hellmuth, in the character of an investigator after truth, and an eager questioner. It was not the bottle at her elbow, nor her bleary eyes, nor her confused manner, that troubled him. For this he was prepared. It was rather the attitude which Mrs. Klein chose to take up toward him. She threw at him one look of sharp, cunning suspicion, as he announced to her that he had come to ask her a few questions, and then obstinately refused to answer a single word.

The fact is, Kane Hellmuth was a bad diplomatist, and soon perceived that he had made a mistake. This he hastened to rectify in a way which seemed to him best adapted to mollify one of Mrs. Klein's appearance, which was the somewhat coarse but at the same time very efficacious offer of a sovereign.

The effect was magical.

Her fat, flabby fingers closed lovingly around it; and she surveyed Kane Hellmuth with a mild, maternal look, which beamed benevolently upon him from her watery eyes.

"Deary me!" she said; "and you such a 'andsome young gentleman, as is comin' to visit a poor old creetur as is deserted by all kith and kin, which it's truly lavish and beautiful you are as ever was, and him as gives to the poor lends to the Lord, and may it be restored to you a 'undredfold, with my 'umble dooty, and prayer that your days may be long in the land, for evermore, and me a 'oman as has seen better days, which I'm now brought down to this; and many thanks, my kind, kind gentleman, for all your kindness shows."

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"See here, now, Mrs. Klein," said Kane Hellmuth, sharply—"gather up your wits, if you can. I want you to answer one or two questions. You know all about Hennigar Wyverne's family."

Mrs. Klein gave a sigh:

"Which 'im as is dead and gone, and was the kindest and mildest-mannered gentleman as ever I sot eyes on, and allus treated me that generous that I could have blacked his boots for very love, and his—"

"All right. Now, see here. There was Inez Mordaunt, that lived in his house—"

"Miss Hiny—my own sweet child alive—and me that loved her like—"

"Oh, of course. You see I know all about her. But I want to ask you about another. Who is this other girl that lived at Mr. Wyverne's, and called herself Bessie Mordaunt?"

"Which there never was no girl called Bessie, and she didn't live there. She was sent off to France, and her a young thing as had just lost her mother. For my part, I alius says to Mr. Wyverne—says I, 'Sir,' says I, 'Miss Clara's too young to—'"

"Clara!" exclaimed Hellmuth, with a strange intonation. "What became of her? Tell me—tell me—tell me!"

Mrs. Klein gave a doleful sigh, and shook her head solemnly.

"Which she's dead and gone, and is a blessed angel these many years, kind air; and beggin' yer humble pardon, but it's better for her as is far away from a world of sin and woe, and all the chances and chanjues of this mortal spered. And I alius said as—"

"Yes, yes," said Hellmuth, with some impatience, hastily changing the conversation. "But this one I mean called herself Bessie."

Mrs. Klein shook her head.

"She was named Clara—I don't know any Bessie—and I take my Bible oath—and never fear—"

"She may have come to the house after you left."

"And very likely, and me 'as, alius, kind sir, kep' that house that orderly as was beautiful to be old; but what goin's on there was there after I left, Lord only knows, an' Mr. Wyverne that mild that anybody could imagine on 'im same as if he was a new-born babe—"

"Do you know a man named Kevin Ma-

grath?" said Kane Hellmuth, rigidly holding her to the points about which he wished to question her, and checking her headlong garrulity.

Mrs. Klein looked at him with a bleary gaze, and again wagged her fat old head.

"Won't you take somethin' warm, kind sir?" she asked.

"No," said Kane Hellmuth. "But about Kevin Magrath—can you tell me any thing?"

Mrs. Klein poured out a glass of liquor, and slowly swallowed it. Then she smacked her lips. Then she drew a long breath.

"'Im," said she, "as was the serpent that stole into that Heden, and me alius tellin' Mr. Wyverne. Says I, 'Sir, beware; 'e'll put your neck inside the gallus'noose.' And where he came and where he went I do not know, nor can tell, savin' an' except as he was a willain—a out-an'-outer—and me as knows no more about him than that."

Mrs. Klein evidently could say nothing about Magrath more definite than this. Kane Hellmuth questioned her again and again, but the answer was always of the same kind. His visit here seemed, therefore, a failure, and he felt inclined to retire and leave Mrs. Klein alone with the beloved society of her bottle. But he had one question yet to ask, and upon her answer to this very much depended.

"See here," said he. "Can you tell me any thing more about Bernal Mordaunt? Where did he come from? Who was he?"

Mrs. Klein seemed to rouse herself at this last question. She looked at him with less stupidity in her sodden, boozy face.

"Which as hevery one knows," said she, "and I wonders much as 'ow lever a fine gentleman like you turns up and 'as never 'eard of Bernal Mordaunt. They kept it close from Clara, and made out as 'ow it was 'er huncle's 'ome, or second cousin, and hit 'er father's hown place, and one of the grandest and gorgeousest in the kingdom; for, as I alius says, 'tisn't hevery girl as 'as a in'rance like Mordaunt Manor."

"Mordaunt Manor!" cried Kane Hellmuth.

He shrunk away from the old woman, and sat looking at her with a pale face and glowing eyes.

"Mordaunt Manor, as never was," said Mrs. Klein, "which I knowed it all along, and pore Mr. Wyverne, as is dead and gone, knowed as I knowed it, though them children

were that lied to that they didn't know their own father's house."

"Mordaunt Manor!" exclaimed Kane Hellmuth again, upon whom this information had produced a most extraordinary effect. "In what county?"

"Mordaunt Manor as is in Cumberland County—which there never was but one, Mordaunt Manor, as anybody ever heard of."

Kane Hellmuth started to his feet. He had heard enough. His mind was made up to some sudden course, revealed by this new information. He left abruptly, and hurried back to his hotel.

That evening he was hurrying on by express out of London toward the north.

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

##### THE TWO BROTHERS.

THE sudden resolution which Kane Hellmuth had taken was not without a sufficient cause. The connection which Mrs. Klein's information had established between the children of Bernal Mordaunt and Mordaunt Manor gave rise to numerous suspicions in his mind. If they were the heiresses of Mordaunt Manor, then there was supplied that which his mind had long sought after—namely, a motive for the plot against Inez, and for that plot in which it now appeared that Clara had been involved. Yet, if this were so; why had not Clara known it? If Mordaunt Manor was her home, why had she never said so? The only answer to this lay in Mrs. Klein's incoherent remarks about "lies" which were told her, so that she didn't know her own father's house. She may have left it at so early an age that she had no certainty about its being her home, and afterward may have been made to believe that it belonged to some one else.

In any case, however, it now seemed to Kane Hellmuth that Mordaunt Manor itself was the best place for him to go to. If it belonged to Bernal Mordaunt, he himself would be more likely to be there than anywhere else; and, if he was not there, he might find out where he really was. If Kevin Magrath's plot really had reference to this, he might possibly find out there something about him. Or, if neither of these could be found, there was a remote probability that he

might hear something about Bessie. For all these reasons, then, and for others which will afterward appear, Mordaunt Manor seemed to him to be by far the best place that could be found for a centre of operations.

On reaching Keswick he stopped at the inn, where he obtained answers to all the questions that he chose to ask; and these answers filled him with amazement. In these answers there was communicated to him a number of facts which were incomprehensible, bewildering, overwhelming!

The first thing that he learned was that Bernal Mordaunt had returned home after an absence of years, and, after a brief decline, had died there.

Moreover, he had been welcomed home by his daughter.

This daughter had herself come home but a short time before, after an absence of years.

This daughter had cheered the declining days of the feeble old man, had given herself up to him with a devotion and a tender love that was almost superhuman. In that love the old man had solaced himself, and had died in her loving arms.

Moreover, the name of this daughter was *Inez Mordaunt!*

This Inez Mordaunt had filled men of every degree with admiration for her beauty, her fascinating grace, her accessibility, her generosity, and, above all, for her tender love and unparalleled devotion to her aged father.

This Inez Mordaunt also had married a man who was worthier of her than any other; he was also a resident of the county, and thus she would not be lost to the society which admired her so greatly and so justly. Her father had hastened on the marriage before his death, so that he should not leave her alone in the world. Even after her marriage this noble daughter showed the same deathless devotion to that father for whom she had done so much.

The happy man who had won so noble a woman for his wife was Sir Gwyn Ruthven, of Ruthven Towers.

All this is familiar to the reader, but all was not familiar to Kane Hellmuth. One by one these facts came to him like so many successive blows—blows of tremendous power—blows resolute, bewildering, overwhelming, falling upon his soul in ever-accumulating

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force, until the last one descended and left him in a state of utter confusion and helpless uncertainty.

With the first fact he was able to grapple. It was intelligible that Bernal Mordaunt had, after all, come home, here, to Mordaunt Manor. It was intelligible that he had reached his home weak and worn out; and that he had died. It was intelligible and probable that Bernal Mordaunt was now dead, and buried, and that his remains were actually in the family vaults of Mordaunt Manor.

So far, so good; but now, when Kane Hellmuth advanced thus far on this solid ground, and looked out beyond, he found every thing misty, gloomy, uncertain, chaotic, and unintelligible.

What was the meaning of this daughter? She had reached home not long before her father. He had recognized her. He had found happiness in her. Her love and devotion for him was spoken of as something nearly superhuman. Had Bernal Mordaunt, then, another daughter?

The name of this daughter was Inez Mordaunt.

Inez Mordaunt! But he had left Inez Mordaunt in Paris, where she had been deceived by letters forged in the name of her father, Bernal Mordaunt. What Inez Mordaunt was this?

Could his Inez—his sister Inez—be mistaken? Impossible. His Inez was the sister of his Clara. The likeness between them was so extraordinary that he had stopped her in the street, and carried her senseless to his lodgings. Since then he had heard her whole story. He had the testimony of Mrs. Klein to the identity of his Inez with her who was once called Inez Wyverne. His Inez was the sister of his lost Clara beyond a doubt.

Were they, or were they not, the children of Bernal Mordaunt? He knew that they must be. His Clara was, he knew; and that Inez was, he also knew.

Could there be two Bernal Mordaunts? One, the father of his Inez; the other, the father of this strange Inez here? Impossible. Mrs. Klein's testimony pointed to Mordaunt Manor as the home of Clara and of Inez. But, if so, why had not his Clara known this in her life? Or was a creature like Mrs. Klein to be trusted in any thing whatever? Might he not have come here on a fool's errand?

No.

The answer to this lay in Kevin Magrath's plots, and in the fact that Mordaunt Manor alone formed a sufficient cause and motive for them. Without Mordaunt Manor he was an insane schemer; with Mordaunt Manor he was a villain aiming at a magnificent prize.

But, if this was so, what part had he in the magnificent prize? Was it not already held by this other Inez, this wonder among women, this pious daughter, this paragon? And what was there in common between her and one like Kevin Magrath? Yet Bernal Mordaunt had come home, from his years of exile and sorrow, to Mordaunt Manor, and there was his daughter Inez to welcome him, his daughter whom he loved, and in whose arms he died.

But beyond all these bewildering and contradictory facts lay another which produced upon Kane Hellmuth's mind an effect so strong that it may be called the climax of them all.

This Inez Mordaunt had married Gwyn Ruthven. They were living now at Ruthven Towers.

Over this, Kane Hellmuth brooded long and solemnly. In this last fact he saw that which would open to him a way by which all the others would be made plain. Yet the way was not one which he would have chosen. He would rather have tried any other way. It came in opposition to his self-inflicted punishment. It would terminate the silence of years. It would put an end to that seclusion in which he had thrust himself, and draw upon him the glare of day. Thus far he had been, as he called himself, a *dead man*—this would force him to rise from the dead.

This was not what he wished. But it was too late to go back. He had set forth in this path. The way now lay straight before him to Ruthven Towers, to Gwyn Ruthven and his wife, who had called herself Inez Mordaunt. Could he now turn back? Dare he do it?

He dare not. For the sake of Inez, whose wrongs were still in his mind, for the sake of his lost wife, who also, had suffered wrongs that seemed to have come from the same source from which had flowed the wrongs of Inez; for his own sake, too; for every reason that can animate a man to action he felt himself impelled to go onward, and to penetrate this mystery.



Now, Kane Hellmuth was a man who, when he had once resolved on any course, had no other idea in his mind than a simple, straightforward, and tenacious pursuit of it till his purpose might be accomplished.

Had this other Inez Mordaunt still been unmarried, he would have avoided Gwyn Ruthven. He would have gone to her. He would have seen her, and questioned her, and thus have satisfied himself, if satisfaction had been possible. But she was now the wife of Gwyn Ruthven. Her identity was merged in his. He could not go and interrogate the wife apart from the husband. The only way to the wife lay through the husband. To the husband, therefore, he must go; and so Kane Hellmuth, on this day, set forth for Ruthven Towers and Gwyn Ruthven.

He rode on horseback.

He was scarce conscious of the scenery around him as he rode along, though that scenery was wondrously beautiful. He was considering what might be the best course of action.

By the time that he reached the gate of Ruthven Towers he had decided. After this, he was less preoccupied. He passed through the gates. He looked all around with strange feelings. He rode up the long avenue. He dismounted. He entered Ruthven Towers.

On inquiry, he learned that Sir Gwyn Ruthven was at home. He gave his name, and was shown to a large room on the right. He entered and waited.

He did not have to wait long. Sir Gwyn was prompt, and soon came down to see his visitor.

Kane Hellmuth was standing in the middle of the room. Sir Gwyn, on entering, bowed courteously. Kane bowed also. Then Sir Gwyn seemed to be struck by something in the appearance of his visitor. He looked hard at him for a moment, then he looked away, then he looked again, this time with an air of perplexity. Kane, on his part, looked at Sir Gwyn, and his stern face softened. Indeed, Sir Gwyn was one upon whom no one could look without a sense of pleasure. It was not because he was what is called handsome, not on account of any mere regularity of feature, but rather on account of a certain fresh, honest, frank expression that reigned there; because of the clear, open gaze, the broad, white brow, the air of high breeding mingled also with a boyish

heartiness and simplicity. Sir Gwyn, in short, had that air which is so attractive in a high-bred boy of the best type—the air of naturalness, of frankness, of guilelessness, and generosity. For this reason, the hard look died out of Kane Hellmuth's eyes, and a gentler and softer light shone in them as they rested on Sir Gwyn.

"I hope you will excuse me for troubling you, Sir Gwyn," said Kane Hellmuth, at length, "but I have come a great distance for the purpose of making some inquiries at Mordaunt Manor. I had no idea that Mr. Mordaunt was dead until my arrival here; and, as my business is of the utmost importance, I have thought it probable that I might obtain the information that I wish from yourself, or from Lady Ruthven."

At the sound of Kane Hellmuth's voice, Sir Gwyn gave a start and frowned, and listened with a puzzled expression. He was evidently much perplexed about something, and he himself could scarcely tell what that something was.

"I'm sure," said he, "that both Lady Ruthven and myself will be happy to give you any information that we can."

"It all refers," continued Kane Hellmuth, "to the life of Mr. Mordaunt after his return home. I am well aware of his long absence. Since his return, however, it is very probable that he has spoken of these things about which I wish to ask."

"Very probably," said Sir Gwyn, slowly, with perplexity still in his face. "He was very communicative to me."

"What I should like to ask first," said Kane Hellmuth, "refers to an affair at Villeneuve. Did Mr. Mordaunt ever mention to you any thing about the death of Mr. Wyverne at that place?"

"Oh, yes, he told me all about it."

"Thanks," said Kane Hellmuth. "What I wished to know was whether it was the same Mr. Mordaunt. I did not know but that it might have been another person. He did not give his name, and it was only my conjecture that it was he."

"It was Mr. Mordaunt himself," said Sir Gwyn. "He told me all about that occurrence, and also all about his past connection with Mr. Wyverne."

This reply settled one thing; namely, the identity of this Bernal Mordaunt with the father of his Inez.

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"Thanks," said Kane Hellmuth; "and now I wish to ask one or two other things. They refer to his family. They concern myself very nearly, or I should not ask them. They are only of a general character. Would you have any objections to tell me how many children Mr. Mordaut had?"

"Certainly not," said Sir Gwyn. "He had two daughters, that is all. The name of the oldest was Clara."

"Clara?" said Kane Hellmuth, in a strange voice.

"The other one," continued Sir Gwyn, "was named Inez."

"Is—Clara—alive yet?" asked Kane Hellmuth, in a tremulous voice.

"No," said Sir Gwyn, "she died ten years ago."

"Ah! and the younger one, I presume, is still alive?"

"Yes, the younger one is Lady Ruthven, my wife."

"Ah!" said Kane Hellmuth.

He had heard this before. It was now confirmed. The problem remained a problem still, but he had advanced somewhat nearer to a solution, for the very reason that he had approached so much nearer to the one who had called herself Inez Mordaut. This was her husband. He had no doubt whatever of the truth of the intelligence which he was giving to his visitor.

"One thing more, Sir Gwyn," said Kane Hellmuth, "I really must apologize for the trouble that I am giving you, and I hope you will not suppose that I am asking out of nothing better than idle curiosity. What I now wish to ask refers to your own family—your own brothers."

Kane Hellmuth paused. Again Sir Gwyn looked at him with that perplexity on his face which had already appeared there. The two thus looked at one another earnestly. Kane Hellmuth felt a pang of sadness as he looked at that noble and generous face, and thought that he might be the means of inflicting pain upon one who did not merit it; but his task had to be done, and went on:

"There were three of you, I think," said he; "Bruce, Kane, and yourself."

Sir Gwyn bowed in silence. The perplexity of his face was now greater than ever.

"Bruce died at home, I believe," continued Kane Hellmuth, "and Kane died in Paris."

"No," said Sir Gwyn.

"I have understood so."

"Mr.—ah—Hellmuth," said Sir Gwyn, earnestly. "Tell me truly, were you ever acquainted with my brother Kane?"

Kane Hellmuth hesitated.

"Yes," said he, slowly, "I was, about ten years ago, in Paris."

"Do you believe that he is dead?" asked Sir Gwyn, sharply and eagerly. "I don't. I never did," he continued. "I tell you I have tried everywhere to find him. Look here, there's something confoundedly queer about you, do you know? odd, isn't it? but it seems to me that we've met before, but hang me if I can remember where. I tell you I've done every thing to find my brother Kane. I've advertised. I've sent out agents. I don't believe he's dead, and I hope to meet him yet. By Jove! And, see here, if you should ever get on his track, tell him this from me: That I am waiting for him, that I am holding this place for him, that I'd give it all up—estate, title, all, for the sake of seeing him once more. Yes, by Heaven! I would; and if I only knew where he was now I'd go to find him if I had to risk my life. I say this to you because, do you know, somehow you've got a confoundedly queer look about you, and, by Jove! you remind me of him somehow. You don't happen to be a relative of the family in any way, I suppose."

The tone in which Sir Gwyn spoke was the tone of a big, honest, warm-hearted boy. Every word went to the very heart of Kane Hellmuth. He was not prepared for this. In the course of his life he had lost much of his faith in man, and had accustomed himself to think of his brother as one who would be glad to hear of his death. He had been trying to make himself known in a gradual way, so as to ease the blow which he supposed would fall on his brother. Lo! now, to his amazement and confusion, his brother stood there offering to give up all—estates, title, yes, even life itself, if he could find him.

His head sank upon his breast. He struggled to keep down the emotion that had arisen in his soul. It was hard to restrain himself. Sir Gwyn looked at him in wonder. At length Kane Hellmuth raised his head. He fixed his eyes on Gwyn with a strange meaning. Then he spoke.

"Gwyn!" said he.

That was all.

Sir Gwyn started. Then all the truth in a moment burst upon him.

"Oh, by Heavens!" he cried. "O Heavens! Kane! Kane! Kane! By Heavens! Kane himself! You glorious old boy! Didn't I know you? didn't I feel that it was you?"

He grasped both of Kane's hands in his, and clung to them with a fervid, enthusiastic greeting, wringing them, and shaking them over and over.

"Kane, you dear, glorious old boy, where have you been wandering? and why have you stayed away so long? Haven't you seen my frantic advertisements, imploring you to come and get your own? Haven't I felt like a thief for years, holding all this when you might be wanting it? Ah, dear old boy! I know what you once had to suffer. And you might have let me had a word from you. You once used to think something of me when I was a youngster. Don't you remember how I used to look up to you as the pride, and glory, and boast, of the whole race of Ruthvens? You must remember enough about the youngster Gwyn to know that, whatever his faults were, he'd be as true as steel to you. Bruce treated you like a devil, too, and I cursed him for it to his face; and didn't you get my letter? Kane? I was only a boy at school, and I sent all I had to you—my two sovereigns—all I had, Kane. It wasn't much, but I'd have laid down my life for you."

So Sir Gwyn went on. He appeared to be half crying, half laughing. He still clung to his brother. It was the enthusiastic, the wild delight of a warm-hearted boy. As for Kane, he stood overwhelmed. He trembled from head to foot. He tore one hand away, and dashed it across his eyes.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### RUTHVEN.

Thus, then, it was that Kane Ruthven came back to the homo of his fathers—to Ruthven Towers. He was a dead man no longer. He was no more Hellmuth, but Ruthven.

He had not anticipated such a reception. He was not prepared for such truth and fidelity—such an example of a brother's love. He was unmanned. He stood and wept.

Yet life seemed sweeter now to him through those tears.

"Dear boy," said he at last, as soon as he had recovered himself somewhat, "don't talk to me about the estate, or the title. They are yours. Do you think I came back for them? They are yours, and they shall be yours. I gave them up years ago. I saw your notices, but I was not going to come back here. Things had happened which made wealth and rank of no importance. I have as much money as I want. I don't care about a title. You shall remain as you are now, and so will I."

"I'll be hanged if I will!" cried Gwyn. "I tell you, this estate and title have been bothering me out of my life."

"Well, then, I'll make out a paper transferring every thing to you."

"You shall do nothing of the sort."

"I will. You don't know how I am situated."

"I swear you shan't. You are the head of the Ruthvens, and I glory in you, and I long to see you in your place, old boy."

"No, Gwyn—my own place is a very different one. I have lived my life. I didn't come back to interfere with yours."

"It's no interference. Come now, Kane, don't be absurd. It's all yours, you know."

"Very well, and I hereby make it all over to you."

"I won't take it."

"You must. I'll make out the necessary papers, and then go back to my lair that I've just come out of."

"What's that? What!" cried Gwyn. "Go back! Why, you won't go back? You have come home now for good, Kane—haven't you? Go back? No, never! You are here now, and here you must stay."

"Oh, you may be sure, dear boy, we'll see one another often after this; but, for my part, I have a work to accomplish, which will require all my care for some time to come, and, at present, I'm still Kane Hellmuth."

"Hellmuth! what preposterous nonsense! You're Sir Kane Ruthven of Ruthven Tower—and you shall remain so."

"No, Gwyn, my purpose is fixed and unalterable. I care nothing for such things. You can enjoy them. I have as much money as I wish. I need nothing more. You have your position, and there is your wife."

"My wife!" exclaimed Gwyn. "Ah

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Kane, you little know her. Oh, how she will rejoice over this! Oh, she knows all about it! I've told her all. Oh, how glad Bessie will be! Oh, how Bessie will rejoice!"

"Bessie!"

This exclamation burst forth from Kane involuntarily. His voice was harsh and grating. He stood with staring eyes and averted face. The utterance of that one name—"Bessie"—had been sufficient to overturn all his thoughts, and thrust him back into his old bewilderment and gloom. Like lightning, a thousand thoughts swept through his mind, quickened into instant life by that one name. This revealed all.

"The false Inez who had married his brother was Bessie. Bessie who? Bessie Mordaunt—the friend—of the true Inez; the Bessie to whom she had written; but who had refused to answer those letters of despair—Bessie!"

Gwyn noticed the change.

"What's the matter, Kane?" he asked, anxiously.

Kane drew a long breath.

"Oh, nothing!" said he. "By the way—what do you mean by 'Bessie.' I thought your wife's name was Inez."

"So it is, but it is Bessie also. Her full name is Inez Elizabeth Mordaunt. She was living with the Wyvernes, however, at London, you know, where I first became acquainted with her, and they all called her Bessie to prevent confusion, for there was another Inez—Inez Wyverne—a distant relative of hers. So, I knew her as Bessie, and I've called her Bessie ever since. Inez is a pretty name, but it seems unfamiliar to me."

All this was terrible to Kane. It confirmed what had been told him. Inez Wyverne was Inez Mordaunt. Bessie had taken her place. Had Bessie betrayed her? Inez loved her still, and trusted in her. Was it possible that Bessie was a traitor, or had she only been mistaken? But, then, Bernal Mordaunt must himself have received Bessie as his daughter!

Kane Ruthven feared the worst. And there came to his heart a sharp and sudden pang. If Bessie should prove to be the traitor, the impostor, which he now imagined her to be, then what wrong would have been done to this noble, this generous heart! Here was this true and loyal soul, this matchless brother, with his faithful love, his unsullied nature, his young, pure life, linked

to one whose character must be terrible. Could he go on further when his path would only serve to darken this brother's life? He shuddered, he half recoiled. How could he dare? His brother had taken a serpent to his bosom. Could he open his brother's eyes, and show him all?

Just at that moment, in the midst of such gloomy and such terrible thoughts as these, there came a sound which penetrated like sudden sunshine through all the clouds of suspicion and terror that were lowering over the soul of Kane Ruthven, a sudden sound, sweet, silvery, musical—a sound of laughter that was childish in its intonations—a peal of laughter . . . was full of innocence, and gaiety, and mirth.

Then followed a voice—

"Aha, you runaway! So, here you are! and it's meself that's been the heart-broken wife. Really, I began to think that you'd deserted me, so I did. Come, sir, give an account of yourself. How dare you leave me for a whole half-hour!"

The new-comer suddenly stopped. She saw a stranger there.

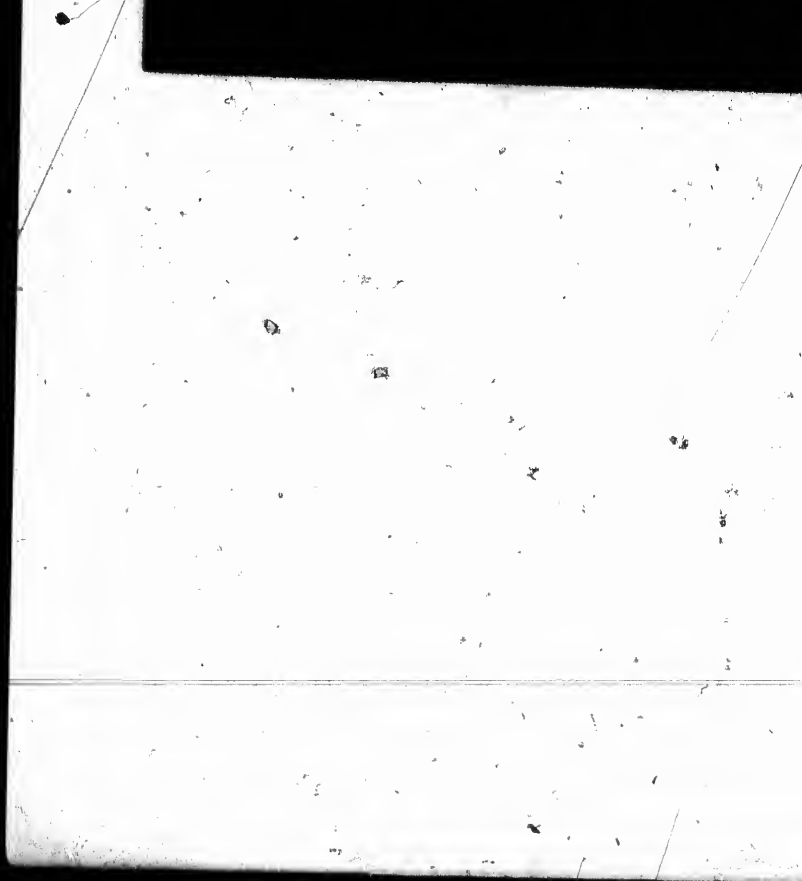
At the first sound of her silvery, musical laugh, Kane Ruthven started, and looked up.

He saw before him a vision of exquisite loveliness. It was a young lady—who looked like a very young girl, a blonde, with large eyes of a wonderful blue, with a face of indescribable piquancy, with golden hair, flowing in rich masses over her shoulders, with a dress of some material as light as gossamer. This was the one whose laugh had penetrated to his ears, who now came lightly forward with these words addressed to Gwyn.

Gwyn, too, had started at her entrance. At the sight of her the cloud that had come over his face, thrown there by the strange gloom of Kane, was instantly banished, and a joyous light succeeded. He took the lady's hand, and led her forward.

"Kane," said he, "here she is—my own Bessie. O Bessie! who do you think this is? You'd never guess. It's my dear, long-lost old boy—my brother Kane."

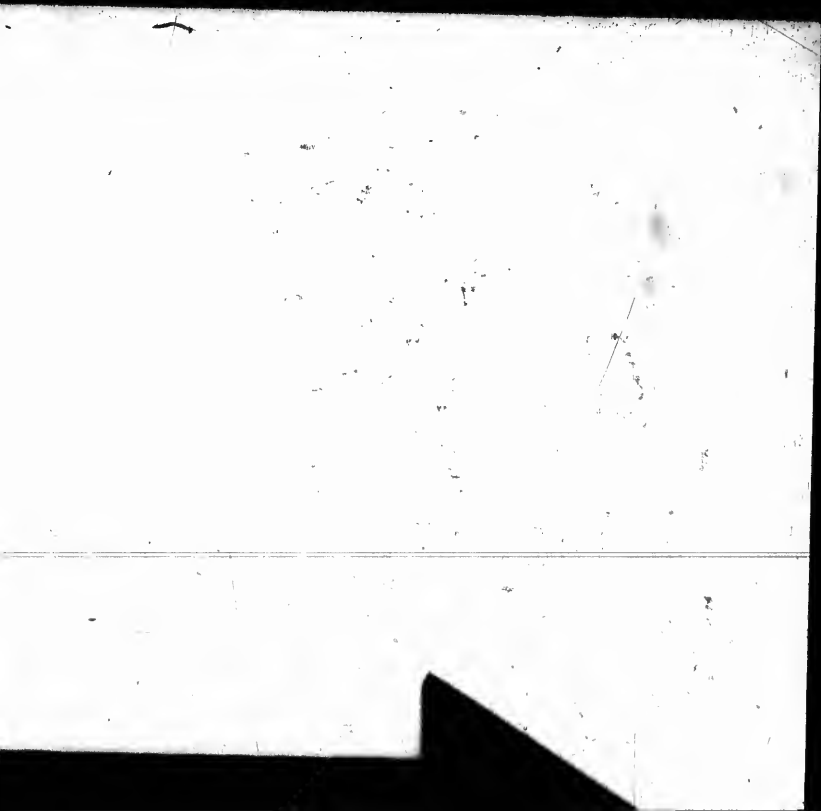
The hand that Gwyn held suddenly closed convulsively around his; over the fair face there shot, for an instant, an expression of pain. Bessie shrank back involuntarily, and half raised her other hand, as if to her heart. Yet this was only for an instant. It passed

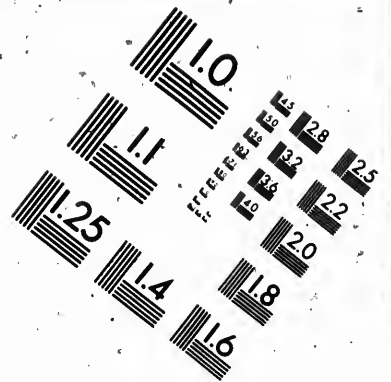
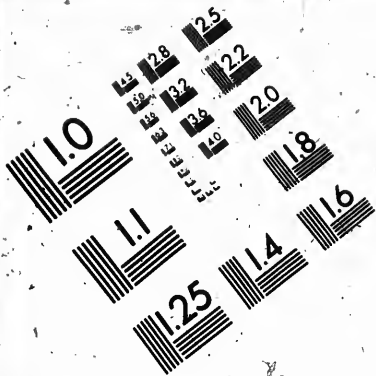




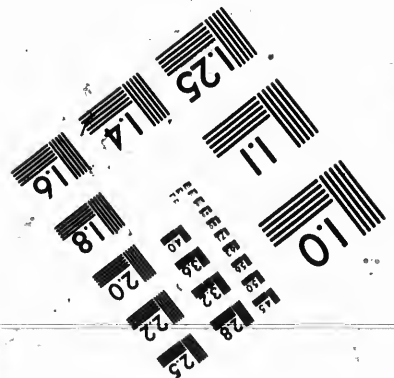
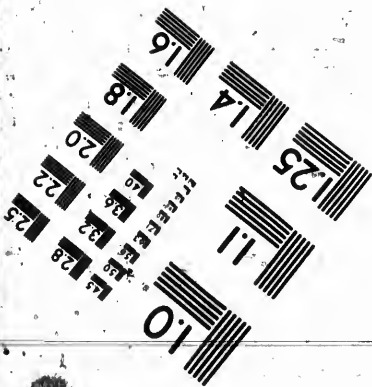
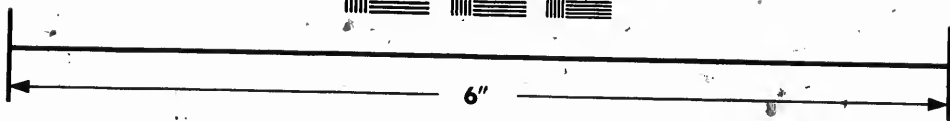
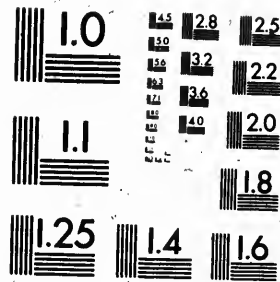








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as suddenly as it had come. Kane did not notice it, nor did Gwyn.

"Kane!" exclaimed Bessie, in a sweet and gentle voice; "sure then it's me own brother he is too, and oh, how glad I am!"

She held out her hand with a sweet smile. Kane took it, and the smile on her face drove away the last vestige of his gloomy fears. All evil suspicions passed away. He saw only that perfect loveliness and that bewitching smile; he saw only her charming grace and captivating beauty; he saw only the wife of Gwyn, and the friend of Inez.

He pressed her hand fervently, and in silence.

"Really," said Bessie, "do you know, Gwynnie, dearest, you gave me an awful shock, and I haven't got over it yet. I was so awfully glad, you know, but it was at the same time so awfully sudden, you know; and oh, how we've talked about this. I'm sure I can hardly believe it is so, and I'm sure it's awfully funny to find a brother so suddenly, when you never expected such a thing at all at all. And oh, but it's the blessed thing to think that our brother Kane should turn up after all, so it is."

She looked at Kane as she said this with a sweet smile on her face. Kane noticed this, and was charmed. He noticed, also, the slight "brogue" that was in her tone, which, intermingled as it was with the idiom peculiar to young ladies, seemed to him to be very charming. He believed in her at once. The sight of that face was enough. With such a being suspicion had simply nothing to do. She herself was beyond all suspicion. In her face, her manner, her tone, he could see infinite possibilities for love, for loyalty, for sociability, for friendship, for fun, for drollery, for kindness, and for gracious self-surrender; such a one seemed a fit companion for Inez or for Gwyn; but to associate her, even in thought, with such foul natures as Kevin Magrath, seemed an unholy thing.

And so it was that Kane Ruthven first met Bessie.

The expression of Kane's face was usually an austere one. His dense growth of crisp hair, his bushy eyebrows, his heavy and somewhat neglected beard, his piercing eyes, his corrugated brow, and, added to all these, the hard outline of his features, all combined to give him a certain saturnine grimness, which would have been repellent had it not

been for the lurking tenderness that shone in his glance—a tenderness which was perceptible enough to any one who took more than a superficial observation. On the present occasion, the look with which he regarded Bessie had all of this tenderness, and nothing of this grimness and austerity; it was a look such as an anchorite might give to some child visitor straying near his cell, whose approach might have broken in upon his solemn meditations. To Kane Ruthven there seemed about Bessie a sweetness, and light, and sunshine, which forced him for a time to come forth out of his usual gloom.

"Sure, and it's quite like the parable of the prodigal son entirely," said Bessie; "only of course, you know, I don't mean to say that you were a prodigal son, brother Kane; and then, too, in the parable, it was the younger son that was the prodigal, but you're the older, so you are; now isn't he, Gwynnie, dearest? But, 'deed, and it's no matter which, for it's only the joy over the return that I was thinking of, so it was, and sure we'll kill the fatted calf and be merry, as they did in the parable. I feel," she added, with an absurd look of perplexity, "that my comparison is hopelessly mixed up; but then my intentions are honorable, you know."

As Bessie said this, she stole her hand toward that of Gwyn, and inserted it confidently in his, quite in the manner of a fond young bride, who is confident of the attachment of her husband, and upon whose marriage still exists something of the bloom of the honeymoon. Gwyn, on his part, did not fail to reciprocate this tender advance, and his hand clasped hers lovingly, and the two stood thus opposite Kane, indulging in this pardonable little bit of sentimentality, or spooneyism, or whatever else the reader may choose to call it, quite regardless of his presence. Upon Kane, however, this little action, which was not unobserved by him, did not produce any unpleasant effect, but rather the opposite. It seemed to him to be a beautiful picture—the young husband, with his frank, open, gentle, and noble face; the fair young bride, with her fragile beauty, and the golden glory of her flowing hair—these two thus standing side by side, with hands clasped in holy love and tenderness.

Kane felt softened more and more, and this scene roused within his mind memories drawn from his own past; memories of a

time when he was as dear to was to his brother the touch of a his would quick send through his memories had through all the torment to him had they been such vividness, he made this his confiding tender only served to than usual of a dearer sense of so

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time when he, too, like Gwyn, had one who was as dear to him as this fair young creature was to his brother; memories of a time when the touch of a gentle hand stealing toward his would quicken his heart's pulsation, and send through him a thrill of rapture. Those memories had never been lost, they had lived through all the weary years, they formed a torment to him in his desolation; but never had they been roused to such life, and with such vividness, as at this moment, when Bessie made this half-unconscious movement of confiding tenderness. The happiness of Gwyn only served to remind him more poignantly than usual of all that he had lost, and a drear sense of solitude came across his soul—

"Oh, for the touch of a gentle hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still."

The sight of his brother's happiness also had another effect. It elicited not envy, for envy was a stranger to his heart, but rather a generous sympathy, and a more tender regard both for this brother and this new-found sister. Inez was one sister, and here stood another as fair as she, and, to all outward seeming, as gentle, as pure, and as good. The sight of these two only served to strengthen his firm resolve already made, to leave his brother here in possession of that estate and title for which he, in his present mode of life, had no need, and of which his nature would not permit him to deprive him.

The loving and tender reception of Kane by these two was met on his part by a grateful reciprocity of feeling; the hearts of all of them were opened to one another; and an interchange of confidences took place, which was unreserved on the part of Gwyn, and only limited on the part of Kane by the nature of those griefs which he suffered, and which could not be lightly spoken of. He laid great stress on his wanderings, and particularly on his adventures in South Africa in search of diamonds. His allusions to this were made with the intention of letting Gwyn see that he had ample means of his own, and of communicating to him, in a delicate way, the fact that he had no intention whatever of taking any steps to deprive him of the estate.

But the chief topic of conversation referred to times far beyond this, and to things which they had in common. Gwyn had much to say about his early boyhood and his remembrances of Kane. He brought forward a thousand things which had faded out of his

brother's recollection, but were recognized as Gwyn mentioned them. About these Gwyn talked with a zest, and a simple, honest delight, which was very touching. His whole tone showed that, in the days of his early life, he had looked up to this brother Kane with all the enthusiastic admiration of a generous boy. It was also quite evident that this enthusiastic admiration had lasted beyond his boyhood and into his maturer years. He seemed to have considered his brother Kane the *beau idéal* of perfect manhood, and one who was the best model for his own imitation. At the same time he regarded his own efforts to imitate him as useless, and the honest humility of his allusions to his own inferiority was almost pathetic, especially when his noble face and his chivalric sentiments were so manifest, and seemed to speak so plainly of a character and a nature which could not suffer from a comparison with even that idealized Kane which he had in his mind.

The minuteness and the accuracy of Gwyn's recollections surprised Kane, who had forgotten many of the occurrences mentioned. They referred chiefly to Kane's last year at home, when Gwyn was a little fellow and Kane a young man. The incidents were very trifling in themselves, but at the time they had appeared wonderful to the boy; and now, even when he had become a man, they seemed the most important events of his life. It was not long afterward that Kane's misfortunes had occurred, and Gwyn showed, without going into particulars, but merely by a few eloquent statements of facts, that, at the time when Kane was so desolate, there was one loving heart that was sore wrung for him, and one loyal soul that would have faced even death itself if it could have done him good.

Bessie bore herself admirably during the conversation. She did not thrust herself forward too much; nor did she, on the other hand, subside into silence. A few, well-chosen remarks, now and then thrown in, served to show that she was full of the deepest interest in all that was said, and occasional timely questions to one or the other of the brothers served to draw forth a fuller explanation of the subject to which the question referred. Moreover, all the time there was in her expressive face such eager curiosity, such profound interest, such total surrender of self to the one who might be speaking, that her very

elence was more eloquent than any words could have been.

Bessie was also gentle and affectionate. Kane was her brother now. With a frankness that was charming she at once began to put herself on the footing of a sister toward him; and proceeded, not abruptly, but delicately and by degrees, to insinuate herself further into confidential terms of intercourse. At first it was Brother Kane, occasionally dropped as if by accident; then the familiar name was repeated more frequently. Then she called him simply Kane. Once, when her sympathies seemed unusually strong, she exclaimed, "O dear brother Kane! it's heart-broke you must have been about that same!" Finally, when they bade one another good-night, she held forth her cheek in the most childish and innocent and sisterly manner in the world, and, as he kissed her, she said:

"Good-night, dear Kane; good-night, and pleasant dreams."

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

##### HUSBAND AND WIFE.

KANE RUTHVEN had come here to Ruthven Towers on an errand. That errand was twofold: It referred, first, to his lost wife Clara; and, secondly, to his injured sister Inez. He had come here with these things foremost in his mind, and all his thoughts turned toward a dark mystery. But his arrival here had produced a change. The unexpected reception by Gwyn, the meeting with Bessie, the discovery of this loyal, true, and noble-hearted brother, with his fair, and gentle, and tender wife, all tended to expel the darker feelings from his soul. The first sound of Bessie's laugh had been to him what the harp-notes of David had once been to Saul; and, though the dark clouds might again roll over him, yet he none the less enjoyed this brief sunshine. For that day, at any rate, he did not choose to introduce the subject of Inez, and he gave himself up to the spirit of the occasion. Once more he came back to the old world which he had left; and, on becoming a Ruthven again, he allowed his mind to dwell upon the distant past. That night he took up his abode in the home of his fathers, and slept at Ruthven Towers.

The honest and unaffected joy of Gwyn over his brother's return could not be repressed, but was manifest after they had parted for the night, and while he and Bessie sat talking over the wonderful events of the day.

"Isn't it the most wonderful and the jolliest thing you ever heard of, Bessie, dear?" he said; "but, oh, you haven't the faintest idea of what he used to be! He was the most magnificent swell—the bravest, boldest, handsomest, most glorious man I ever saw. He neglects himself, and is reckless about his life; but you can easily judge yet, from his present appearance, what he may once have been. As it was, he was a great, bright vision in my life, that I've never forgotten. His ruin was a great, dark thunder-cloud, and I swear I've never got over that! I almost broke my heart about it, and I used to imagine a thousand things that I would do for him when I got older. And then I've never given him up, you know that; I told your poor father that. I always hoped he would turn up, and here he is at last. But he's an odd sort of a fellow. He always was the soul of honor and generosity; and in this he is the same still, only perhaps a little more so. I've already told him how I felt for him, and how bad I had felt all along at keeping the title and estates while they were his. Whereupon, what do you think he said? Why, he declared that he wouldn't have any thing to do with them; but, of course, he'll have to. It'll make him. He's suffered enough, poor old boy! from his family. All I want is to see him have his own. He'll have to take Ruthven Towers, and be Sir Kane. Plain Gwyn Ruthven's enough for me, especially so long as I have my little Bessie with me."

During these last words a cloud had come over Bessie's brow, which, however, Gwyn did not perceive. As he ended, he turned fondly toward her, and kissed her lovingly.

Bessie smiled.

"So he's going to be Sir Kane Ruthven, and you're only Mr. Ruthven, after this," said Bessie, slowly; "and he's going to take up his abode here on his own estates, and Ruthven Towers is all his own entirely, and we're intruders, so we are. Well—well, but it's a queer world we live in, so it is."

As Bessie said this, the forced smile passed off, and the cloud came back to her

face. But Gwyn

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"Oh, it is very, v  
said Bessie; "and s  
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cession."

"Oh, yes," cried

face. But Gwyn was taken up with his own pleasant thoughts, and did not notice her.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "the king shall come to his own again." Hurrah! Kane swears he won't take it, but I swear he shall. And now we'll see who'll win."

"Oh, sure, he'll take it fast enough," said Bessie, gloomily. "No man ever lived that would refuse it—and if it's his—it's his, so it is."

"Yes; but you know he really wouldn't take it if I didn't make him," said Gwyn; "and I'm going to make him."

Bessie was silent for some time. This was so unusual a thing with her that Gwyn at length noticed it, and looked at her smilingly and pleasantly. Her head was half turned, so that he could not see her face, and therefore did not observe the slight frown of her usually serene brow, or the compressed lips, that generally were fixed in so sweet a smile. But serenity and smiles were gone now.

"Isn't it awfully jolly?" cried Gwyn, enthusiastically.

"Awfully," said Bessie, while her little hands clutched each other convulsively, and a deeper frown came over her brow.

"It's almost too good, to get old Kane back," said Gwyn, in the same voice. "I swear I can hardly believe it yet!"

Bessie made no reply for some time. A severe struggle was going on within her. At length she regained her self-control altogether, and turned her face around. Once more her brow was serene, and the old familiar stamp of her sweet smile was on her curved lips.

"Oh, yes, Gwynnie, darling," said Bessie; "it's the awfulest jolliest thing I ever heard of, so it is; and that dear, darling, old Kane, so splendid a man! really, he's just like Olympian Jove, entirely, so he is; and so he's Sir Kane, is he? and you're only Mr. Ruthven, and I'm not Lady Ruthven at all, but only plain Mrs. Ruthven. How very, very funny, is it not, Gwynnie, darling?"

Gwyn laughed aloud; not so much at the funny idea that Bessie had pointed out to him, but rather out of the joy of his heart over his brother's return.

"Oh, it is very, very funny, it is, entirely," said Bessie; "and so we'll have to quit Ruthven Towers, and Sir Kane will remain in possession."

"Oh, yes," cried Gwyn, "he'll have to do

it; of course, the dear old boy. He'll make no end of a row about it, you know; but he'll have to do it. Ha, ha! isn't it jolly? But we'll be close by one another always, that's one comfort."

"How is that, Gwynnie, darling?" asked Bessie, in her softest tone. "How can we always be close by one another if we have to leave Ruthven Towers? Sorrow a one of me knows at all, at all."

"Why, of course, you know, you little goose, we'll go and live at Mordaunt Manor."

"O Gwynnie!" exclaimed Bessie, fixing her eyes mournfully upon her husband, and speaking in tones of the utmost reproach—"O Gwynnie! Mordaunt Manor."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Gwyn, "my own little pet, I really forgot your—your dislike, and all that."

"And pup—pup—poor—did—did—did—dear pup—pup—pup—pal scarce cold in his grave. How can I go back?" sobbed Bessie; "and you know how sad it was, and how hard it is to avoid giving way. O Gwynnie! how could I ever expect such a thing from you!"

At this Gwyn looked unutterably shocked and distressed. He folded her in his arms—he swore and vowed that he did not mean what she supposed; that there was no necessity to leave Ruthven Towers yet, for a long time, and, even when they did, they need not go to Mordaunt Manor. They could live in London, Paris, anywhere, in a hundred other places. Bessie gradually allowed herself to become mollified, and at length seemed quite herself again.

"But won't it be awfully funny, Gwynnie dear?" she said. "I'll have to support you, won't I? Sure it's turn and turn about it'll be, so it will."

Gwyn laughed at this in his usual uproarious fashion.

"Sure," said Bessie, thoughtfully, "all this reminds me of a thing that I've sometimes thought of. It used to seem impossible, but now sure there's no knowing, and I don't know but that it'll be the next thing that'll happen, so it will; and, if so, then good-by, say I, not only to Ruthven Towers, but also to Mordaunt Manor."

At this Gwyn started and stared at Bessie in amazement.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Sure I mean what I say."



"How can we bid good-by to Mordaunt Manor?"

"Why, the same way that we're going to bid good-by to Ruthven Towers."

"Oh, nonsense! Why, my elder brother has come home. You haven't any elder brother, you know, you little goose."

"No, but what prevents me from having an elder sister?" said Bessie, looking earnestly at her husband.

"An elder sister!" cried Gwyn, in new amazement.

"Just that; it's that entirely what I mean, so it is," said Bessie, "and sorrow the thing else it is, at all at all; and there you have it. Oh, really, Gwynnie darling, you needn't begin to smile. You've done enough laughing for to-day; and this'll help you to feel a little more serious, so it will. I suppose poor, dear papa could never have mentioned it to you," continued Bessie, with a sigh, "but, no wonder, when he was so very, very ill."

"Pon my life!" exclaimed Gwyn, "I haven't the faintest idea what you're driving at. You have to explain yourself more, Bessie dearest, only you mustn't make your poor little head ache about nothing."

"Oh, never mind my poor little head," said Bessie; "there's enough in this to make more heads ache than mine. Only I do wish poor, dear papa had explained it all to you. I hate so to make explanations. But there's no help for it. Well, you know, Gwynnie dearest, poor, dear papa had two daughters—one Clara and the other Inez."

"But Clara's dead," cried Gwyn.

Bessie shook her head.

"Nobody ever knew about her death, at any rate; she's dead in just the same way that your brother Kane was dead."

"What!" cried Gwyn—"what makes everybody say so, then? And your father, he gave her up as dead. I've heard him speak about the dear child that he had lost."

"Sure enough," said Bessie, "he did that same. This sister Clara disappeared when I was a bit of a child, and, of course, you know, Gwynnie, it certainly is possible, and perhaps even likely, that she is dead; but, at the same time, there is no certainty of that, at all at all, not the least in life. You see, she was sent off to a school in France, and while there she made a runaway match with some adventurer; and that's how it was. Well, there was a will, and there was

a guardian, and the will arranged that, if ever either of the daughters married without the consent of the guardian, she could be disowned, or something. Well, poor papa was supposed to be dead, and poor, dear guardian didn't like the match, and so, I suppose, he treated them rather cruelly, for she disappeared, and was given out as dead, and that's all I know about it, you know. So, you know, I've often thought that poor, dear, darling Clara might yet be alive—and oh, how awfully glad I should be to see her!—and she may come and claim Mordaunt Hall, you know; and then, you see, Gwynnie darling, we'll be left to our own resources entirely."

"Oh, really now, Bessie, see here, now," said Gwyn, "this is all very different, you know—a different thing entirely. Oh, she's not alive—no—no—depend upon it, she's not alive—no, nothing of the kind—why, it's all nonsense, you know."

"But wouldn't it be awfully funny if she were to turn up, after all, alive and well, and come to take possession of Mordaunt Manor?"

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Gwyn. "Why, Bessie love, you haven't got a ghost of a foundation for all this."

"No, darling, nor had you any foundation more than this for your belief in the life of dear Kane, yet you always believed he would come—didn't you, darling?"

Gwyn was silent.

"And so, do you know, Gwynnie, I really have always had a firm belief that some day my poor, dear, darling sister would turn up—and wouldn't that be funny?"

"Oh, but, you know, Bessie, you see this is a different sort of thing altogether. Oh, quite!"

"But isn't it awfully funny, now?"

"Oh, yes."

"And now, Gwynnie, I've got another thing to tell you, and it's very, very funny, too—sure and it's getting to be the funniest thing I ever knew—all this is—it is entirely."

"What do you mean now?" asked Gwyn, curiously, wondering what new revelation Bessie might make.

"Sure and it's this," said Bessie. "Your brother Kane was married, you know."

"Oh, yes; I know that, of course."

"Did you ever hear the name of the lady?"

"Never."

"Well, then and you must be you must. The Ruthven married Clara Mordaunt!"

At this Gwyn chair.

"I don't believe it's the truth placidly. My c It was Mr. Wynn talk about, and he oh; but the dear terward; really it dear, to see how Clara, so as to make last journey to France making a final sea-

Some more of this. Gwyn had about Mr. Wyvern feel satisfied. But clear that there was in his mind.

"And so, Gwyn laying her hand to husband, and bending to his till her forehead "you see, Clara was and I dare say she is it be funny if it sh Kane had come here as his own?"

Gwyn had begun that was leaning on he stopped, and a such across his face. But ly.

"Pooh!" said h secrets from me. I he'd have told me."

"Oh, of course, b hardly had time yet.

to-morrow, or next we gradually, of course like to mention it before

At this, the gloom once more.

"By Jove! Bessie, know what you're sayin

"I'm sure I don't not be so," said Bessie

"Oh, nonsense! It n like—like an underhand

"Well, I'm sure I d

"Well, then, I'll tell you who she was, and you must be prepared for a surprise, so you must. The lady that your brother Kane Ruthven married was my own elder sister, Clara Mordaunt!"

At this Gwyn actually bounded from his chair.

"I don't believe it!" he cried.

"It's the truth I'm telling," said Bessie, placidly. "My dear guardy was hers also; it was Mr. Wyverne that you've heard me talk about, and he told me all about it. And oh; but the dear man had the sore heart afterward; really it was very, very sad, Gwynnie dear, to see how he tried to find poor, dear Clara, so as to make amends. He made that last journey to France for the purpose of making a final search."

Some more conversation followed about this. Gwyn had many inquiries to make about Mr. Wyverne and Clara before he could feel satisfied. But Bessie's answers were so clear that there was no room for doubt left in his mind.

"And so, Gwynnie dearest," said Bessie, laying her hand lovingly upon that of her husband, and bending her golden head near to his till her forehead rested on his shoulder, "you see, Clara was really dear Kane's wife, and I dare say she is still alive, and wouldn't it be funny if it should turn out that dear Kane had come here on her business as well as his own?"

Gwyn had begun to caress the lovely head that was leaning on his shoulder, but at this he stopped, and a sudden look of pain flashed across his face. But it passed away instantly.

"Pooh!" said he. "Kane hasn't any secrets from me. If his wife was living, he'd have told me."

"Oh, of course, but you see, dear, he's hardly had time yet. I dare say he'll tell you to-morrow, or next week. He'll break it very, very gradually, of course. Besides, he wouldn't like to mention it before me."

At this, the gloom came over Gwyn's face once more.

"By Jove! Bessie," said he, "you don't know what you're saying."

"I'm sure I don't know why this should not be so," said Bessie.

"Oh, nonsense! It makes him seem like—like—an underhanded sort of a fellow."

"Well, I'm sure I didn't mean to hint at

any thing of that sort about dear Kane. It's your own fancy, Gwynnie dear."

Gwyn frowned, and sat in thought.

"Well, at any rate," said Bessie, "you can't deny that we're both likely to be paupers."

Gwyn drew a long breath, and was silent.

"By paupers I mean, of course, dependants on others, and that I hate, even when it's my own sister. If I were not married, it would be different, but a married woman ought to depend on her husband."

"Oh, nonsense, you little goose!" said Gwyn, hurriedly; "this is all nonsense; but, even if it were so, I can take care of you, you poor, little, precious darling."

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

"Why, I'll—I'll—I'll go into the army, of course."

"I never could bear that, dear," said Bessie, with a shudder. "It's too—too dangerous. Besides, darling, do you think the pay of an officer is enough to support a wife? They say not."

"Oh, well," said Gwyn, in an attempt at his old cheerfulness, "I'm young. There's a lots of young fellows that fight their way through life."

"Sure, and there are," said Bessie, pleasantly; "but you know, Gwynnie dear, you haven't been brought up to fight your own way—no more have I."

"Pon my soul, Bessie," said Gwyn, with a short laugh, "you're developing an amount of prudence that I never gave you credit for."

"Sure, and it's the bitter, black prospect before us that's enough to make a fool wise. I'll have to give up being a butterfly, Gwynnie darling, so I will, and turn into a busy bee. It's not prudence, so it isn't. It's fear, for I'm frightened-out of my wits. And oh! I don't—don't be so hasty, Gwynnie, don't give up all, don't, don't, darling, darling Gwynnie!"

With these words Bessie burst into tears, flung her arms about her husband, and sobbed upon his breast.

"Oh, come, now," said Gwyn, but he could say no more. He was troubled. Bessie held him thus, and entreated him as before.

"I must," said Gwyn, "my own darling. It's dishonor not to—"

"Oh, sure, and what's dishonor compared

to black, biting poverty? Sorrow the bit do I care for dishonor, and there you have it."

At this, Gwyn shrank back a little. The hand which was fondling her and soothing her again, as before, ceased as if paralyzed. He looked at the golden head and the slender form.

"Well, Bessie," said he, at length, "a lady once told me, in confidence, that women never have any sense of true honor. I was horrified, at the time, at such a sentiment, from a lady too; but, after what you've just said, I'll be hanged if I don't begin to think there must be some truth in it."

"I don't care," said Bessie. "What's sentiment? What's honor? It's only you I care for in all the world, only *you*—only *you*—and this will bring darkness and sorrow down on you, Gwynnie. O Gwynnie! O Gwynnie! darling, darling Gwynnie! what will become of you?"

At such fond words as these, Gwyn's heart overflowed with tenderness. The poor, little, weak, loving creature, thus clinging to him, with her timid, tender, loving heart, how could she be responsible for any sentiments that did not happen to come up to a man's code of honor? It was enough for him that she loved him so. He kissed her therefore tenderly, and soothed her fears.

"This man," said Bessie—"this man comes like a serpent, to ruin us."

"Oh, nonsense! nonsense! Bessie, darling, you mustn't talk so."

Bessie clung more closely to him.

"I wish he had never, never come!" she said, passionately.

"O Bessie!"

"I wish he had died when they thought he had."

"Darling, don't talk so, you don't know how you wring my heart."

"I don't care. I wish he was dead!" cried Bessie, fiercely and bitterly.

"Bessie," said Gwyn, "you *must* stop."

He spoke sternly. Bessie gave a sob, and clung more closely to him. Her arms were around him. He loved her better than life. He thought her not responsible for these passionate words, and, in the circling clasp of those loving arms, how could he feel anger?

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### REVIVING OLD ASSOCIATIONS.

HOWEVER excited Bessie's feelings may have been, they left no trace behind, for on the following day she greeted "dear brother Kane" with the same cordiality, the same innocent affection, and the same sisterly familiarity which had distinguished their adieux of the evening before. As for Gwyn, there was no change in him, except that he was, if possible, even more cordial than ever. Kane on his part was in no haste to put an end to the happiness which he felt at thus finding himself again the centre of affectionate attentions; he felt as though his business had something in it which would in some way interfere with the sunshine of the present, and therefore was in no immediate haste to introduce it.

That day they passed in visiting the places within and without in which Kane took an interest.

When he was a boy, the Ruthvens had lived in London principally, and had come to this place but seldom. On one of these occasions, Kane had remained several weeks; and all his memories of Ruthven Towers were crowded into this space of time. He was then a boy of fourteen, active, eager, daring, and during this visit had made himself thoroughly familiar with all the past history of Ruthven Towers, with every legend connected with this place or with the surrounding country. He had never been here since, but so vivid was the impression which this visit had made upon his mind, and so retentive was his memory, that every thing almost that he saw served to recall some incident in that bright time of boyish vigor and enjoyment.

To all the reminiscences of that bright past, Gwyn listened with his usual relish and absorbed interest, questioning his brother incessantly, and hanging upon his words with that fond admiration which ever since Kane's arrival had marked his attitude toward him. Kane found it pleasant to talk of this past—which lay beyond the time of his calamity; and all the more so, since he had such listeners. For he had not only Gwyn, but Bessie also; and she, too, showed something of the same feelings which Gwyn evinced—the same attitude of eager attention, the same look of intense interest, of utter and complete self-

absorption in the subject. She had shown the same interest and now she showed it more.

In the morning, Kane sat with Bessie in the front-seat of the house, and about which called up a memory, so did they at places that lived in their minds were associated with the time when he had visited Ruthven Towers.

Beyond the line of the road became hilly, and was one which was the road as they discussed the topic about two hours whose dark, rocky contrast to the river and the waving trees beyond this. The more of this he seemed to like.

"There," said Kane, "one of the pluckiest of life."

"Oh, do, dear Kane, about it, if you please, so love to hear of yours, so I do. Do, er Kane?"

Kane looked with a face, whose eyes were full of the impression of the moment whose tone was one of irresistible interest.

"Well, really, Bessie, absurd for me to be myself."

"Oh, but you know all about what you do, don't we, Gwynnie darling? Have you all these years seen you all these years, nie darling?"

Gwyn lent his side to Bessie, and Kane was boyish exploit, which was inevitable.

"You still call the Rock?" said Kane, to Bessie.

"Yes," said Gwyn.

"Well," said Kane, "no sooner heard that than visit it, and to hear of it."

absorption in the narrative of the speaker. She had shown all this on the previous day; and now she showed it still more strongly.

In the morning they strolled about the grounds, and, after this, went out for a drive. Kane sat with Bessie in the back-seat, Gwyn in the front-seat. As they had found in the house and about the park many objects which called up old associations in Kane's mind, so did they also find, beyond the grounds, places that lived in his recollection, and which were associated with the events of that halcyon time when he made his boyish visit to Ruthven Towers.

Beyond the limits of the park the country became hilly, and among these eminences was one which was very conspicuous from the road as they drove along. It was a precipice about two hundred and fifty feet high, whose dark, rocky sides presented a gloomy contrast to the rich vegetation all around, and the waving trees and grassy slopes beyond this. The moment Kane caught sight of this he seemed unusually excited.

"There," said he, "is a place where I did one of the pluckiest things I ever did in my life."

"Oh, do, dear brother Kane, tell us all about it, if you please, brother Kane. I do so love to hear about these adventures of yours, so I do. Do, please—won't you, brother Kane?"

Kane looked with a smile at the beautiful face, whose eyes were fixed on his with an expression of the most anxious entreaty, and whose tone was one of the most coaxing and irresistible.

"Well, really, Bessie," said he, "it seems absurd for me to be talking so much about myself."

"Oh, but you know we do so love to hear all about what you used to be, and to do—don't we, Gwynnie darling?—and we haven't seen you all these years—now, have we, Gwynnie darling?"

Gwyn lent his solicitations to those of Bessie, and Kane went on to tell about a boyish exploit, which was really very creditable.

"You still call that place the 'Witch's Rock'?" said Kane, inquiringly.

"Yes," said Gwyn.

"Well," said Kane, "when I was here, I no sooner heard that name than I was wild to visit it, and to hear the story, if there was

any story, that was connected with so strange a name. It was some story about a witch that lived in a cave on the side of that cliff ever so long ago, and kept the whole country at defiance, though they all turned out to hunt her. No one could get at her, though, and she remained there. How she lived, no one knew; but the legend had it that she never died, but was living there yet. Now, you see, that was just the thing to set me wild with curiosity. In the first place, the existence of a cave in the face of the cliff was a temptation in itself; and then, again, the idea that the witch might be living there yet was a still stronger one. I didn't believe in the witch, but I did believe in the cave, and, as no one had ever got into it, I thought I'd try for myself. Well, I got some ropes, and, without saying a word to any one, went to the place, and let myself down from the top. It was about the most risky thing I ever tried. The cave was sunk in, and it wasn't possible to get a foothold in it at all, without swinging backward and forward. However, I succeeded in the attempt, and actually penetrated into it. It was not much of a place. It was about ten feet wide inside, and twenty deep, and I dare say had often sheltered fugitives in the stormy times of the past. I cut my name there, and, I remember now, I forgot my knife, which is there yet, unless some one has visited the place and picked it up."

"By Jove!" said Gwyn, "I don't believe I should have the nerve for that sort of thing, old boy. I shouldn't mind so much lowering myself down, but it's the swinging part of the business that would upset me."

"Yes, that was the hardest part of it," said Kane.

"But, oh, how perfectly awful!" cried Bessie. "Why, it makes me positively dizzy even to think of it, so it does. And how you ever dared to do such a thing I can't imagine at all, at all.—Now, can you, Gwynnie dear?"

"I wonder whether I could do such a thing as that now?" said Kane, gazing thoughtfully at the precipice. The carriage had stopped. They all looked there.

"Why, what a perfectly horrible idea!" cried Bessie. "Why, I'm sure you'd be dashed to pieces, so you would."

"Oh, no," said Kane, with a smile, "there's no danger of that. The only question is, whether I could do the swinging part of it."

"Oh, how awfully funny!" said Bessie. "Sure but I almost wish you would, Kane dear."

"By Jove!" said Kane, "I feel very much like it. I'd like to try whether a man's nerves are as steady as those of a boy."

"And then there's your knife," said Bessie. "Oh, but wouldn't it be the fine thing entirely if you should get in there again, and find that nobody had ever been there since yourself, at all at all, and wouldn't you be the proud man!"

"The knife?" said Kane. "By Jove! I wouldn't I like to get that knife again! The knife? why it would be like getting back part of my boyhood. I should take it as an omen, if I found it—an omen for good in the future—that things are going to turn out for me all right in the end."

"Sure but you never could get down there," said Bessie; "never at all at all. Oh, no, you wouldn't have the nerve now. It's too terrible. Why, really it makes me quite dizzy to think of it.—Doesn't it make you dizzy, Gwynnie dear?"

"Dizzy? pooh!" said Kane, whose eyes were fixed upon the cliff, as if by some strong fascination. "Dizzy? why, no man that has a man's head on his shoulders need think any thing of that. I could easily go down and back again, but I might not be so agile as I then was, and might not be able to get a foothold."

"But, oh, what a triumph it would be! and, oh, but it's the proud man you'd be if you were to find the knife!"

"Look here, Bessie," said Gwyn, suddenly, "upon my word, this is hardly the thing, you know; you seem to be actually tempting Kane to a dangerous adventure, when you ought to be trying to prevent him."

"Me tempt him?" said Bessie, reproachfully. "Me? sure it's only encouraging him that I was, and I'm really frightened out of my wits at the very idea, and I'm sure I don't believe that he'd dare to do it, and that's the only comfort I have, so it is."

"Dare? That's the wrong word to use, Bessie. You'll only make Kane the more determined."

Kane laughed merrily. In his laugh there was a ring and a quato that had not been known in any laugh of his for years. He was for the moment like a boy again. The prospect of renewing his old enterprise and re-

peating his boyish feat, of itself seemed to have rejuvenated him.

"Dare? ha, ha!" he said. "When a lady dares a man to do any thing, there's nothing left but to do it. But, at any rate, I feel confidently like going; and, by Jove! I will go."

Bessie smiled radiantly at him, and threw, immediately afterward, a deprecatory glance at Gwyn.

"Nonsense, Kane! don't think of such a thing; it's dangerous."

"Dangerous? pooh!" said Kane. "I tell you the sight of this rock has made me a boy again. I want to find my knife. Gwyn, my boy, you don't know how I cling to that glorious boyhood, and you'll never know till you've had a manhood like mine, and from that may Heaven preserve you!"

These last few words were spoken with sad and solemn intonations. These words Gwyn had occasion afterward to recall—afterward, when they seemed to him to have a prophetic meaning.

For the present, at any rate, Kane had made up his mind, and for the rest of the day was full of this new idea. His old grimness departed utterly, and a boyish enthusiasm about his coming attempt took the place of it. Gwyn made a few feeble attempts to dissuade him from it. He felt some strange, indefinable presentiments of evil, but did not know how to express these in words, and so his attempts to dissuade Kane were only laughed at. But Bessie cheered him on. Bessie talked about it incessantly; Bessie laughed about it, and made merry about it; and even if Kane had been inclined to give it up, he could scarcely have done so under such circumstances. But Kane was not inclined to give it up. The idea had taken complete possession of him, and nothing now could have prevented his putting it into execution. He spent some time that day in making preparations for his adventure. These preparations were not at all elaborate. They consisted simply in procuring a rope of sufficient length and strength, and tying a series of alternate knots and loops. This was the mode which he had adopted when a boy, and its complete success at that time recommended it as the best thing which he could do now; besides, in this recent revival of boyish feeling, any thing that could connect him more closely with those early days was

welcome, and no him than to repeat tails, the plan was successful.

Another evening at Ruthven time he and Bessie most cordial, most confidential. He had been mentioning the real reason from the fear that mar the joy of this this day he had thought more he thought such hesitation so hearted brother a wife—his brother hesitate any long wished to tell? that was too sad, such innocent ears rather the story of friend of Inez? Did and trust in her known to the only terrible loneliness could be better for to be able to join Once together, all even if any mystery wait, secure in one should be thrown up

Kane's confidence. It had grown rapidly as a brother, and she ter. Under these been none of that might have existed.

Accordingly, that about Inez. He told them, for they were never dreamed of to which Gwyn might trust his confidence in Bessie character, her loyalty that led him to this. ever, the whole story him. The perplexing be the daughter of Bessie had been acknowledged daughter, prevented him the subject, and from name. He merely received a letter from have been appointed

welcome, and nothing seemed pleasanter to him than to repeat, even to the minutest details, the plan which had formerly been so successful.

Another evening came—the second evening at Ruthven Towers for Kane. By this time he and Bessie were on terms that were most cordial, most fraternal, and most confidential. He had thus far refrained from mentioning the real object of his journey here, from the fear that the mention of this might mar the joy of this intercourse. Yet through this day he had thought much of this, and the more he thought of it the more absurd did such hesitation seem. Here was this noble-hearted brother and this gentle and loving wife—his brother and sister—why should he hesitate any longer to tell them what he wished to tell? Not the story of Clara—that was too sad, too tragic, too terrible, for such innocent ears as Bessie's to hear—but rather the story of Inez. Was not Bessie the friend of Inez? Did not Inez still love her and trust in her? Why delay to make known to the only friend that Inez had the terrible loneliness of her position? What could be better for the poor, lonely girl than to be able to join her friend once more? Once together, all could be explained; or even if any mystery remained they could wait, secure in one another's love, until light should be thrown upon it.

Kane's confidence in Bessie was complete. It had grown rapidly, but he had come to her as a brother, and she had met him as a sister. Under these circumstances there had been none of that reserve which otherwise might have existed.

Accordingly, that evening he told them about Inez. He told the story to both of them, for they were both one now, and he never dreamed of telling Bessie any thing which Gwyn might not also hear. It was his confidence in Bessie's gentle and noble character, her loyalty, and her innate worth, that led him to this. He did not tell, however, the whole story as Inez had told it to him. The perplexing mystery of her claim to be the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt, when Bessie had been acknowledged as that very daughter, prevented him from touching upon the subject, and from even mentioning the name. He merely mentioned that Inez had received a letter from one who professed to have been appointed by her father as her

guardian; that Inez had believed the letter, and, with the utmost recklessness, had complied with his request to come to him, at Paris. When there she had found out that this man was not what he professed to be, and that, for some unknown reason, he wished to keep her in his power. She was subjected to restraint for a time, but managed finally to escape. She had written twice to Bessie, but had received no answer.

In this guarded way Kane told the story of Inez, and in this way he avoided altogether that painful and distressing confusion of names, claims, and rights, which the full statement of the truth would have brought forward. He did not mention even the name of Kevin Magrath for fear of distressing Bessie, but contented himself with the name of Gounod. It was enough for him just then to reveal the condition of Inez, and he was willing to leave all the rest to the future. He thought that the best thing for him to do would be to bring Inez and Bessie together on the old footing; and then Inez might tell, of her own accord, as much or as little as she chose about her story. He could not help feeling that much had yet to be discovered before the conflicting claims of these two, who were so innocent and so dear, could in any way be harmonized.

If there had remained in the mind of Kane any vestige of a doubt in Bessie, her reception of his story would have removed it.

Astonishment, grief, sympathy, joy, all seemed to struggle together in the expression of Bessie's face and in the tones of her voice. The start of horror at the wickedness of those who made this plot; the cry of fear at the danger of Inez; the exclamation of joy at her escape and safety; of all that in look, or word, or tone, or gesture, could indicate the deepest and sincerest sympathy, not one thing was wanting.

"Oh, but isn't this the blessed day," she exclaimed, at last; "and oh, but wasn't I the heart-broken girl! For, you see, Kane dear, it was the death of her poor papa—poor, dear, old Gurdy Wyveroe—that upset her altogether. And not one word, good or bad, would she speak to me, and me fretting my heart out, and trying to get from her even a look. It's mad she was entirely. Insane, and out of her head, and no mistake. And me that used to lie awake all night long crying my eyes out about her. I was looking forward to her coming

here with me to Mordaunt Manor, where she'd get over her grief. But never a word could I get from her. Oh, it's mad she was—mad, and nothing else, from grief and trouble. There's a vein of madness in the Wyverne family, Kane dear, and she's got a touch of the family complaint, and that's all about it, and there you have it. And that's how it was with poor, dear, old Guardy Wyverne, that for the last two or three months of his life was positively out of his mind, all the time. It was really awful. And only think, at the last, he really mistook poor, dear, darling Inez for me, and told her she wasn't his daughter, and that excited the poor darling so that her own mind gave way. Oh, I saw it. I often thought about that. But I thought the best way was to leave her alone, and not worry her, or bother her, and all that, and she'd soon come around. Oh, why couldn't she have been more frank with me? If she had only shown me that letter! And who is this Gonood? What an awful name! And only think of her running away on a wild errand after a perfect stranger who writes her a crazy letter! Oh, sure but it's mad she was—poor, dear, darling, old Inez. Really it makes me shudder when I think of it. To run away so, you know. I was frightened out of my wits all the time, and I should have gone all the way there with her, but I went as far as Southampton, and my courage failed. She was so perfectly awful, you know, Kane dear; and do you know, Kane dear, she didn't speak a word all the way there, and seemed really angry that I'd come?

"And then, you know, Kane dear, I went back—and oh, but it was mo that had the sore heart, and then I had to go to Mordaunt Manor at once, for they were doing something about poor, dear Guardy Wyverne's estate, and they said they'd have to shut up his house and sell every thing. So I had to come here to Mordaunt Manor, and then came poor, dear, darling papa—and oh, he was so very, very ill! and—and you know what happened."

Here Bessie's emotion made her break down; and, burying her face in her hands, she sobbed piteously. It was very sad, and Kane's eyes moistened as he saw the beautiful golden head bowed down, and the slender frame shaken by sobs. Gwyn, too, was overcome, and in his despair tried all the caresses of which he was capable to soothe Bessie's agitated feelings.

At length she revived and raised her head, but kept her eyes fixed mournfully on the floor.

"It's easy to see how her letters missed me," said she, sadly. "She had directed them to London, and they never reached me. I left no directions about forwarding letters, for I never expected to get any, and didn't give it a thought. Its heart-broke I was about dear, darling Inez, and I never thought of any thing. How could her letters ever get to me?" And so there she was; and there she is now—and oh, my darling, darling Inez! my sweet, sweet sister! what a power of suffering you've had to bear!"

Kane's eyes now overflowed. He was a brave, strong, resolute man, but he was very tender-hearted, and the sight of Bessie's grief was too much. Gwyn, also, was overcome.

"And oh, Kane dear, why didn't you tell me last night? I'll go to her at once. We must all go."

At this Kane smiled. It was just what he most longed for.

"But I'll write her too," said Bessie, "first of all, in case of any delay on our part. I'll write her this night, for I can't leave at once, not for a day or two, and if she only gets a letter to know I'm coming, it'll cheer her a little, and she'll wait patiently, the poor, sweet darling! So you'll give me her address now, Kane dear."

As Bessie said this she drew a tablet from her pocket, and, taking out the pencil, handed it to Kane.

Kane took the pencil and tablet, and wrote the address of Inez.

Then they talked long and tenderly of their absent friend, and when at last the time came for Bessie to retire, she held her cheek for Kane to kiss, and said:

"Good-night, Kane dear, and pleasant dreams to you!"

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE TEMPTER.

KANE WAS JOYOUS over the prospect of Bessie's journey to Inez, and still more so at her eagerness and her promptness. On the following day, Bessie informed him that she had written and sent her letter, and that she would not be able to set out herself for two or three days yet. Such a delay did not seem

long to Kane, who Inez seemed scarcely her again. Her a little long; and; and now that ter had been arranged he found in his alloyed than it he seconded Bessie's ness that might ha and it was arrange should all set out time, the active na ployment, and the recurred to his mi ever. Bessie was She did it, in a lau if he still intended left. The question laration, on Kane's an attempt on the simple preparations and it only remain scene of action.

On the way there more radiant, and m With Kane, who wa she kept up an ince most animated char the Witch's Rock. story of his old exp particular as to the cave, and the way in himself backward an listened, she laughd till, in her excitement hysterical. Kane wa with his plan and p little acquainted with unusual in her manr forcibly impressed by himself unusually sil what depressed. This count of some forebo family in his own min anxiety on account of healthy excitement of been, after all, merely obscurity which befal third party where the monly talkative and liv In this way they re cliff was on the side easily climbed by a mo half a mile off. By asc

long to Kazie, who now, that the future of Inez seemed secure, felt less haste to see her again. He could well afford to stay here a little longer, where all was so pleasant; and now that this troublesome matter had been arranged, the enjoyment which he found in his visit was more pure and unalloyed than it had thus far been. Gwyn seconded Bessie's proposal with the earnestness that might have been expected of him, and it was arranged that in three days they should all set out together. In the meantime, the active nature of Kane required employment, and the Witch's Rock once more recurred to his mind more attractively than ever. Bessie was the first to mention it. She did it, in a laughing way, by asking him if he still intended to get his knife before he left. The question was met by an eager declaration, on Kane's part, that he would make an attempt on the cliff that very day. His simple preparations had already been made, and it only remained to set forth for the scene of action.

On the way there, Bessie was more lively, more radiant, and more charming, than ever. With Kane, who was full of his enterprise, she kept up an incessant conversation of the most animated character, principally about the Witch's Rock. She made him tell the story of his old exploit all over. She was particular as to the shape and size of the cave, and the way in which he had swung himself backward and forward. And, as she listened, she laughed and shuddered by turns, till, in her excitement, she seemed almost hysterical. Kane was too much engrossed with his plan and purpose, and, as yet, too little acquainted with her, to notice any thing unusual in her manner, but Gwyn was very forcibly impressed by it. Gwyn, indeed, was himself unusually silent, and seemed somewhat depressed. This may have been on account of some forebodings of indefinable calamity in his own mind; or it may have been anxiety on account of the unusual and unhealthy excitement of Bessie; or it may have been, after all, merely the natural silence and obscurity which befalls one who makes a third party where the other two are uncommonly talkative and lively.

In this way they reached the place. The cliff was on the side of a hill, which was easily climbed by a moderate acclivity about half a mile off. By ascending this they were

able to reach the edge of the cliff without difficulty, and here Kane flung down his rope and began to make the necessary preparations for his descent.

The hill was a long one, of moderate elevation, being a spur thrown out from Skjoldaw; and the cliff was formed by its abrupt termination on one side. It was, as has been said, about two hundred and fifty feet in height. The top overhung slightly, and at the bottom was a wilderness of sharp rocks, the debris of the cliff, which had been dislodged in the course of centuries by frost and storm, and had fallen here.

The changes which had taken place here since Kane was a boy were not very extensive. On looking about him, he recognized several landmarks without difficulty. In particular, he noticed a large oak-tree, around whose trunk he had then fastened his line; and around the same tree he proposed to fasten it again. This tree, fortunately, stood over the very place where the cavern was, and consequently was by far the best point from which to start on an attempt of this nature.

Kane bound his rope about this tree with a security and a dexterity which indicated a practised hand. After this he flung the remainder of the rope over the cliff, and looked over to see how far it reached. It went down more than half the way. Then he took a carriage-rug, which he had brought with him, and put it under the rope where it ran over the edge of the cliff, so as to prevent any danger that might arise from the grinding of the rope against the rock.

As he made these preparations, he kept up an incessant flow of lively and joyous remarks; and jested about the witch, who, according to tradition, ought still to be there, and who, he maintained, was bound to punish him in some way for his former intrusion into her abode. With this Bessie chimed in, and was very merry over an absurd picture which she suggested of a fight between Kane and the witch in mid-air, the one swinging from a rope, and the other flying on her broomstick.

This conversation, absurd though it might be, was yet destined to be memorable to one of these two speakers.

It was in the midst of this laughter and merriment, that Kane advanced to the edge of the cliff, and prepared to descend.



"Good-by, Kane dear, and take care of yourself," said Bessie, with a smile.

"Good-by," said Kane; "never fear. I'll get that knife."

The next moment he had descended over the edge, and was out of sight.

All this time Gwyn had said not a word. He stood with a clouded brow, and looked on abstractedly. There was trouble in his mind. Kane, however, had not noticed this; for his attention was altogether engrossed by his preparations, and by Bessie. Thus Gwyn had watched Kane in silence while he bound the rope about the tree, while he wrapped the carriage-rug around it, and while he went over the edge of the cliff. Then he walked slowly forward and knelt down.

He looked over.

The knotted rope hung far down, and there below him was Kane clinging to it with his muscular gripe, and letting himself down farther and farther. As he went farther down, and increased the distance between himself and the top of the cliff, there began a vibration of the rope, and Gwyn could see his brother slowly swinging to and fro with a movement that increased as he descended. The sight had something in it which to Gwyn was intolerable, and, turning away, he stood up.

As he did so, he felt a slight touch on his arm. He turned with a sharp and sudden movement. There seemed something in that touch which was strangely startling to him. Yet, when he turned, he saw only Bessie. Unusual, indeed, was it for the touch of the gentle hand of this young wife to give such a shock to so loving a husband. But Gwyn had not been himself all this day. There had been something on his mind; and this something had transformed him.

So now he turned, and saw Bessie. Her face was perfectly calm and placid, and her large, soft, deep-blue eyes were fixed upon his with that open, childlike gaze which formed the sweetest and most attractive peculiarity of Bessie's face. For, when Bessie looked full upon any other person, there always seemed in her face such a suggestion of youth and innocence that the one who encountered it never failed to feel attracted. Never before had Gwyn failed to be affected by her sweet glance, but now, as he encountered it, there was no response on his part; nor did his brow relax in the slightest degree from that gloom into which it had settled.

But Gwyn's look produced no effect whatever upon Bessie. Whether she noticed it or not, did not appear. Perhaps she did observe it, but attached no importance to it; or perhaps she was too much taken up with her own thoughts to regard any thing external. She, therefore, looked at him with her usual expression, and with that same good-natured and fascinating smile upon her lips which she always wore, and, with a tender, confiding gesture, she stole her little hand toward that of Gwyn.

As her hand touched that of her husband, he shrank back and turned away his head. This movement was too apparent to be unnoticed, and Bessie stood with her hand still stretched out, looking at her husband in silence for a few moments. The smile did not pass from her face, nor did she appear to be in the least degree offended or hurt. On the contrary, after a slight hesitation, she renewed her advances in such a way that they admitted of no rejection, for she stepped toward him and quietly took his arm.

"Sure, Gwynnie dear," said she, "you're not yourself at all at all this day. Not one word have you spoken, good or bad, since last night. And I'm sure I think you're really unkind. Haven't you ever a word at all at all to throw to a poor little girl that's fairly heart-broken with such coldness and neglect?"

Bessie, as she said this, leaned tenderly, lovingly, and confidingly, upon her husband's arm, and looked up into his face with her sunniest smile. But Gwyn stood with his face averted, and his eyes looking far off at vacancy, and the cloud, still dark and gloomy, over his brow. The broad, serene tranquility that once had reigned there—the frank, open, boyish look that had once distinguished him was gone, and in its place there had come the shadow of some stern, dark, unhalloved thought, such as had never before been known to his honest soul. And it was the spell of this thought that at this moment held him bound, so that he remained inaccessible to Bessie's witchery, to her smile of sweetness, her glance of tenderness, and her words of love. There was a change in him beyond a doubt, and, whether that change should be transient or permanent, depended very much upon the issues of this hour.

After waiting patiently for some time, Bessie found that Gwyn would not look at

her; so, with a lip and at the same time, clasping his

"Sure and he must—must

To this Gwyn was apparently in quite unintelligible Bessie, however.

and one of her hands time succeeded in nesting.

"And he must—must" continued Bessie, drawing another venture draw him into a corner.

To this Gwyn on in an inarticulate, un-

"And oh, but it's" be, and a heavy weight of string," continued be cautiously feeling conversation about w doubtful.

Gwyn drew a long ing.

Bessie stole a look still averted. It was still forcing himself reason or other, and th

"It's awfully dang then, Gwynnie darling low voice. Gwyn said

"Gwynnie," said I —"Gwynnie, why wor

Gwyn drew a long "I think," said he, near the edge."

"Sure and what d Bessie. "It's like a Gwynnie dear, and, w never a fear have I."

She said these word ly, and pressed his arm the cloud on Gwyn's b pelled at the softer en caress had caused, but the tenderness had pass came back.

"We must not stand in a harsh voice." "It's

With these words he half a dozen paces, while him, still clinging to

her; so, with a little sigh, she looked away, and at the same time nestled more closely to him, clasping his arm in both of hers.

"Sure and he must have the steady nerves, so he must—mustn't he, Gwynnie dear?"

To this Gwyn murmured something which was apparently intended for a reply, but was quite unintelligible. It seemed to encourage Bessie, however. She pressed his arm closer, and one of her hands sought out his, and this time succeeded in finding a place where it lay nestling.

"And he must be down an awful distance, so he must—mustn't he, Gwynnie dear?" continued Bessie, after a few moments, making another venture to mollify Gwyn, and draw him into a conversation.

To this Gwyn once more replied as before, in an inarticulate, unintelligible way.

"And oh, but it's a heavy man he must be, and a heavy weight on the end of that bit of string," continued Bessie, who seemed to be cautiously feeling her way onward into a conversation about whose reception she felt doubtful.

Gwyn drew a long breath, and said nothing.

Bessie stole a look up at his face. It was still averted. It was averted purposely. He was forcing himself to look away for some reason or other, and this Bessie could easily see.

"It's awfully dangerous, so it is—isn't it, then, Gwynnie darling?" said she again, in a low voice. Gwyn said nothing.

"Gwynnie," said Bessie, pressing his arm—"Gwynnie, why won't you speak?"

Gwyn drew a long breath.

"I think," said he, "we are standing too near the edge."

"Sure and what danger is there?" said Bessie. "It's like a rock you are, so it is, Gwynnie dear, and when you are with me, never a fear have I."

She said these words tenderly and lovingly, and pressed his arm again. For a moment the cloud on Gwyn's brow seemed to be dispelled at the softer emotion which Bessie's caress had caused, but, in another moment, the tenderness had passed, and the stern look came back.

"We must not stand so near it," said he, in a harsh voice. "It's too dangerous."

With these words he stepped back about half a dozen paces, while Bessie accompanied him, still clinging to his arm. Here they

both stood in the same attitude in which they had been before, Bessie still clasping his arm. A short silence followed. Bessie looked at the ground; Gwyn, as before, stood looking far away at vacancy.

All around them lay a beautiful scene; beneath the brow of the cliff was the valley, and beyond rose wooded heights. The passing breeze sighed and murmured through the trees, and the twitter of sparrows arose through the air. But nothing in this scene was perceived by Gwyn, in that deep abstraction of soul into which he had been plunged. But Bessie's eyes rested upon the rope which ran along the ground before her, holding suspended in mid-air the precious burden of a human life.

"It would be a shocking thing, so it would," said she, at length, "if any thing were to happen to him, and it's not unlikely. Stranger things than that have happened, and it's a highly-dangerous venture."

At these words Gwyn frowned more darkly, and, with a quick gesture, withdrew his arm from Bessie's clasp, and, stepping away a foot or two, he stood in gloomy silence.

"What made you let him go down, Gwynnie dear?" asked Bessie, in a low voice, after watching him in silence for a few moments.

Gwyn made no reply.

"It's a small, thin rope, and might grind itself away easy enough, so it might," continued Bessie, who, as she spoke, watched Gwyn's face closely, as though wishing to see in what way her remarks would be received; "and sure," she continued, after a pause, "if it wasn't for the bit of a rug that's under it, the rope would have ground itself out by this time. And oh, but wouldn't it be the strange thing, Gwynnie dear, if any thing should happen, and him coming here on such an errand? It would be so very—very—sad, wouldn't it, Gwynnie darling?"

Bessie did not seem now to expect any reply to her remarks in words, but contented herself with watching Gwyn's face. That face changed not, except, if possible, to grow more and more stern and dark at every new word of hers. Was there a struggle going on within him at that hour? Was his evil genius struggling with his better self? He said nothing, nor did he try to distract his thoughts by any converse with the bright and pleasant being at his side, who still showed the same

sunlight in her eyes, and the same smile on her face.

"It's so very, very small a thing," she continued, "that saves him. It's the bit of a rug, so it is—nothing more. It's the rug that—that keeps dear darling Kane from— from being taken from us, isn't it, Gwynnie darling?"

"I wonder how far he is down," she continued; "sure, but wasn't it mad in him to go, and the rope so thin? Sure, and if it wasn't for the bit of a rug, where'd he be now? So thin it is, and so small, and so easily cut—"

As Bessie said this, Gwyn turned his face and looked at her with a terrible glance. His face was ghastly pale, and big drops of perspiration covered his brow. Bessie looked at him with her usual calm, clear gaze, and with the same pleasant smile.

"I wish you wouldn't look at me so, Gwynnie dearest," said she, at length; "you really make me feel quite nervous. Come and let us take a peep down and see where poor, dear Kane is. Come."

She started off toward the edge of the cliff where the rope went over. For a moment Gwyn gasped for breath. Then he said, in a harsh, hoarse voice:

"Don't go!"

"Oh, but I just will then," said Bessie, with a laugh. "Sure, I'm not a bit afraid, though you seem to be. Do you know, Gwynnie dear, I begin to think you're a sad coward, so I do?"

With these words she tripped lightly toward the rope.

"Bessie, come back!" cried Gwyn, sternly.

"Sure, I'll go back to you in a minute, so I will. I just want to take one peep, and I'll show that I'm braver than you, so I will."

With these words she stooped down, and knelt by the rope, just at the edge of the cliff, and bent her head down low. Her left hand rested on the rug, her right on the rock.

Gwyn stood like one paralyzed; there was a terrible thought in his mind; he looked at her with a wild, glassy stare of horror.

After a few moments Bessie drew back her head, and turned and looked at Gwyn with a bright smile. Then, still holding her left hand on the rug, she put her right hand into her pocket, as though she intended to draw out something.

What that something might be had in an instant suggested itself to Gwyn's wild fancy. A groan burst from him.

He sprang toward her, and, before she could be aware of his intention, before she could even shrink back, there was a wild and terrible cry in her ears. She felt herself seized in a fierce and resistless grasp, and torn from the ground. It was Gwyn's hand, the hand which never before had touched her save in love and tenderness, that now grasped her with the fury of despair. He seized her in his arms. For a moment he held her up-lifted from the ground, and Bessie could see his face, and she saw in it that which made her think that he was about to fling her over the precipice. For a moment he held her there, and a shriek burst from her which was wrung out by pain and by terror. For a moment he held her—one single moment—and then he hurled her violently away from him.

She fell to the ground headlong and heavily. She lay senseless.

Her beautiful face, marble white, lay with her cheek on the hard ground; and her little hand, the right hand, which she had inserted in her pocket, still held in its grasp a simple handkerchief.

For a moment Gwyn stood horror-struck, then he staggered toward her and raised her up. The handkerchief in her hand had in it something piteous; he had imagined something else there. He had imagined horrors unspeakable. And this was all. Trembling from head to foot, he gently laid her down again, and kissed her pale face fondly, and tenderly examined her to see if she had received any injury. But, even at that dread moment, there was in his mind the presence of the evil thought which all day long had darkened his soul; and, obeying a sudden impulse, he rushed once more to the edge of the cliff and looked down.

## CHAPTER XL.

### RENEWING HIS YOUTH.

MEANWHILE Kane had gone steadily down on his adventurous descent. The rope had been formed on the model of the one which he had used when a boy, and was very well adapted for such a purpose. The knots and loops which occurred at intervals enabled him

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to maintain a firmer hold than would otherwise have been possible, and to secure an occasional rest even for his feet. Gradually, as he went down, he became aware of one circumstance which troubled him not a little. This was the vibration of the rope. With his weight at the end, he found himself vibrating to and fro like the pendulum of a clock, and the farther he descended the longer did these vibrations grow. But he was not one who could easily give up any undertaking upon which he had once fairly entered, and so, in spite of this, he still continued to descend. Fortunately was it for him that he had guarded against the twisting or untwisting of the rope, by which a rotatory motion might have been given to him, in which case he could scarcely have saved himself from dizziness, but this he had contrived to prevent by doubling and knotting the rope.

He continued, therefore, without stopping, though, at length, the long vibrations of the rope grew somewhat troublesome. At first, these oscillations had taken place in a line which was parallel to the face of the cliff, but, as he went farther down, this line of motion gradually changed to one which drew in more toward the cliff; and finally, as he swung in, his feet touched the rock. An oscillation in this direction favored his purpose, and he sought to preserve it for the remainder of the way. He continued descending, therefore, until at length he found himself opposite the famous place known as the Witch's Hole.

This place was very peculiarly situated. It was a recess in the face of the cliff, to which there was no access whatever except in some such way as this. The sides receded all around the cave for some eight or ten feet, and there was no foothold except on the floor of the cave at its mouth. This was only a small space about six feet wide, and was so difficult of access that one single occupant could easily have defended himself against any number of assailants. As Kane reached a point opposite this place, the vibrations of the line backward and forward brought him alternately to and from the cave. This oscillation he increased by working his body in that fashion which is used on a swing, and thus he swung himself nearer and nearer. At length his feet touched the rock on one side, and he was able to kick himself off in such a way as to direct the next movement toward the cave. In this he was successful, and the

next inward swing brought his feet to the cave floor. Still this was not enough, for the impetus had not been sufficient to give him a foothold. He therefore kicked himself off once more with all his strength. He swung far out, and then, as he swung back again, he watched closely, and held himself all gathered up to take advantage of any opportunity of landing on the floor of the cave. This time he was swung inside, within reach of a rough rock on one side of the mouth of the cave. This rock he caught at with his feet. For a moment he held himself there, and then gradually let himself down, until at length he reached the floor of the cave. He then carefully pulled in the rope, and fastened it about this very rock.

He had reached it at last, but the effort had been an exhaustive one, especially these last exertions in swinging himself into the cave. He sat down for a short time and rested, and looked all around.

The cave was not large. In fact it was rather a recess than a cave, and was merely a fissure in the cliff, the bottom of which had filled up with rubbish sufficient to form a floor. Above, its sides ran up till they met one another at a sharp angle. The depth of the fissure was about twenty-five or thirty feet, and its width some eight or ten feet. There was nothing more to see than this, and it was hardly worth the risk of a life.

Perhaps, if the history of this cave could have been told, the story would have been one quite as interesting as any of the legends about the witch which had grown up around it. Its very inaccessibility had probably caused it to be the lurking-place of fugitives in ages of the past. It required only the resolution to descend as Kane had done, and then they were safe. Still better would it have been for any fugitive here to keep a rope hanging down to the ground below, and come and go in that way. It was not impossible, therefore, or even unlikely, that this cave had been the scene of extraordinary events in the past, and that this floor, if it were dug up, might disclose articles of human workmanship—arrow-heads, stone weapons, earthen pottery—or any other things which may be left to mark the place where man has once been. ~~Celtic~~ They may have fled here from Saxons, Saxons from Normans. This may have been the refuge of fugitives in the Wars of the Roses, or in the wars of the Parliament.

Protestant or Catholic might have found here a safe hiding-place from religious persecution; here the hermit of the middle ages, the witch of the Stuart period, and the outlaw of a later age, may all have succeeded to one another.

Kane, however, had not come as an explorer, nor as an archaeologist. He had not come even out of bravado, though it might have seemed so. He had come to reach out a hand to his lost boyhood; to bring back a vanished past. He had come to renew his youth, to repeat his boyish exploit—above all, to get his knife, left here long years before. He did not allow himself much time for resting. A few minutes sufficed, after which he rose and walked farther in.

He went to the farthest end of the cave, and then scanned the rocky wall carefully. He was anxious to see whether that memorial of his former visit which he had left here was still visible. His curiosity was rewarded. There on the dark rock, cut in large, bold letters, he read that memorial—his own name:

“KANE RUTHVEN.”

He stood looking at it for some time with varying emotions, while all that past came back before him—that bright past, which Bessie had been assisting him, or rather encouraging him, to recall. The sight of this name suggested that other object of his search—the knife. He looked down. For some time he saw no signs of any thing; but, at length, an object met his sight, lying close against the rock, and looking like a stone. He picked this up.

It was his knife.

Dust and mud had caked about it, and the blades and springs were all rusted together; but, nevertheless, it was his own knife—the very knife which he had carried down here as a boy, and with which he had carved that name. He looked at it with a pensive gaze, and then slowly returned to the mouth of the cave. Here he sat for some time, looking out. But it was not the scene outside, magnificent though it was, which met his eyes. His gaze was fixed upon vacancy, and, if he saw any thing, it was the forms and scenes of the past which his memory brought up before him.

At length, he started up. There was nothing more to be done here, or to be seen.

He had exhausted the possibilities of the place, and had gained the object of his daring exploit. Nothing remained now but to return. This was far less difficult than the descent. He had no trouble now about directing his course. At first, as he let himself out, the long swing of the rope was troublesome, and its return swing threatened to drive him with somewhat too great force against the rocks; but this he guarded against, and, as he steadily ascended, the oscillations grew gradually less.

At length, he reached the top of the cliff.

As his head rose above it, he expected to see Gwyn and Bessie; he expected to feel their eager hands pulling at him to help him; to hear their words of encouragement, of wonder, of congratulation; to see their faces full of sympathy and delight, Bessie with her gentle and merry glance, Gwyn with his broad, frank face and hearty, loving ways. All this he expected to see.

But there was no voice sent down as he neared the summit; no hands were outstretched; no faces full of welcome smiles were there. There was silence, and it was not until he had clambered up and looked around that he saw what scene had been awaiting him here on the top of the cliff.

This is what he saw:

A prostrate female form, and, kneeling by her side, a man with a ghastly face and a look of horror. Kane saw that this man was Gwyn; yet so appalling was the change which had taken place in him that he stood dumb with amazement. For Gwyn seemed ten years, or twenty years, older than when Kane had left him. To his fresh, boyish look had succeeded a grim, austere face—a face that had a grayish tinge over its pallor; and over it there was spread an expression that was not like any thing which Kane had ever before seen in any human face. And, as he looked, there came across him, like a sudden flash, the thought that it looked like the face of a man who had been tempted of the devil, and had seen him face to face.

Thus, then, it was that Kane came back to Gwyn and Bessie.

Kane walked slowly toward his brother. Thus far Gwyn had stared at him with a dazed look; but now, as he approached, he jumped up hastily from Bessie's side, and hurried to meet him. There was a piteous



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"A prostrate female form, and kneeling by her side, a man."—Page 106.

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expression now on his face—one of eager welcome that seemed struggling to surmount his despair. He grasped Kane's hand convulsively in both of his, and gazed at him with an indescribable look. Kane felt bewildered. All this was incomprehensible. He could only see that some disaster had happened. The prostrate form of Bessie showed that she was concerned in this, and the anguish of Gwyn was intelligible enough on that ground; yet he could not help feeling astonished that Gwyn could have the heart, under such circumstances, to think of him, much less to come and welcome him back so eagerly. He could not possibly know what had occurred, nor could he even conjecture the inconceivable importance which his reappearance had in Gwyn's eyes.

"Heavens!" cried Kane. "What's all this? What has happened to her?"

He thought only of Bessie now. With this thought, he wondered at Gwyn's apparent forgetfulness of her; and so he tore his hand from his brother's grasp, somewhat impatiently, and hurried over to the prostrate form.

Bessie was lying on her back, with her face upturned. Her eyes were closed; her lips were slightly parted; the roseate hue of her cheeks had given place to a waxen pallor; and her waving hair flowed like a flood of golden glory about her forehead and neck and shoulders. She was motionless; she was senseless. It was a piteous spectacle.

Piteous, indeed, it seemed to Kane, who bent over her with his mind full of remembrances of her last appearance, and thoughts of the contrast between that and this—the glow of health, the blue eyes fixed on him in their mirthful innocence, the red lips curved into merry smiles, the dimpled, rosy cheeks, the laughter, the jestings—above all, the tender, loving way of referring all her thoughts and all her joys to that husband whom she loved so devotedly. And here she was now! What was the meaning of it? Here was Gwyn, crushed. Well he might be. Yet, what did it all mean?

These thoughts filled his mind as he knelt by Bessie's side and chafed her hands. But, though Gwyn also united his efforts with those of Kane, there did not appear any signs of returning animation; and, at length, Kane advised an immediate return to Ruthven Towers, carrying her with them as best they could; for there restoratives could be ob-

tained which were not to be found elsewhere. To this Gwyn at once acceded. Kane was about to help him carry Bessie down to the carriage; but this Gwyn would not allow. The proposal seemed to excite in him a repugnance so strong that it amounted to nothing less than horror; and Kane, who could not help noticing it, was filled with new astonishment. Gwyn, however, said nothing; and, indeed, he had not spoken a word all this time. Stolidly and silently he bent down, and, encircling the slender form of his senseless wife in his strong arms, lifted her lightly and easily, and then carried her to the carriage at the foot of the hill.

Ruthven Towers was not very far away, and the carriage drove there rapidly. Gwyn held Bessie in his arms all the way, and looked at her with a mixture of helplessness and agony. On reaching their destination he carried her himself up to her own room, and committed her to the care of her attendants. A doctor was hastily sent for, and Gwyn waited in despair for the result.

Meanwhile, Kane was waiting below in a state of the deepest anxiety and suspense. Dinner came and went, and Kane was alone at that repast. Not long after, Gwyn made his appearance. He informed Kane gravely that the doctor had come and had found Bessie recovered from her swoon; he had given her a sleeping-draught, and she had been sleeping ever since. The doctor did not anticipate any serious results, and hoped that in two or three days she would be herself again.

To Kane's anxious inquiries as to the cause of the accident, Gwyn replied in somewhat vague and incoherent terms, for he was very awkward at evading the truth, and unskilled in deceit of any kind. From what he did say, however, Kane gathered the information that she had stumbled somehow against the rope, and in falling had struck her head. Of the part that Gwyn had taken in this affair he had not the remotest idea.

All that night Gwyn remained awake, hovering about in the neighborhood of Bessie's room, and anxiously watching the progress of affairs. Every thing went on well. Bessie slept soundly. Her face had regained its usual color, and she showed no trace of injury. At length he felt so hopeful about her that he went to bed. It was about dawn when he retired, and he slept until late in the



following day. His first thoughts were about Bessie, and, hastily dressing, he hurried at once to her room.

But those awaited him a great surprise. On reaching the room the house-keeper met him and handed him a note. At the same time she informed him that Lady Ruthven had passed a very comfortable night, and had awakened early, feeling so well that she had gone out for a drive, and had not returned.

Gwyn was completely overwhelmed by this intelligence. He took the letter, and, looking at his watch, found that it was two o'clock. On inquiring about the time when Bessie had left, he learned that it was about six o'clock in the morning. So long an absence, under such circumstances, excited his worst fears, and the despairing thought arose that Bessie had punished him for his violence by deserting him forever. He hurried to his room with the letter, and for some time was afraid to open it, for fear that he should read his doom. At length he could no longer endure the suspense, and, tearing it open, he read the following:

"I'm quite myself again, Gwynnie dearest, so there's no use in life for you to be worrying about me. I'm going out for a drive, and may not be back for a few days. The fact is, after what has happened, I have come to the conclusion that a short separation will be best for both of us. Do you know, Gwynnie darling, I really think you must have been insane, and your head was full of horrid fancies. You had some awful idea about me which I do not like to think of. It was a terrible mistake, so it was. I hope that, if you are by yourself for a little while, you will see how very, very wrong you were, and how fearfully you have misunderstood your poor Bessie. Adieu, then, Gwynnie dearest, and au revoir. I forgive all, and love you with all my heart, dear. Don't forget,

"Your own loving

"BESSIE."

This letter drove away the worst part of Gwyn's distress, but still there remained the deepest longing to see her, and the strongest anxiety about her health. The very forgiveness which she granted him increased these desires after her, and he hurried at once to the stables. Here, to his intense joy, he found that the carriage had returned in which

Bessie had gone, and that it had only taken her to Mordaunt Manor, whereupon he mounted a horse and rode there with the utmost speed.

On reaching Mordaunt Manor the porter handed him a letter, and informed him that Lady Ruthven had gone away along with Mrs. Lugin, leaving this for him. It was only with a violent effort that Gwyn concealed the emotion which he felt at this intelligence, and, taking the letter in silence, he turned away, full of wonder and apprehension. He had come, full of love and longing, to hear Bessie's words of forgiveness, and to bring her back. But she was gone, and he turned away with an appalling sense of desolation. What did this mean? Had she gone back from her word? Had Mrs. Lugin persuaded her to retract her forgiveness and punish him more severely? This looked like it.

But speculation was idle. Here was her letter in his hand, and she herself spoke there.

He tore it open and read:

"GWYNNIE DARLING: When you get this I shall be on my way to Paris. Do not be at all uneasy about me, darling, for I assure you I am quite myself again. If you had been awake this morning I would have explained, but you were asleep, and I kissed you for good-by, dearest.

"You see, I feel awfully uneasy about poor, dear, darling Inez, and I am frantic to see her; and, when I came here, I found Mrs. Lugin willing to accompany me, so I decided to go. You and dear Kane will come on immediately, of course, for I know, Gwynnie dearest, you will be quite unable to live more than two or three days without me; so, when you come, you will find me with my mamma's papa, dear Grandpa Magrath, at the Hôtel Gascoigne, 125 Rue de la Ferronnière. And now, once more, good-by, darling, and don't forget,

Your own loving

"BESSIE.

"P. S.—You may as well show this to dear old Kane, Gwynnie darling, for it will explain my somewhat abrupt departure. Once more, good-by.

"BESSIE."

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CHAPTER XLII.

REPENTANCE.

On turning away from Mordaunt Manor, Gwyn was quite unconscious of the way in which he was going; and, if his horse directed his steps homeward, it was more from his own inclination than from any direction of his rider. As for Gwyn, his thoughts were busy with the events and experiences of the previous day. He went over all that he had thought, and said, and done; he recalled all Bessie's words, and acts, and looks; he arraigned himself and her before the bar of his conscience, and passed every thing in review up to that culminating scene on the precipice.

A dark thought had been suggested to him. It had come first from Bessie, when she lamented the prospect that was now before them, when she recoiled from the thought of poverty, and preferred that evil should happen to Kane rather than to them. This thought had passed into Gwyn's mind, and had taken root there. Thus far he had been an honorable gentleman, with an upright and loyal soul; but all men have their peculiar temptations, and this proved to be the very one which was most dangerous to him. It came so insidiously, it came from her whom he adored and idolized, it was enforced by her grief, her tears, and her loving caresses. In the midst of their happiness one had come who was to expel them from their paradise, and Bessie's nature could not endure the thought. So this temptation had come most insidiously, most powerfully; and, having once entered into his mind, it had taken root, and grown, strengthened, and fostered, and developed, by events and by words in which both Kane and Bessie had borne a part.

Thus the thought, "If he had never come," became a wish: "Oh, that he had never come!" "Oh, that he had been dead when we supposed him to be!" "Oh, that he were dead now!" It thus grew and enlarged itself, until Gwyn found himself at last wishing for the death of that very brother over whose return he had but lately rejoiced with sincere and enthusiastic joy.

It was Bessie who shaped his thoughts to this; it was Bessie who was the cause of this wish, who alone gave it any point or meaning. He could not bear to see her tears. He

could not bear the thought of any misfortune befalling her. He had brought her here to a home which she loved, and he could not bear to see her expelled.

Then came circumstances which changed the secret wish into a temptation to act. There was, above all, the proposal to go over the cliff. Had it not been for this, Gwyn's wish might have eventually died a natural death from lack of opportunity. But the temptation came as it comes to many a man, and, following close upon the temptation, there came also the opportunity.

That opportunity reached its height on the top of the cliff when Kane's head disappeared from view as he descended on his perilous journey. As Gwyn stood there in gloomy silence, he was wrestling with the Tempter, who now, in his utmost power, was urging him to act. This was the conflict in which he was engaged, and at this moment it was Bessie herself who interposed and lent her aid, not to the tempted, but to the Tempter.

It had been her misfortune all along to aid the Tempter and to weaken her husband. She it was who earnestly urged Kane to his adventure when she should have dissuaded him; she it was who encouraged him, and jested with him up to the last moment, all unmindful of her husband's anguish; and she it was who now, at this supreme moment, came forth to deal a final blow upon his fainting resolution. It was as though the Tempter had suddenly assumed form; as though the devil had appeared in the shape of an angel; and not only an angel, but more, the one whom he loved better than life, and better than his own soul—his beautiful young bride.

What was it that she had said? She had said all that was worst at such a moment. Every word that she uttered was a suggestion of this opportunity; every word was an expression of that dark temptation whose accomplishment was now so easy. Each word that she spoke was worse than its predecessor; and, finally, at the close of this great agony of soul, the climax was reached, when she stepped to the rope with the intention, as he thought, of doing the deed herself. She called him "come" as she turned away, and, as she stooped to the rope, it seemed to him that her gentle smile concealed a terrible purpose, and that her hand sought her pocket.



to keep secret. But, at length, a very natural way suggested itself, by which he might account for it all; and this was Bessie's own letter to himself. In this last letter she had not referred in the faintest way to the affair on the cliff, nor had she again said any thing about forgiveness. It was a letter full of loving words, ascribing her departure solely to her anxiety about Inez, and her eager desire to see her. Most keenly was Gwyn conscious of the delicacy of feeling which had inspired this; for, though he was convinced that the real cause of her departure lay in his own treatment of her, yet he perceived that she had adopted this affection of hers for Inez as the real pretext; and as her affection for Inez was undoubted, and Inez was in a position of actual peril, the pretext was every way plausible. He therefore concluded to show the letter to Kane, and add any further explanation which might be needed, in accordance with its tone. It was evident to him that Bessie had this in her mind, and had written this second letter, not only to console him, but also to smooth his path toward explaining it to Kane. By the time that he had reached the gates of Ruthven Towers, Gwyn had settled this in his mind, and was therefore in a position to meet Kane without embarrassment.

Meanwhile; Kane had found himself in a most perplexing situation. On waking in the morning, he had inquired after Lady Ruthven's health, and had been informed that she was quite well again. Several hours passed, and he learned that Sir Gwyn was still sleeping. Upon this, he went off on a long stroll, from which he did not return till about four. On coming back to the house, there was a general air of confusion, which excited his attention. On inquiring whether Sir Gwyn was up, the servant whom he asked informed him that Sir Gwyn had gone hurriedly to Mordaunt Manor. The manner of the servant was so singular that Kane asked some more questions, and at length learned the astonishing news, which was now whispered all through the house, that Lady Ruthven had gone away at daybreak, very hurriedly, and that her husband, on hearing about it, had set out in pursuit of her in the greatest possible haste. All this was to Kane utterly unintelligible, and though the servants' gossip gave this story the very worst coloring possible, he refused to believe it. Still the fact remained that

both had gone away most abruptly, without a word to him; and this was the thing that perplexed him.

The return of Gwyn put an end to this. Kane walked down to meet him, as he saw him come up, and could not help noticing the great change that had come over his brother's face. At first, he felt shocked, and anticipated the worst; but, as soon as Gwyn saw him, he put all these feelings to flight by the first words that he uttered.

"Well, Kane," said he, with an attempt, that was not altogether successful, at his old ease and cordiality of manner, "you must have felt awfully puzzled at our disappearance in this fashion. But the fact is, Bessie was so wild to see Inez that she couldn't wait for us, and so she has gone off to Paris. She was all right this morning, just as well as ever; and as I had been up all night, and wasn't awake, she quietly trotted off by herself, went to Mordaunt Manor, took Mrs. Lugrin, and is now en route for Paris. See—here is her letter. I went off after her, but was too late. We'll have to set out at once."

As Gwyn said this, he dismounted, and produced a letter from his pocket. What he had said was spoken, not only for Kane's benefit, but also for the benefit of the servants, some of whom were within hearing. He wished to give to Bessie's departure a matter-of-fact character, so as to prevent any scandal. In this he succeeded perfectly, for those who heard it understood by his words that Lady Ruthven's departure was quite natural, and that her husband was going to join her at once. So this much of Gwyn's purpose was accomplished.

To Kane, however, these words only afforded fresh perplexity. When he had seen Bessie last, she was senseless; and now he learned that she was on her way to Paris. So sudden a recovery, combined with so sudden a departure, was to him unaccountable. Why could she not have waited? He said nothing—he was too bewildered—but waited to hear Gwyn's further explanations.

Gwyn now led the way into the house.

"I'll show you her letter," he said. "It explains all. It was a sudden whim, or some sudden fear about Inez, you know; and she was awfully fond of her, you know; they were like sisters, and all that—couldn't wait for us—had to go the first moment she felt strong



such a movement should be made known to them—a very possible thing—they might track her and get her into their power as well as Inez. It seems to me that the enemies of one are the enemies of the other, and that the danger that threatens one may threaten both."

This suggestion of possible danger to Bessie at once roused a new feeling in Gwyn's heart. Already he longed to fly to her, out of his deep, yearning love; but now the possibility of danger formed a new motive, and one, too, which urged instant and immediate departure.

"Do you really think so?" he asked, anxiously.

"I do," said Kane, seriously.

"Then we had better go at once. If this is so, I cannot stay here another hour. I shall have to go, and you will have to excuse me, Kane."

"Excuse you, dear boy? I'll do nothing of the kind, for I will go myself. I only came here for the sake of Inez, and I am anxious, above all things, for Bessie to find her. Since Bessie has gone, I will go too."

That very evening Kane and Gwyn left Ruthven Towers. They might just as well have remained all night, for they gained nothing, and had to wait at Keewick; yet still they both felt less impatience and more satisfaction in doing so, since it seemed to them that they were at least on the way to their destination. They were as much as twenty-four hours behind Bessie, but they both hoped that this might make no material difference.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## THE TWO FRIENDS.

BESSIE'S accident appeared to have left no evil results behind, for she found herself well enough on the following morning to form the resolution of going to Paris, and to carry it out successfully. On the morning after she reached her destination, and drove at once to the Hôtel Gascoigne, where she remained a few hours. She then took a cab to the address of Inez, which had been given her by Kane Ruthven.

She found the place without much difficulty, and, telling the cabman to wait, she entered and asked for Inez. She did not have

to wait long. A hurried step, a cry of joy, and Inez flung herself into Bessie's arms, and the two friends embraced one another long and fervently. In the first delight of that meeting but little was said on either side, and it was a long time before either appeared to be able to make any coherent remark of any kind whatever.

"I knew you would come," cried Inez, as soon as she could speak. "I knew you would come as soon as you heard. I knew you would come, you darling—you darling! And did you see Kane? and did he tell you all? Oh, I think my heart will almost break with utter joy!"

"Sure but it's the cruel girl you were to me, and it's the sore heart I had," cried Bessie, reproachfully. "Wasn't I hoping to hear from you day after day, until at last I came to the conclusion that you'd given me up for good and all."

"But I couldn't—I couldn't, dear. Didn't Kane tell you about me?"

"Sure and he did—the whole story, entirely—and, of course, darling, I was able to account for what had seemed your very mysterious silence. Oh, my own poor, dear, darling Inez! how my heart bled for yours!—and I couldn't wait one single moment longer; but, as soon as I heard about you, I left every thing—yes, every thing—and hurried here."

At this proof of Bessie's loyalty and truth, Inez was affected to tears. She could not say any thing, but once more pressed her friend in her arms.

"But how did it happen, Bessie dearest," asked Inez, after a time, "that my letters never reached you?"

"Oh, sure but that's very easily explained, Inez darling," said Bessie. "You see, I had to leave poor papa's house—they were going to sell every thing; and, as you had left me, there was no help for it but for me to go, too. So I went away to my own home in Cumberland; and, by the same token, my other guardian came to take me away at that same time, having heard, you know, about poor, dear Guardy Wyverne's death. So you know, Inez dearest, you addressed your letters to me at London, I suppose, while I was away in Cumberland all the time; so, of course, I never received them."

This explanation fully accounted for what had seemed like Bessie's neglect, and vind-

cated her faithful friendship. Bessie's allusion to Mr. Wyverne as her "papa" struck Inez rather unpleasantly, and she now thought that between her and Bessie there was still that terrible secret which had already been so disastrous to her. That secret put her in opposition to Bessie—it gave her claims which were antagonistic to claims of Bessie's; and, if Bessie were to know of it, Inez saw that she would lose that sweet friendship which was now her dearest consolation. At this very first meeting with Bessie, therefore, she saw the necessity of being on her guard, and maintaining as much reserve as possible about the mystery of Bernal Mordant. The great difficulty here, however, was her ignorance as to how much Kane may have told Bessie.

While she was trying to think of some way by which she might find this out, Bessie herself volunteered to give her the information.

"Oh, my own darling!" exclaimed Bessie, "how very, very rash it was in you, you know, so it was! And I'm sure I don't see why you couldn't have sent some agent on to this fearful place, instead of coming yourself. Your poor, dear papa's business couldn't have been so very, very pressing. And then think of the suffering you have caused me."

"I was very rash," said Inez, "very rash indeed."

"And you must never do so again," said Bessie, earnestly; "now promise."

"No, never," said Inez.

"Promise that you will never run off this way without telling me."

"I do promise," said Inez. "I do, dear Bessie. I shall not leave you till you wish me to."

Bessie laughed joyously.

"Then that means forever, so it does!" she cried; "and sure it's myself that'll keep you with me as long as I live, so I will."

"Did Kane come with you?" asked Inez, after a pause.

"No," said Bessie; "sure I just ran away, leaving them by themselves. And I suppose they'll be coming in in hot haste after me. They'll both be here by to-morrow."

"Both?" repeated Inez. "Both who? Is there any other but Kane? Do you mean your guardian!"

"Well, yes; that's what he just is," said

Bessie, with a merry smile. "He's my guardian."

"What's his name?"

"His name is Sir Gwyn Ruthven. He is Kane's brother, you know."

At this astounding intelligence Inez started back, and, for a few moments, stared at Bessie in the deepest astonishment. Kane had told her his true name, but she was not aware that any brother of his was alive; and, though she was acquainted with Sir Gwyn Ruthven, yet she did not imagine for a moment that he was Kane's brother.

"Sure and I've got another surprise for you," said Bessie, regarding Inez with a sly and mischievous smile.

"Another surprise?" repeated Inez. "This is surpris enough for one day. Oh, how glad I am—how glad I am! Kane is reunited with his friends, then?"

"I should think he is," said Bessie. "Sir Gwyn is Sir Gwyn no longer. It is Sir Kane Ruthven now, and Ruthven Towers goes to him also. But that isn't the surprise I mean for you, at all at all. It's about myself, so it is, Inez darling."

"Yourself, Bessie? what is it?" asked Inez, full of interest.

"Well, you know, dear, I said that Sir Gwyn Ruthven, or Mr. Gwyn Ruthven, is my guardian."

"Yes—how strange, too! I never knew that before."

"No—no more you did. He hasn't filled that office long. It's a very peculiar sort of guardianship, too."

"But isn't he rather young and inexperienced for so important and responsible a position?" asked Inez, in a solemn tone.

Bessie laughed gayly.

"Oh, sure," said she, "this is a kind of guardianship, Inez darling, that makes youth all the more appropriate. It's the guardian of me for life that he is."

And Bessie looked with such a peculiar smile at Inez, that the latter began to catch her meaning at last.

"Why, Bessie," she exclaimed, in amazement, "you look as though you mean that—"

"That he's my husband," said Bessie, triumphantly, "and I'm Mrs. Ruthven, so I am—a bride of a few weeks' standing, that hasn't ceased to be a friend either, so I haven't; for didn't I run away from my own

husband to come to Inez?"

With these words around Inez, and kind Inez, who was perfect news of Bessie's marriage what to say, was so full proof of Bessie's love only murmur a few incoherent and gratitude.

"You see, Inez darling," said Bessie, "Gwyn and I had London, though nobody went home, he came at urgent, and I was so lonely, so that—that, in fact, reason for refusing him accepting him, and the oh, it's the loving heart he has, so it is, and you liked him yourself—nowling?"

"It's enough for me, is Kane's brother. I consider the most noble-hearted in

"True for you," said Gwyn, why, sure it's enough Kane's own brother. A beautiful sight to see the two of them. They idols of one another, so like to interfere with the was crazy to see you, and satisfy myself, and you, and everybody, by slipping them to come after me. I'm along at once, and I'll do doubt."

It was with very diverse Inez listened to Bessie as this information. She feigned joy that her true man whom she loved, and was so worthy of her; somewhat upon her to hear Kane in this way, and to her brother-in-law. It had that Kane was brother-in-law. Now, there was nothing Inez to object to, but the thence of unpleasantness, or the additional closeness of fortunes were interweaving her own. Already there was Bessie's name and claim, con

husband to come to the help of my darling Inez ? ”

With these words Bessie flung her arms around Inez, and kissed her fondly ; while Inez, who was perfectly thunderstruck at the news of Bessie's marriage, and did not know what to say, was so affected by this additional proof of Bessie's love for her that she could only murmur a few incoherent words of affection and gratitude.

“ You see, Inez dearest,” continued Bessie, “ Gwyn and I had an understanding in London, though nobody knew it, and, when I went home, he came after me, and he was so urgent, and I was so lonely, and he loved me so, that—that, in fact, I hadn't one single reason for refusing him, and a great many for accepting him, and there you have it. But oh, it's the loving heart and the noble nature he has, so it is, and you know you always liked him yourself—now didn't you, Inez darling ? ”

“ It's enough for me,” said Inez, “ that he is Kane's brother. I consider Kane one of the most noble-hearted men I ever saw.”

“ True for you,” said Bessie, “ and, as for Gwyn, why, sure it's enough to say that he's Kane's own brother. And oh, but it was the beautiful sight to see the meeting between the two of them. They went on to make idols of one another, so they did. I didn't like to interfere with their enjoyment, and I was crazy to see you, and so I thought I'd satisfy myself, and you, and Gwyn, and Kane, and everybody, by slipping away, and leaving them to come after me. And they'll be coming along at once, and I'll be here to-morrow, no doubt.”

It was with very diversified feelings that Inez listened to Bessie as she communicated this information. She felt sincere and unfeigned joy that her true friend had won a man whom she loved, and a man, too, who was so worthy of her ; but yet it jarred somewhat upon her to hear Bessie speak of Kane in this way, and to think that Kane was her brother-in-law. It had come to this, now that Kane was brother-in-law to each of them. Now, there was nothing in this fact itself for Inez to object to, but the thing that excited a sense of unpleasantness, or uneasiness, was the additional closeness with which Bessie's fortunes were interweaving themselves with her own. Already there was the mystery of Bessie's name and claim, conflicting so utterly

with her own. This of itself brought about between them a conflict of interests, about which Inez did not like to think ; but now this new relationship to Kane promised to bring forward new antagonisms, and seemed to be token evil in the future. There were a thousand things which she wished to ask Bessie, but dared not touch upon. Bessie still regarded her as Inez Wyverne ; Bessie regarded herself as the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt ; she must also regard Kane Ruthven as the man who married Clara Mordaunt, whom she believed to be her own elder sister. All these things constituted elements of disturbance, and made Inez watchful and cautious in her words. Upon these subjects it would not do to venture. To do so would be to endanger this sweet friendship which had come like a gleam of sunshine into the darkness of her life. She did not even venture to ask after Bernal Mordaunt, for fear lest this might bring forward the dreaded subject. But her desire to enjoy Bessie's love was stronger than her curiosity about her own circumstances, or even than her filial anxiety about Bernal Mordaunt ; and, therefore, she willingly put away for the present every thought about these forbidden matters.

As for Bessie, she was perfectly unembarrassed, and showed all that warm-hearted and demonstrative affection, all that frank cordiality and playful drollery which constituted so great a charm in her manner. She made no allusion whatever to the return of Bernal Mordaunt, to his fondness for Gwyn, and to his death. Whether this arose from any suspicion of the belief that Inez had in her relation to him, and from a desire to avoid what would necessarily be a painful subject ; or, on the other hand, whether she avoided this subject simply from an unwillingness to touch upon a matter which was so sad to herself, did not appear.

After a prolonged conversation, Bessie at length proposed that Inez should go with her at once. Inez was not at all unwilling ; and, as her luggage was slender, indeed, no great time was taken up in making preparations. But Inez could not leave without acquainting the kind landlady and her family with her good fortune, and bidding them good-by. The good people rejoiced with unfeigned joy, and exhibited a delight at the changed fortunes of Inez which was extremely touching ; while, by the admiring glances which they



turned upon Bessie, they evidently thought that the lovely English girl was being restored to friends who were worthy of her. After an affectionate farewell, and amid fervent good wishes for her future happiness, Inez took her departure, and drove off with Bessie to the Hôtel Gaseoigne.

Here Inez was delighted to find that the loving forethought of Bessie had caused all necessary preparations to be made for her comfort. There was a suite of rooms for the two friends, and Inez had a room to herself, with a dressing-room adjoining. In addition to this, Bessie had contrived to bring on luggage enough to supply all the wants of Inez in the way of apparel. In fact, there was nothing wanting of all that careful forethought and considerate affection could suggest. Here Inez, for the first time in many weeks, felt that perfect peace and comfort which arises from the sense of safety, and protection, and the neighborhood of loving friends. All this was given to her by these surroundings, and by Bessie's presence.

Yet out of this sweet security and perfect peace Inez had a sudden and most unpleasant start, which occurred just at the beginning of this new enjoyment, and for a time seemed to her to threaten the ruin of every hope. It was caused by a casual remark of Bessie, made in all innocence, and in perfect unconsciousness of the effect which it was to produce.

"And now, Inez darling," said she, after the close of a prolonged conversation about Kane and Gwyn—"and now I have one of my very dearest friends here, and, if it hadn't been for him, I couldn't have come on so quick, darling—it's me dear mamma's papa—and you must see him this day. You'll love him as I do, I know."

Bessie suddenly stopped, astonished at the change which came over Inez. For, no sooner had Inez heard these words, and this allusion to Bessie's "mamma's paps," than she turned as pale as death, and started to her feet with an expression of deadly fear.

"What's all this?" cried Bessie; "what's the matter, Inez? Inez darling!"

"Is that man—here?" gasped Inez.

"That man! What man?" cried Bessie.

"Kevin Magrath," said Inez, in a scarce audible voice.

"Kevin Magrath," said Bessie; "why,

that's my mamma's papa. Why, wasn't I saying that he is here, but—"

"I'll go away," said Inez, with a terrified look. "Let me go, Bessie dearest. Let me go!"

"What! Is it mad ye are?" cried Bessie, clinging to Inez. "What in the wide world has come over ye then? Sure, I don't understand this, at all, at all! Is it my grandpa that ye're afraid of? Sure, and it looks like it, so it does!"

"I'll go. I will not stay. Bessie, if you love me, don't stop me. Bessie, dearest Bessie, let me go. O Bessie! that man, that man—Kevin Magrath—he is the one that has caused all my sufferings. Bessie, darling friend, let me go. If he gets me in his power again, I shall die."

And Inez tore herself away, and hurried to her room, where she began to put on her hat. Bessie hastened after her.

"Inez!" she cried, vehemently. "Inez, darling Inez, will ye trust me then? Am I nothing to you? Is it nothing for me to have done what I did, and quit my own husband to see you? Will you run away from me, for a wild, fantastic freak? Is it mad ye are, then? Oh, my poor, darling Inez! how very, very cruel this is of you!"

"O Bessie!" said Inez, mournfully, "you do not know what I have suffered, and that man is the cause, Bessie. Let me go now, dear, or—"

"No," said Bessie, firmly, coming up and taking Inez in her arms. "No, dear, I will not let you go—never—or, if you do go, I will go with you. I will not leave you. I have found you, and I will follow you. But, listen to reason for a moment, will you? Inez darling, there's some mystery about you that I don't understand at all, at all—and Kane didn't explain much after all—perhaps because he didn't understand any more'n I do—and for my part I don't want to think of it at all, for it makes my poor little head ache—and I don't want to talk about it, for it's painful, so it is, both to me and to you. Don't I know it? Am I an owl? Not me, Inez darling. Let's bury it all out of sight. Let's forget all about it, dear, and be our own selves again, such as we used to be before your poor, dear papa died. But, as to my mamma's papa, if it's him you're afraid of, I tell you it's all a mistake you're afraid of. It must be, so it must. He harm you! He im-

prison you! of such a thing as her, truer, m that same Ke him? Me ow Sore I do. It'—a mistake, I is—and there y

Bessie's ve spite of herself fading away in long as these.

the man w whom she so t be altogether t posed him to be

"Have you e continued Bessie seen him then, o him?"

"Never," said It was a fac seen him.

"Sure, then, it is. Won't you that he's one of t and, if you were him, you'd feel fo would? Sure, ho what wild fancy but it is a wild, m so I am. So cor you haven't any with me, and wher go to?"

This was a que answer. Where, l To find Bessie ha chief desire of her now fly from her ?

Besides, here w vehemently to dism she had been enter grath. Bessie trust him. "Might not B justifiable? After him. She had jud evidence. Might n away? Was she so that she could put of Bessie?

But more than th what harm could no dread imprisonment would be absurd.

prison you! Why, it's mad you are to think of such a thing. There never breathed a nobler, truer, more tender-hearted man than that same Kevin Magrath. Don't I know him? Me own grandpa, too, the darling! Sure I do. It's all a mistake, whatever it is—a mistake, Inez darling, no matter what it is—and there you have it."

Bessie's vehemence impressed Inez in spite of herself, and she found her terrors fading away in the presence of such assertions as these. She could not help thinking of the man whom Bessie so loved, and in whom she so thoroughly believed, could not be altogether the villain that she had supposed him to be.

"Have you ever seen him, Inez darling?" continued Bessie. "Tell me, have you ever seen him then, or have you ever spoken with him?"

"Never," said Inez, hesitatingly.

It was a fact. She had never actually seen him.

"Sure, then, it's a mad fancy of yours, so it is. Won't you believe me when I tell you that he's one of the best and noblest of men, and, if you were only to see him and know him, you'd feel toward him as I do, so you would? Sure, how do I know, Inez darling, what wild fancy you've got into your head? but it is a wild, mad fancy; of that I'm sure, so I am. So come, sit down again. Sure, you haven't any cause to fear while you're with me, and where in the wide world can you go to?"

This was a question which Inez could not answer. Where, indeed, could she go now? To find Bessie had for a long time been the chief desire of her heart. How could she now fly from her?

Besides, here was Bessie urging her most vehemently to dismiss those suspicions which she had been entertaining about Kevin Magrath. Bessie trusted in him. Bessie loved him. Might not Bessie's trust and love be justifiable? After all, she had never seen him. She had judged from circumstantial evidence. Might not all this be explained away? Was she so sure that she was right, that she could put her opinion against that of Bessie?

But more than this—here was Bessie, and what harm could now befall her? Could she dread imprisonment now—with Bessie? That would be absurd. Besides, in the space of

one more day, Kane would be here, and with him his brother Gwyn, who was also Bessie's husband. There would then be three upon whom she could rely. Even if Kevin Magrath should be all that she had believed him to be, what could he do when she had the support of Bessie and her husband and Kane?

Finally, in spite of all that Inez had suffered, she found herself in a strange state of doubt as to the truth of her own belief about Kevin Magrath. Here was Bessie who assured her that this belief was false. Kane also, who had just been with Bessie, and had talked with her about these matters, might possibly have learned enough about him to change the opinion that he had formed; and, indeed, it seemed as though it must be so, since Bessie had left her husband, and Kane also, with the express purpose of going on to join Kevin Magrath, and find herself. Kevin Magrath, then, seemed to Inez to lose his terrors, since Kane had allowed Bessie to go forward on this errand.

She therefore allowed herself to be persuaded and soothed and quieted by Bessie's words, and, at length, not only gave up all thoughts of flight, but allowed herself to consent to an interview with this once-dreaded Kevin Magrath that very evening.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## A REVELATION.

THE apprehension with which Inez looked forward to a meeting with Kevin Magrath did not last over the first few moments of that interview. He was dressed in black, rather after the fashion in vogue among English priests, than among those on the Continent. As he looked at Inez, there was on his face something so mild and paternal that her fears departed, and she began to think that she had been mistaken in him all along. He addressed to her a few affectionate words, mingled with playful allusions to Bessie's running away from her husband for her sake, and then proceeded to express the deepest sympathy for her, and the strongest condemnation of Gounod. He declared that it was all a most lamentable mistake, arising from the miserable stupidity of "that old fool, Gounod." He had directed him merely to take the greatest possible care of her,

which direction he had understood, or misunderstood, so as to conceive his duties to be those of a father. He alluded, in touching language, to his own deep grief when he learned that she had gone, and to his fear even to search after her, lest she might suppose that she was pursued.

After these preliminaries, he went on to say that the time had now come, which he had so long wished to see, when he could explain every thing to her, and to Bessie also.

"I mean both of you," said he, "for you're both involved in this, and oh, but it's the shupreme momint of my life, so it is. Gyerruls—Inez Mordaunt, Bessie Mordaunt—listen to me. Ye both love one another like sisters, so ye do. Inez darlin', haven't ye ever suspected what's mint by Bessie's name? Bessie jool, don't ye suspect somethin' when ye hear me callin' her Inez Mordaunt?"

And with these words Kevin Magrath looked first at one and then at the other with a beaming smile of joyous expectation.

At such a singular address as this both Inez and Bessie looked puzzled. Inez looked at the speaker with earnest, solemn scrutiny; while Bessie looked first at Inez and then at him, and then back again at Inez.

"Ye love one another like sisters," continued Kevin Magrath—"ye love one another like sisters, and why? Why is it? Why? Have ye niver suspected? Listen, then, I'll tell ye's both why it is.—It's because ye are sisters!"

"Sisters!" exclaimed Inez, in utter bewilderment. "Sisters! What do you mean?" And she turned and looked inquiringly at Bessie, who took her hand in one of hers, and, twining her other lovingly around her shoulder, looked eagerly at Kevin Magrath, and said:

"Sure an' it must be one of your jokes, grandpa darling, so it must. Inez Mordaunt, is it, and sisters, is it? How very, very funny, and sure it's me that don't understand it at all at all—now do you, Inez darling?"

"Be the powers! but it would be strange if ye did until I've explained myself somewhat. You, Bessie jool, have always known that yer father was Bernal Mordaunt; and you, Inez, only knowed it after the revelation of the late Henniger Wyverne—peace be to his soul!"

At this Bessie clasped Inez closer in her arms, and murmured:

"O Inez! darling, darling Inez, is this really so?"

"I'll explain it all," continued Kevin Magrath, while Inez said not a word, but stood motionless from astonishment, with all her gaze fastened upon his face, as though to read there the truth or the falsity of these astounding statements.

"Bernal Mordaunt, thin, the father of both of ye's, had two daughters—one named Clara, now in glory, the other named Inez, now in this room. Now, when this Inez was a little over two years old, Mrs. Mordaunt had a third daughter, who is this very Bessie, now likewise in this room."

"And is Inez really my sister, then?" cried Bessie, with irrepressible enthusiasm, "and older than me, and me always loved her so!—O Inez! dear, sweet sister! O Inez! sure but it's heart-broke with joy I fairly am, and there you have it!"

With these words Bessie pressed Inez again and again in her arms; and Inez, who was still puzzled by various thoughts, which still stood in the way of her full reception of this announcement, was nevertheless so overwhelmed by Bessie's love that she yielded to it utterly, and, returning her embraces and kisses, burst into tears, and wept in her arms.

"Ye're not the same age, thin," said Kevin Magrath, "for you, Inez, are one year older than ye've been believing; and you, Bessie, are one year younger. Sure an' there's been oninding schayming about ye's, and ye've been the jupea of it. But I'm not going now to pursue that same into all its multichudinous ramifications. I'm only intending to mention a few plain facts. Well, thin, your poor mother, Bessie, died in giving birth to you. With that death died out all the happiness of Bernal Mordaunt. Sorry am I to say, also, that you, the innocent child, were regarded by the widowed husband with coldness, if not aversion, for that you were the cause, innocent though you were, of the death of his wife, whom he adored. His other children he had always loved, but you he niver mentioned, nor would he hear about you after the death of his wife. So—Bessie, poor child, you were at the very outset of life worse than orphaned."

"I'm sure it—it wasn't my fault; and

I'm sure I—I think it was," said Bessie, and, drawing herself, buried her face in her

"Well, thin, Der the wurruld as he was and spind the remainvices of religion. Sentered the Church, and fors taking this step den to the gyarjian verne, whose wife was relative of the decease here was the injustice man. His children, Clara and Inez; the not acknowledge; he own child by neglect Here it was when I stered with him, but impatience. 'Do as Kevin,' says he to me, her to me; but for her have did.' Those were they were. Cruel they most unjust, but he could them, and he went awspind the remainder of ary priest.

"I was saying that Alredy this neglected by a nurse, and was no I came with me sister, disowned child, and I h up, and I have sustain with the hope that Ben yet return to receive h from my hands."

"O darling grandpa—my real grandpa, after all long nearer to Kevin Magrath's hands fondly in hers; "ows you, and you only, a duty, so I do."

"Sure to glory, thin, I know it, and isn't it me that's a father, so it was?"

"And sure, then," said Kevin Magrath's hand in reaching out the other to "you, Inez darling, won't you, Inez darling, won't you, Inez darling, won't you, Inez darling?"

Inez pressed her hand and fate touched her heart

"I'm sure I—I think it was a great shame so it was," said Bessie, sobbing as she spoke; and, drawing herself away from Inez, she buried her face in her hands.

"Well, thin, Bernal Mordaunt, weary of the wurruld as he was, determined to quit it, and spind the remainder of his life in the services of religion. So he wint away and entered the Church, and became a priest. Before taking this step he committed his children to the gyarjianship of Hennigar Wyverne, whose wife was the dear friend and relative of the deceased Mrs. Mordaunt. Now, here was the injustice which he did, poor man. His children, in his eyes, were only Clara and Inez; the young infant he would not acknowledge; he virtually disowned his own child by neglecting it, by ignoring it. Here it was when I interposed. I remonstrated with him, but he listened with cold impatience. 'Do as you please with her, Kevin,' says he to me, 'but don't talk about her to me; but for her my wife would never have died.' Those were his own words, so they were. Cruel they were, and bitter, and most unjust, but he couldn't be moved from them, and he wint away to the far East, to spend the remainder of his life as a missionary priest.

"I was saying that I interposed here. Alredy this neglected child had been kept by a nurse, and was now nearly a year old. I came with me sister, and I took the poor disowned child, and I had her well brought up, and I have sustained meself for years with the hope that Bernal Mordaunt might yet return to receive his injured daughter from my hands."

"O darling grandpa—then you are not my real grandpa, after all?" said Bessie, drawing nearer to Kevin Magrath, and taking his hands fondly in hers; "but, at any rate, I owe you, and you only, a daughter's love and duty, so I do."

"Sure to glory, thin, Bessie, don't I know it, and lan't it me that's always loved ye as a father, so it was?"

"And sure, then," said Bessie, holding Kevin Magrath's hand in one of hers, and reaching out the other to take that of Inez; "you, Inez darling, won't disown your sister, even if my cruel father did so turn away, will you, darling?"

Inez pressed her hand warmly. Bessie's sad fate touched her heart keenly, and this

new-found sister came to her surrounded with a new and pathetic interest—that sister, cast out so long since, and now so strangely restored.

"Well, well," said Kevin Magrath, "sure it's best to let by-gones be by-gones. As I was saying, thin, Bessie was taken by me, and Clara and Inez were handed over to Hennigar Wyverne, who was to be their gyarjian. In a short time a difficulty arose. Hennigar Wyverne sent away Clara to a school in France, and changed the name of Inez Mordaunt to Inez Wyverne. The fact is, he had a scheme of getting possession of the Mordaunt property. His wife discovered this, and remonstrated. They quarrelled bitterly, and the end of it was that Mrs. Wyverne left her husband. Sure it was a hard position for an honest woman to be put in, but she couldn't stand by and see this thing done under her very nose, so she left her husband; and, for my part, I honor her for doing so, so I do. It was from her that I heard of Hennigar Wyverne's baseness, and I wint and remonstrated with him, and tried all I could to bring him back to the path of juty. I couldn't do much with him. I couldn't find out where he had sint Clara; and, whin he found that I was growing troublesome, he sint you away, too, Inez darling. Well, years passed, and at length I heard from him that Clara was dead. I heard that she had married, in Paris, some adventurer, and was dead and buried. Well, not long after that, you were brought home by him, and were known as Inez Wyverne. I now determined to bring things to a close. I had heard that poor Bernal Mordaunt was dead, and I was determined that whin you came of age, Inez, you should have your name and your rights. In order to do this, I had to go and talk plainly to him. I found that he had forgotten about Bessie, and he saw that all his fine schemes were broken up, and that I had him in my power. He had squandered so much of the Mordaunt property that he could never repay. He also had suffered much in his conscience, for he had one, the poor creature, and was a broken-down man. He at length promised to do all that was right, but begged me to give him time. He had come to love you, Inez dear; and he felt a deep repugnance to develop his crimes to you; he couldn't enjure the thought of confessing to you the wrongs he had done. Well, I pitied him, for we were old frinds—and, for

that matter, Bernal Mordaunt was also—and, in spite of his roguery, I couldn't help feeling sorry for him. So I gave him time, and, at the same time, declared that I would hold him to his word. Well, thin it was that I sint Bessie to live with him, or rather with you, Inez darling, for I wanted the two of ye's to love one another like sisters, and I couldn't wait for Wyverne to make his confession. 'They'll love one another at first sight,' I thought, 'and when they find out the blessed truth, they'll love one another all the better, so they will;' and that's what I see 'fulfilled this day, and sure to glory, but it's mesilf 'that's the happy man for being spared to see it.'

And Kevin Magrath regarded them both for a few moments with a radiant face, and a benevolent, paternal smile.

"At length," he continued, "poor Wyverne's health grew steadily worse. It was remorse that was killing him, so it was, neither more nor less; and the dread of having to tell the truth to you, Inez darling. So he wint once to the Continent, and ye both wint with him, and ye finally brought up at Villeneuve. All this time we corresponded, and I was able to follow his track, either fortunately or unfortunately, I hardly know which. Now, ye know, Rome was, as a general thing, the place that was more like home to me thin any other, especially since I had turruned over Bessie to poor Wyverne, or rather to you, Inez darling. Well, one day I was overwhelmed at hearing that Bernal Mordaunt had returrned from the East. I rushed to greet him, and for a time, in the joy I felt at meeting my old frind, I forgot all about the villany of another old frind. At length, when he infarrumed me that he was going to London as soon as possible, I became filled with anxiety. Circumstances were not in a proper position. Such an arrival would have forced on a sudden disclosure, and I knew that in Wyverne's weak state the excitement and shame would kill him. So I did the best I could. I wrote to him that Bernal Mordaunt had come, and advised him to fly for his life, or even to get up a pretended death. I towld him to get rid of the gyerruls, particularly Inez—that's you, darling—for I thought I'd give him a chance to escape, and thin come after ye, and tell ye both the whole story. I made a few further remarks, blaming him for entangling himself with a young doctor—a good enough young

fellow, but a great check on his movements—and thin I mailed the letter, and tried to hope for the best. I felt afraid, though, in spite of all; and when, a few days afterward, Bernal Mordaunt left, I wint as far as Milan with him, and bade him good-by with my heart full of a chumult of confounding emotions.

"Howandiver, there was nothing more for me to do, so I wint to Churin, and thin *via* Genoa and Marseilles to Paris. I hadn't been there long before I learrened the worst. I learrened this from the lips of Bernal Mordaunt, who had come to Paris straight from Villeneuve, and was intending to go to England as soon as possible. Some ecclesiastical juries, however, compelled him to remain for a time in Paris. He it was who infarrumed me about the occurrences at Villeneuve; and he towld me a thrilling story about being sint for to go to a dying man, and finding this dying man to be Hennigar Wyverne. I had alreddy felt it my juty, as an old frind, to infarrum Bernal Mordaunt to some ixtint about Wyverne's defalcations, telling him at the same time about his remorse and determination to make amends. I did not tell him where he was, though, and tried to dissuade him from crossing the Alps by the Simplon road. But he wanted to go that way to see some people at Geneva, and I couldn't prevent him. He had no idea that you gyerruls were there, as I had refrained from telling him, for reasons which you understand. Wyverne was almost gone, and but a few words passed between thin. But yer father told me that he forgave him ivery thing, and told him so to his face."

"I did not know that any words passed between them," said Inez, mournfully, remembering Blake's account of this scene.

"Deed and there did, just as I'm telling ye. Who towld you that no words passed?"

"The—the doctor"—said Inez.

"Dr. Blake, is it? Well, there's some misunderstanding. He couldn't have known, or he couldn't have meant it. I had it from Bernal Mordaunt himself; and, of course, there couldn't have been any mistake. And, besides, I'm sure ye must have misunderstood him, for we've talked of that same several times since—over and over, so we have."

Inez was struck by this allusion to Dr. Blake, and could not help trying to find out more about him.

"I dare say," said she, "that there may

have been some but I certainly ha of the meaning words, and that without exchanging

Kevin Magrath

"Quite the cor "It's as I have ba it to me over-and- ling, it must be as

"I suppose it is very singular. I seen the doctor?"

"Not very long "Is he here y further effort to him.

"Oh, no—he le

"Ah!" said Inez. "I can't admit too much cu Bessie, and at such tremendous myster their past lives wer Bessie, however, di smallest interest in pensively at the flo sion that was very u

"He left here so Magrath, pursuing th started. "He was of life and energy, a poor Wyverne took a thought at the time sances, he was emba The flight that I intin difficult, with Blake and general director. same, for Blake know does."

"Where did he g rply, unable to cont

"Well—he left h and he wint to Italy, fact."

"To Rome?" repe of one who wished to l

"Yes—to Rome—a "How odd!" said I place for a doctor?"

"Sure, it's as good not? Anyhow, there h is now."

Inez made no fur seemed a strange place yet so it was, and the fa

have been some misunderstanding on my part, but I certainly have a distinct remembrance of the meaning that I gathered from his words, and that was, that Mr. Wyverne died without exchanging a word with him."

Kevin Magrath smiled blandly.

"Quite the contrary," said he, mournfully; "it's as I have said, and Blake has mentioned it to me over and over. Do you see, Inez darling, it must be as I have said."

"I suppose it must," said Inez, "but it is very singular. Is it long since you have seen the doctor?"

"Not very long."

"Is he here yet?" she asked, making a further effort to learn something about him.

"Oh, no—he left here some time ago."

"Ah!" said Inez. She did not like to exhibit too much curiosity, especially before Bessie, and at such a time as this, when the tremendous mysteries that had surrounded their past lives were being slowly unfolded. Bessie, however, did not appear to take the smallest interest in this. She was looking pensively at the floor, with a grave expression that was very unusual with her.

"He left here some time ago," said Kevin Magrath, pursuing the subject which Inez had started. "He was a fine young fellow, full of life and energy, and I don't wonder that poor Wyverne took a fancy to him; though I thought at the time that, under the circumstances, he was embarrassing his movements. The flight that I intimated would have been difficult, with Blake as his medical adviser and general director. Well, well, it's all the same, for Blake knows all about it now, so he does."

"Where did he go to?" asked Inez, abruptly, unable to control her curiosity.

"Well—he left here—on an adventure, and he went to Italy, so he did—to Rome, in fact."

"To Rome?" repeated Inez, in the tone of one who wished to learn more.

"Yes—to Rome—and in Rome he stayed."

"How odd!" said Inez. "Is Rome a good place for a doctor?"

"Sure, it's as good as any place. Why not? Anyhow, there he stayed, and there he is now."

Inez made no further remark. Rome seemed a strange place for a doctor to go to, yet so it was, and the fact set her thinking.

"He's settled there," continued Kevin Magrath after a pause. "He's settled there, and for good."

This was not very pleasant, on the whole, to Inez. It looked like neglect and forgetfulness on Blake's part, and she had expected something different. A sigh escaped her in spite of herself. But then she reflected upon her own sudden disappearance, and thought that Blake might have made unsuccessful efforts to find her, and have given it up at last in despair.

"Yes," said Kevin Magrath once more, "he's settled there; and there's no injucement that I know of that'd draw him away."

"Well, grandpa darling," said Bessie at last, "we don't care about this. We want to know more about ourselves, and our poor, dear papa, so we do. You said that he came as far as Paris. Now, what happened immediately after that? Did you tell him then about it all, and about our darling, precious Inez, my own sweet sister—or did you postpone it—or—?"

"I'll tell ye all about it, Bessie darling, and you too, Inez, my jool, but not now, not just now. What comes after this is a mournful story; and Bessie, me darling, I hardly know how I'm ever to tell it to you at all."

"To me!" exclaimed Bessie, in wonder; "and sure, and why not, thin?"

"Well, thin, it's jist because it makes me feel badly. There's things to say that I don't like to say to ye, face to face. I'll tell it all to Inez some time, and she can be after telling it to you. In this way, I'll allow the story to filter, as it were, through her to you."

"Well, I'm sure, I think it's very strange, so I do, grandpa darling; but you're the best judge, and, if it is so awfully sad, you know, why, perhaps, I'd better hear it from Inez, or, perhaps, I'd better not hear it at all—that is, if it is really too very awfully sad—for, sure, I was niver the one that was inclined to listen to bad news, unless it was necessary."

"It depnds on what ye call necessary. Howandiver, ye can judge for yerself afterward."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## ALL THE PAST EXPLAINED.

This was the happiest day by far that Inez had known for a long time. The advent of Bessie, the restoration to her proper position in life, the society of friends, all these were unspeakably sweet to one who had suffered as she had. But, above all, the discovery that Bessie was her own sister formed the climax of all these joys; and Inez, after the first natural bewilderment had passed, gave herself up to the delight of this new relationship. As for Bessie, she was, if possible, still more excited. Naturally of a more demonstrative disposition than Inez, she surpassed her in her exhibitions of affection and delight, and overwhelmed her with caresses. Such a revelation as this gave them material for endless conversations, exclamations, and explanations. Each one had to tell all about her life and her past reminiscences; each one had to give a minute account of the state of her affections with regard to the other; and all the past was thus opened up by the two in so far as it might afford interest to one another. Each one, however, instinctively avoided the more mournful periods in that past; and, as Inez said nothing of her imprisonment, so Bessie said nothing of the mournful events at Mordaunt Manor.

As to the sufferings through which Inez had gone—her journey to Paris, the discovery of her father's death, her imprisonment, the examination of the letters, her suspicions, her fears, her flight, her illness, and her misery, all these constituted a part of her life upon which no light had yet been thrown. Yet Kevin Magrath had shown all the impressions which she had formed about him from his letter to Wyverne to be erroneous; and, from what she had seen of him, she did not doubt that he would account for every other difficulty, and prove to her that she had been in every respect deceived in the opinions which she had formed about him. The remainder of his story she knew would be as clear, as open, and as natural, as the first part had been; and he himself would stand completely vindicated.

On the following morning Kevin Magrath came to breakfast with them, and, after breakfast, Bessie withdrew.

"I know, grandpa dear," said she, "that

you'd rather not have me just now, so I'll go, and I'll hear it from Inez, if she chooses to tell me; and, if she does not choose to tell, why, I'd very much rather not hear. And, what's more, I won't even think about it. Good-by, you two dear jools of life."

With these words Bessie retired, and Inez waited for the remainder of Kevin Magrath's story.

He regarded her for a few moments in silence, with an expression on his face that was at once affectionate and paternal, and with a gentle smile on his lips.

"Inez, my darling," said he, "you've suffered from me more than I dare to think of, but you'll see that I wasn't to blame, and that I've really suffered as much as you have out of pure sympathy and vexation. But I'll go on in order, and just tell a plain, consecutive story.

"Well, then, your poor father, Bernal Mordaunt, came here to Paris, as I said, and here I found him. It was from me that he first heard that one of his daughters was dead. This was his eldest, Clara, his favorite. When I say she was his favorite, you'll understand me. You see, you were only a little thing—a baby, in fact—barely able to prattle, while Clara was many years older, and had been thus the love and joy of her father years before you were born. You'll not be pained when I say that he could better have spared you than her. Anyhow, so it was; and, consequently, when he heard that Clara was dead, it was a worse blow to him than if a man had knocked him down senseless. It took all the life and soul out of him. For he had been broken down out in China, or Japan, or India, by overwork, and, while he hurried his steps homeward, it was his children that he thought of most; and by his children he meant, most of all, Clara. So, when he heard that she was dead, it was with him for a time as though he had lost the last tie that bound him to this wurruld; and he couldn't think of any thing but her. He brooded over this. We went out to her grave in Père-la-Chaise, and then he formed the design of conveying her remains away, and depositing them by the side of the remains of his wife. Now she—your poor mother, Inez darling—was buried at Rome."

"Rome!" exclaimed Inez, in wonder.

"Yes, at Rome, and to that place your father determined to convey the remains of

Clara. He had gone to Rome to see to the death of her, and his love for her was so great that he would bring her body thence to take Clara's body back to Rome. Once he had had time to go there; and it's a thank and it was meself trying to do the brooding all the time the child of his best thought of you—and didn't go for you, Inez."

"Well, I kept with the remains of Clara in Rome, and placed them in my mother's body. Well, I turran his thoughts from these dead loves, the warmth of a living you, and I told him of would hear nothing coldness and aversion years before, and I could him. He had never loving to work on there; different, for he recalled Inez, named after his wife, trait once with the poor and spoke of this with length his love for you to draw him away from the thought of you filled."

"So, you see, we set reached Marseilles and The journey, however, was him, and by the time we unable to go one step from his bed, and out of that. He had overtaxed his strength which he had enured treated him. For a time hope. He would not'sir urged him, because he was pleasure of going on to of frightening you. But he grew worse and worse, was almost over, when he died for you."

"Even then he tried the poor man—though he on. He did not wish the letter stranger. He dictated it to wish it to seem dictated, for

Clara. He had gone after your mother's death to Rome to prepare for the priesthood, and his love for his lost wife had induced him to bring her body there. So now he resolved to take Clara's body. Besides, he had to go back to Rome—once more, though he would have had time to go for you before returning there; and it's a thousand pities he didn't; and it was meself that was never tired of urging him to do that same; but no, he was brooding all the time over his lost daughter, the child of his best love, and had thin no thought of you—and oh, but it's the pity he didn't go for you, Inez darling!

"Well, I kept with him. We had the remains of Clara exhumed, and took thim to Rome, and placed thim by the side of her mother's body. Well, after this, I tried to turran his thoughts to you—to wean him from these dead loves, and bring to his heart the warmth of a living love. I told him of you, and I told him of Bessie. Of Bessie he would hear nothing. There was the same coldness and aversion which I had noticed years before, and I could do nothing with him. He had never loved her, so I had nothing to work on there; but with you it was different, for he recollected his little baby Inez, named after his wife. He had her portrait once with the portraits of the others, and spoke of this with much emotion. At length his love for you grew strong enough to draw him away from the dead, and, finally, the thought of you filled all his mind.

"So, you see, we set out for England. We reached Marseilles and proceeded to Paris. The journey, however, was very fatiguing to him, and by the time we reached here he was unable to go one step farther. He took to his bed, and out of that bed he never rose. He had overtaxed his strength, and the sorrow which he had endured had greatly prostrated him. For a time he hoped against hope. He would not 'sind for you, though I urged him, because he wished to have the pleasure of going on to you, and was afraid of frightening you. But it was not to be; he grew worse and worse, and at last, whin it was almost over, whin he could not write, he silt for you.

"Even then he tried to ease the blow—poor man—though he only made it worse. He did not wish the letter to come from a stranger. He dictated it to me—but did not wish it to seem dictated, for fear of frighten-

ing you. 'Kevin,' says he—'she'll be frightened,' says he—'just write it as if I was writing it,' says he—'let her think it's from me own hand, and don't say a word about it's being dictated—just take it from me own lips.' That's what he said, and that's just what I did—and, for thut matter, I don't suppose ye ever thought otherwise than that poor Bernal wrote it with his own hand; but I mintion it now so as to show ye, Inez darling, that yer poor father was very far gone when that letter was written.

"So far gone was he, indeed, that on the next day all was over. Early that morning he implored me once more to write to you. 'Kevin lad,' says he, 'let her think it's from me own hand. It'll comfot her more—if she loves me—to think she has something from me. Kevin, I was to blame for not going to her first.' Then he hurried me on, and I wrote word for word just as he spoke—with all his incoherence and disconnected words—and I was pleased with his allusions to myself—for sure I was the only one left for ye to look to after he had gone. And I tell you this now about this letter. The letter itself won't perhaps be so precious in your eyes, Inez darling—but the love of that father ought to be still more precious, who died while lavishing upon you the last treasures of his love.

"Well," continued Kevin Magrath, after a thoughtful pause, "at that hour there was one to whom he ought to have given a thought—yis—one to whom he ought to have given many thoughts—one who should have had at least a share—yis, equal shares with you, Inez—in his love. I mean my poor Bessie. Niver did I cease to try to bring before him that disowned, that injured child—his own child—cast out from the moment of her birth—ignored—dlediked—hated. Oh, sure, but it was meself that was heart-broken about that same; and me trying all the time to injuce him to show her, if not affection, at least common justice. But my efforts were all in vain. I could not get him to feel the slightest interest in her. There was coldness, and even aversion, in his manner whenever I introduced that subject. When I spoke about her, he would be at first fretful; then, overcoming this, he would take up an attitude of patient enurance, like one who was putting a great constraint upon himself. And oh! but my heart bled for the poor child. I knew what



she was. I felt that, if he could but see her, he must love her—yet here he was, turning himself away, without one word to send her, even from his death-bed. And, Inez darling, I, who know Bessie, I, who know her tender, gentle, loving heart, her susceptible nature, her sweet, innocent, childlike ways—I know this, that, if she was aware of the aversion of her father for her, her heart would break, so it would—she would die, so she would. Poor, poor, darling Bessie! disowned and outcast from her father's heart, from her birth till his death!

"And this," continued Kevin Magrath, with manifest emotion, "this is what I can never tell her, never. I don't even know how to begin to tell her. I can't begin to mention it. And therefore, me child, I tell it to you, hoping that you may find some gentle way of letting her know all about it. You may succeed where I would fail."

"Oh, no," said Inez, mournfully. "Oh, no, I could never, never tell it. There is no way by which such a thing could be told. I could not have the heart to hint at it. I could not even begin to tell her about that last scene, for fear she would ask me what message he had left for her. And oh! how sad not to be able to give any message, however formal or commonplace! Oh, how cruel it was—how cruel! And, poor, tender-hearted Bessie, with her affectionate nature and her heart of love!"

Kevin Magrath wiped his eyes.

"We can't ever mention it," said he, "as far as I can see. It can't be done, unless you may find some way some day, and that I doubt, so I do. We'll have to smother it up, and avoid the subject. But oh! it was a sin, so it was, to pass out of the world in such a way. And ye don't think, thin, me child, that ye could find any way to break it to her?"

"No," said Inez; "impossible. I shall never be able to speak of this subject at all, or to allow her to speak of it. It seems to me that, while she was hearing of his love for Clara and for me, she would feel an intolerable pang at finding herself cast out. No, she ought never to know—never!"

Kevin Magrath sighed.

"Well," continued he, "that letter was the last act of your poor father, for he died not long after; and, for my part, I was overwhelmed. I knew that you might be com-

ing, me child, and I was afraid to meet you—afraid to stay and be the witness of your grief. Now, your poor father had made me promise that I would have him buried by the side of his wife and child, in Rome; and so, when he was removed from the house, I at once went to fulfil my promise, and started for Rome with his remains, afraid to visit and meet you, and leaving to others the task of breaking to you the awful news. The worst of it was, it was your poor father himself who had put me in such a position, by obstinately refusing to write, or to let me write, until it was too late. . . . So, me child, I took away the mortal remains of my friend, and of your father, and I conveyed them to Rome—and there I buried them, by the side of his wife and his child, your sister Clara, and there they all are now side by side."

There was a long silence now.

"Is there a cemetery, or are they buried in some church?" asked Inez, in a low voice.

"There is a cemetery in Rome," said Kevin Magrath, slowly and solemnly, "the likes of which doesn't exist in all the wide world—a cemetery, eighteen hundred years old, filled with the mouldering remnants of apostles, and saints, and martyrs, and confessors—a cemetery, to lie in which rests death of half its terrors, and there now repose all that is mortal of your father, your mother, and your sister."

"Oh!" cried Inez, "what place can that be? Is there such a cemetery? What is its name? I have never heard of it."

"The cemetery that I speak of," said Kevin Magrath, solemnly, "is known as—the Roman Catacombs."

"The Roman Catacombs!" repeated Inez, in a voice full of awe.

"The Roman Catacombs," said Kevin Magrath. "There they lie, side by side—they who loved one another on earth, and who are thus joined in death, awaiting the resurrection morn."

Inez made no remark, and a long silence followed. Kevin Magrath was the first to break it, and he went on to continue his story:

"When I left," said he, "I told Gounod that you were coming, and I told him what to do. I told him about the sorrow you'd be in, and urged him to attend upon you, and do all that he could for you. I knew he could

do nothing to would have, so keeping watch of your wants. In with directions. stayed away for till the time when to be moderated; I assure ye, me with agitation at in your bereavement swaled me? Wh Gounod, with his hag Briset, both w your iseanpe. Isca thing else! Isca had been a prison and so it was, and worruld. The fo he had utterly mis joined upon him to and he had watched derstood well how chafed against res and thin, whin I t after your maid h sached for you, so i spare you pain had Inez darling; and y dared not search for if I did, you would be all the more ter even if I had found been able to look you have spoken one wor ters to Bessie, and sh of anxiety, telling nothing about you, ar clare to you, me chi worst I iver knew in wint on, and I was in until this blessed time Bessie herself came w you; and I hurried her waited here, with me o mltaneously while she she returned, and ye had a chance to expl and at least to let you suffered, I, at least, wa to glory, but it's mese man last night."

So ended Kevin Magrath had sunk deep in Many conclusions h

do nothing to alleviate such sorrow as you would have; so I laid great stress upon his keeping watch over you, so as to find out your wants. In fact, I overwhelmed him with directions. Well, I went away, and I stayed away for weeks, waiting impatiently till the time when I might suppose your grief to be moderated; and then I came back; and I assure ye, me child, I was fairly trembling with agitation at the thought of meeting you in your bereavement. And what do you think awaited me? What! Sure, you may imagine. Gounod, with his bewildering, and the owld hag Briset, both voluble and eloquent about your escape. I escape! As if I ever mint any thing else! I escape! Why, it was as if it had been a prison they had made for you—and so it was, and nothing else in the wide worrld. The fool! the beast! the idiot! he had utterly misunderstood me; I had enjoined upon him to watch you like a servant, and he had watched you like a jailer. I understood well how your nature must have chafed against restraint and surveillance; and then, when I thought of you, all alone after your maid had gone, me heart fairly ached for you, so it did. My very desire to spare you pain had caused fresh pain to you, laez darling; and you were lost to me, for I dared not search for you. I was afraid that, if I did, you would misunderstand it all, and be all the more terrified; and what's more, even if I had found you, I should not have been able to look you in the face. I couldn't have spoken one word. I wrote frantic letters to Bessie, and she wrote back letters full of anxiety, telling me that she had heard nothing about you, and knew nothing. I declare to you, me child, those days were the worst I ever knew in all my life. And so it went on, and I was in helplessness and despair until this blessed time, until yesterday, when Bessie herself came with the glad news about you; and I hurried her away to meet you, and waited here, with me old heart throbbing tumultuously while she was gone. But at last she returned, and you with her; and then I had a chance to explain, in a gradual way, and at least to let you know that, if you had suffered, I, at least, was innocent. And sure to glory, but let's meself that was the happy man last night."

So ended Kevin Magrath's story, and that story had sunk deep into the soul of Inez. Many conclusions had she gathered from

that story; and, as she listened to its details, one by one the frightful dangers that seemed to have hovered about her past, or appeared to impend over her present, were dispelled. At length, they all seemed no more than the creations of her own fancy.

The letter to Wyverne, which had been the first of these troubles, was fully explained. Wyverne's emotion at its reception, his terror of Bernal Mordaunt, his dying declaration—all these were made plain, all except his assertion that Dr. Blake was his son, and on this she laid but little stress now, since she thought that she could ask about that at any other time. With these were also explained the similarity in the handwriting of the different letters, the mystery that had overwhelmed her in her prison-house, the absence of Kevin Magrath, the espionage and strict guardianship of Gounod—all these were explained, and the terrors that they had excited vanished like so many dreams. Out of all this there remained prominent several things:

First. Kevin Magrath was a high-minded, noble-hearted man—the friend of her father, of Bessie, and of herself.

Secondly. Bessie was her own sister.

Thirdly. Her father, her mother, and her sister Clara, were all buried at Rome.

Fourthly. Dr. Blake was also at Rome—"settled there," as Kevin Magrath had expressed it.

"Inez darling, me child," said Kevin Magrath, after a long silence, "I am very anxious to go to Rome, and, if ye would like to go to see the graves of yer father, yer mother, and yer sister, I should like to show them to ye; but, at the same time, if ye feel reluctant about going, it's no matter. Bessie is anxious to go and fulfil a daughter's duty to those who never performed a parent's part to her; and I thought that you, the dear child of their care and their love, might have the same feelings."

At this proposal Inez at once thought of the far-off graves of those dear ones whom she had lost, and there arose a sudden longing to visit in death those whom she had failed to meet in life. With these came other thoughts, less holy, yet equally strong—she thought of Blake. Yes, Rome was a place which presented stronger attractions to her than any other.

"Rome!" said she. "Oh, how I long to

go there! And will you really take me?"

"I should be glad beyond all things if you would come with us," said Kevin Magrath.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### THE TENDERNES OF BESSIE.

KANE and Gwyn hurried on to Paris as soon as possible, and were not more than twenty-four hours behind Bessie. On the following day they arrived there, and drove first to Kane's lodgings. Then they went to the place where Inez had been, and learned that Bessie had taken her away, and that they had gone to the Hôtel Gascoigne. This news did not in any way lessen the anxiety that Kane had felt; for it seemed to him that this movement might carry both of them into the very hands of their worst enemy. It seemed to him that there could be no certainty of their safety until he could see Inez herself, and find out what her circumstances were; when, if there was really any appearance of danger, he might warn her, or confront Magrath himself. So great were his fears now, that he hardly expected to find either of the ladies, but was rather inclined to fear that Kevin Magrath, the moment that he found them both in his power, had contrived some specious pretext for conveying them to some other place, where they would be out of reach. It was with the dread of this at his heart, that he accompanied Gwyn to the Hôtel Gascoigne.

But the first thing that they heard on asking after the ladies drove away all fear. They were both there, and Kevin Magrath was there also. Kane was hardly prepared for such good news; and for a moment did not know what there was for him to do. He had come here in all haste as the champion of the oppressed, but the comfortable surroundings of Inez put the idea of any very imminent danger out of his head. She had Bessie with her, and here was Gwyn, who could be an additional protector.

Gwyn hurried up after the garçon to the apartments where his wife was, followed by Kane. On reaching the landing, there was a sudden cry of joy, and a beautiful being, all in the glory of golden hair and azure eyes, flung herself into Gwyn's arms.

"Sure, didn't I know you'd be here this blessed morning, Gwynnie darling?" cried Bessie; "didn't I say you couldn't stay more than a day without me and be alive? and so I've been waiting here in the hall for hours and hours, so I have. But you're here at last, and that's all I want. And oh, ain't you very, very much fatigued, darling? and were you ever quite so happy in your life?"

To this torrent of loving words Gwyn said nothing. Such a reception overwhelmed him. He had expected some coldness—some hanging back. He had prepared himself for some humiliation on his own part. But this was the reality that awaited him—the utter forgetfulness of every thing but her love—this perfect forgiveness that did not leave room for any attempt at explanations. He could not utter a word, but pressed her, in silence and with moistened eyes, to his heart.

"And Kane, too!" cried Bessie, as soon as she could free herself from Gwyn's arms; "sure, but you're welcome, Kane dear, and it's great news that I've got to tell. Inez is here, safe and happy, and you'll want to see her."

She held out her little hand with a beaming smile, and Kane pressed it tenderly.

"You'll want to see Inez," said Bessie, as Kane hesitated.

By this time Kane had felt himself somewhat *de trop*. The exceeding and unexpected warmth of this greeting between husband and wife did not seem warranted by so short a separation, even on the grounds of their being yet hardly out of their honey-moon; but still, there it was, and he saw the intense agitation of Gwyn, and suspected that something had taken place before Bessie's flight from Ruthven Towers which had caused that flight and Gwyn's present emotion. He saw that some explanations or other were probably required by these two, and therefore concluded to retire for the present.

"Well," said he, at length, "I think I'll look in again. She is well, you say?"

"Better than I ever knew her. But you'd better come in and see her. She'll be awfully disappointed."

"Oh, I'll come some time to-day," said Kane; "it's—it's—a little inconvenient just now—ah, under the circumstances—so I'll only ask you to remember me very kindly to her, and tell her that I hope to see her this evening."

Bessie urged him rather more faintly his refusal, and at the husband and wife.

All this had to do of the stairway. Bessie took Gwyn's hand to her rooms. Inez was better pleased than

Here they sat down in lover-fashion, while by his unexpected but yet found words, but his eyes. Bessie looked with one of her claims:

"Sure, I oughtn't to oughtn't, and there was so awfully glad Gwynnie dear."

"And—do—do you me?" faltered Gwyn.

"Oh, come now, your sure actions speak for my actions have spoiled Gwynnie darling, so that

"O darling, I shall forgive myself."

"Oh, come, Gwynn about it at all, at all.

able fancy of yours, so ing notion, but, tell me and tell Kane about it

"Tell Kane! Of How could I?"

"Of course not. How ly not."

"I dare say he's no face and in my manner."

"Like enough, for I and is one of those things that one really can't think tirely too heart-breaking didn't feel out up myself know I couldn't bring myself with you about it, and that the best way to do yourself, when you'd find the sooner, so you would tion was only to go to Mother on my way there, I thought darling Inez, and decided very much nicer and better you, and for myself, to e her. And that's just the

Bessie urged him a little longer, though rather more faintly, but Kane persisted in his refusal, and at length retreated, leaving the husband and wife to themselves.

All this had taken place on the landing of the stairway. As soon as Kane retired, Bessie took Gwyn's arm fondly and led him to her rooms. Inez was not there, and Gwyn was better pleased to be alone with his wife.

Here they sat down side by side, quite lover-fashion, while Gwyn was so overcome by his unexpected happiness that he had not yet found words, but sat devouring her with his eyes. Bessie looked tenderly at him, and, with one of her characteristic smiles, exclaimed:

"Sure, I oughtn't to be so forgiving, so I oughtn't, and there you have it. But oh, I was so awfully glad to see you, you know, Gwynnie dear."

"And—do—do you really for—forgive me?" faltered Gwyn.

"Oh, come now, we won't talk about it, sure actions speak louder than words, and my actions have spoken very, very loudly, Gwynnie darling, so they have."

"O darling, I shall never be able to forgive myself."

"Oh, come, Gwynnie, sure we won't talk about it at all, at all. It was only a miserable fancy of yours, so it was, a wild deluding notion, but, tell me, sure you didn't go and tell Kane about it then?"

"Tell Kane! Of course not, darling. How could I?"

"Of course not. How could you? Surely not."

"I dare say he's noticed trouble on my face and in my manner."

"Like enough, for it was very, very sad, and is one of those things, Gwynnie darling, that one really can't think about. It's positively too heart-breaking. And I won't say I didn't feel out up myself, for I did, but you know I couldn't bring myself to have a scene with you about it, and I thought, Gwynnie, that the best way to do was to leave you to yourself, when you'd find out your mistake the sooner, so you would; and my first intention was only to go to Mordaunt Manor; but, on my way there, I thought of poor, dear, darling Inez, and decided that it would be very much nicer and better for her, and for you, and for myself, to come here and see her. And that's just the very thing I did,

and so you see, Gwynnie darling, it's my opinion that we had better not mention it again, for really you know, darling, it isn't a thing that one can very well say much about. Besides, I'm so bursting with the wonderful discovery I've made. And oh, what in the wide world will dear Kane say and think? and oh, Gwynnie darling, how I do wish he had stayed and seen her! For she's here, you know; I found her and brought her here, and she's here now, so she is, the jool of life!"

"You mean Inez?" asked Gwyn, with a sigh.

"Inez? Of course. Who else? And what do you think? Oh, you would never guess—never, never! Oh, it's the very strangest thing and the gladdest thing, so it is!"

"What is it?" asked Gwyn, who wondered what that could be which was able to excite Bessie at such a moment as this. For his own part, all the rest of the world seemed then a matter of indifference.

"You'd never guess, so you wouldn't—never—and so I'll have to tell you," said Bessie, "though I don't think you will really believe it, at all at all, that is, not just at first, you know, for it's so awfully funny, Gwynnie dear. It's this: You know my darling Inez, how I love her, and all that sort of thing, and we've always been just like sisters, too, you know—oh, she's such a darling!—well, do you know, Gwynnie dear, I've just found out that she really is my very own sister."

"Your what? Your sister? Why, what do you mean? How can that be?" asked Gwyn, in great amazement, and thoroughly roused now by this startling intelligence.

"Sure I mean what I say; things have come to light that I never knew before, and there isn't the least doubt in life but it's all gospel truth, so it is; and only think of my own darling Inez being my own sister!"

"What is her name Inez Mordaunt?" asked Gwyn, in amazement.

"Sure and it is, and I got things all mixed up in my mind, so I did. I was told my name was Inez, though they always called me Bessie, but it's my other sister that owned the name, after all; and don't you think it's all awfully funny, Gwynnie darling?"

"Why, I don't know what to think, for I

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didn't want me to hear, about my infaney, I believe, for fear it would make me too sad; and, after it all was over, she looked at me—O Gwynnie! such a look—so awfully sad and sorrowful! And oh, but I had the sore heart for her, poor darling! and I didn't dare to say a word, for sure it seemed to me just as though I'd been serving her as Jacob did Esau—just for all the wide world as though I had taken her name and place—for poor, darling papa took me for Inez, and died blessing me as Inez." But really, Gwynnie darling, it wasn't my fault, so it wasn't—for didn't I think I was Inez? Sure I did. Still, that doesn't change matters for her, and, however innocent I was about it, the fact remains—and oh, but it must be the sore fact for her! But, if any one's to blame, it's poor Guardy Wyerne, who went and changed her name. And oh, but it was hard on her, so it was, for she's suffered more than her share on account of it. And I can't help feeling that I've had a share in the wrong, and that I've been happy at her expense. And I'm anxious to make some amends, and I won't be able to be happy, at all at all, unless I do something to console her. I'm her chief consolation now—and oh, but it's the blessed thing that I hurried on as I did!"

Bessie stopped, and looked with an expression of anxious inquiry at her husband.

"Gwynnie dearest," said she, in her most winning tone.

"Well, darling?"

"I'm going to tell you something now that you won't like; but it must be done, and I won't keep you in suspense about it. I have told Inez that I would devote myself to her for a short time, and that we would be just as we used to be. She objected, poor darling, and said that she would not like to take me from you; but I laughed, and said that you would not object if I wanted it, and that you would be willing to do any little thing you could if it would be for her good. And so you will, Gwynnie dear, for here is my dear sister Inez, the one that I've wronged so much without knowing it, and she's suffered awfully, and she needs loving care and attention, and I am the only living being that can give her this. So please, Gwynnie dear, don't be after looking no dismal, for there are duties that I have in the world besides those I owe to you, and I'm not the one to stand by and see my darling Inez—my new-found sis-

ter—after suffering so much, left alone without any congenial friends. Of course, dear grandpa would do every thing in the wide world for her; so he would; but he is not what she wants, at all at all, nor is Mrs. Lugin. She wants an old friend—an equal—her sister—myself—and it's myself that's the only one she can get comfort from. And so, Gwynnie, as I know you have a tender heart, and are not selfish, why, sure you'll quietly let me go for a while, and devote myself to my sweet sister."

This proposal threw great gloom over Gwyn. Yet the recollection of his own deep offence, and the total and complete reconciliation with Bessie, and her sweet and graceful forgiveness, all made it impossible for him to oppose her wishes, especially when expressed for such a purpose.

"And must I go home?" he asked, distantly.

"Go home, is it? Not you. You must come to Rome. Go home! Why, what an awful idea, Gwynnie darling! Oh, no. You must come on to Rome, and perhaps dear Kane may come, too. Bring him; you'll both be the happier for it, and we'll see one another all the time. When I said I was going to devote myself to Inez, I didn't mean that I was going away from you altogether. I want to have you near, Gwynnie darling, and see you every day."

Gwyn gave a sigh of relief.

"I'll pretend that I'm a lover again, Bessie darling," said he, sadly.

"Oh, yes, do—do, dear, darling Gwynnie; it will be so awfully nice, and funny, and all that. And you must bring Kane to Rome for company. He'll want, perhaps, to come with the rest of us, and join in our prayers over dear Clara's grave. Oh, how awfully nice! Only think—that is, I don't exactly mean nice—but you understand, dear. I want to ask himself, if I only can. But he'll be here this evening; he must come to see dear Inez; she talks so much about him. Besides, he'll be glad to know that every thing is explained."

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## BEFORE HIS JUDGE.

ON returning to Kane's apartments, Gwyn told him all that he had heard from Bessie, to which Kane listened in the utmost amazement. Many circumstances were explained, yet many more were inexplicable to him as yet. Above all, he could not understand how it was, if Bernal Mordaunt had died at Mordaunt Manor, that he could have written from his death-bed in Paris. These two things seemed irreconcilable, nor could Gwyn give him any satisfaction. Soon, however, there were other things mentioned which drew all Kane's thoughts away from the affairs of Inez. This was the statement that the remains of Clara had been exhumed, and had been taken to Rome for burial; and also the announcement that Blake had gone to Rome, and had "settled down in that place for good."

Both of these facts were to him of overwhelming importance. In his friendship for Blake he rejoiced to learn that he was well, though he could not help wondering why he had remained so silent. But this was of comparative unimportance in view of the astounding news about the remains of Clara.

Kane's feelings about his lost wife have been sufficiently described. It was to be near her loved remains that he had come to Paris—it was for this sake only that he lived here. Other places would have been preferable to him, but the presence here of Clara's remains gave to Paris an interest that no other place could have. It had been his habit to pray at stated times over her grave, and the anniversary of that awful day when they were separated was always observed by him with fasting and prayer. He had not been near her grave since that night of the "apparition" at Père-la-Chaise; but the anniversary was not far distant, and he would have to go there, no matter what might be his feelings, and observe the usual solemnities.

Now he learned to his amazement what had happened. This fact at once broke into all the even tenor of his life, and made it necessary for him to make some change. The removal of those precious relics destroyed all motives for remaining here. Where those remains were, there he must go. The state of his feelings was such that life was only tolerable near all that was mortal of her whom

he loved, and the first thought that he had when Rome was mentioned was that he must leave Paris and go there. The information that Kevin Magrath, and Inez, and Bessie, were all going there to "pray over that grave," only intensified his desires to do the same, and all other thoughts became indifferent to him.

What he should do first was now the question. He was anxious to see Kevin Magrath. This man's character had undergone a fresh revolution in his mind. When he had first seen him, he had formed of him such an opinion that he seemed a sort of accusing witness, an avenger of blood, a relentless Nemesis. After hearing the story of Inez, he had been changed into a remorseless villain, a dark schemer and intriguer. Now, however, he appeared once more in the former light. Whatever might be the mystery that remained, it seemed evident to Kane, from Bessie's words, and the acts of herself and Inez, that the last judgment about Kevin Magrath was wrong. It seemed now as though he must have been the faithful friend of Bernal Mordaunt and his children; a just man; a tender-hearted guardian; a loyal friend; one who had been the champion of unprotected innocence, and one, too, who had felt merciful even to the guilty, whose former guilt he had resisted and denounced.

Yet the prospect of meeting with this man had in it something so terrible for Kane that he shrunk from it. For Kevin Magrath once more seemed to be the avenger of the injured Clara. He could not help recalling his look, his attitude, and his words, during that memorable evening in London—those awful words, every one of which had pierced like a stab to his heart. "To go now to this man would be to expose himself to a repetition of this painful scene, to receive fresh wounds, and encounter fresh sufferings. Yet to do so was necessary. This man had assisted in the removal of Clara. He himself must have touched the casket that held that precious treasure, and from that touch the man himself seemed now to Kane's imagination to have acquired a kind of awful sanctity. To meet him would be more painful than ever, but it was necessary in order to obtain accurate information about the place in which they had laid the remains of his lost darling.

Kane therefore yielded to this necessity, and that evening called at the hotel along

with Gwyn. Inez the room waiting Inez with affectionately related her most significant change in her affairs, so occupied with the visit that he did not usually, and the contrary, which was at the entrance of Kevin M.

He looked around which was at once Bessie introduced her hands with him conversed words of welcome, of Kane, advanced to

"Mr. Hellville—glad I am to see you the last time I saw yer ajieus before the hope we may be able in a more suitable manner

Saying this, he a very warmly, and went and Bessie, and Inez, est and pleasantest was

"There's no one g' better than I do," said remark of Bessie's "Don't I know it?"

off and on, for years isn't a cyardinal of the don't know, in and out body of min intirely, a ply they're so many of constitutional kingdom there's a wonderful character if he only knowed how

If they only wint to wot Ireland and America, t' distines of Italy and o' hollows of their hands.

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spirit of the age. It's a stitutional age. Ye must stitutional. It's no us

kings and Imperors, and sinators. Look at the wa ica. They take possessio

and thus become shuprem polities, bald-headed! Dis people. They're all you



with Gwyn. Inez and Bessie were both in the room waiting for them. Kane greeted Inez with affectionate cordiality, and congratulated her most sincerely upon the favorable change in her affairs. But his thoughts were so occupied with the chief purpose of this visit that he did not question her very particularly, and the conversation took a general turn, which was at length interrupted by the entrance of Kevin Magrath.

He looked around with a beaming smile, which was at once benevolent and paternal. Bessie introduced him to Gwyn. He shook hands with him cordially with some warm words of welcome, and then, catching sight of Kane, advanced toward him.

"Mr. Hellville—ah—Hellmuth, sure it's glad I am to see ye here! It's sorry I was the last time I saw ye that ye had to make yer ajious before the evening had begun. I hope we may be able to-night to pass the time in a more shuitable manner."

Saying this, he shook hands with Kane very warmly, and went on to chat with Gwyn, and Bessie, and Inez, one by one, in the easiest and pleasantest way in the world.

"There's no one going that knows Rome better than I do," said he, in reply to some remark of Bessie's about their journey. "Don't I know it? Haven't I lived there, off and on, for years? Me self has. There isn't a cyardinal of the holy conclave that I don't know, in and out. And they're a fine body of min latirely, so they are, but it's a pity they're so many of thim Italians. In a constitutional kingdom, as Italy now is, there's a wonderful chance for the holy father, if he only knowed how to avail himself of it. If they only wint to work the way they do in Ireland and America, they could howld the distinics of Italy and of the wurruld in the hollows of their hands. But they don't comprhind, and they won't, till another generation comes along that grows into the new order of things. Ye see, what I always tell them is this: Ye must conforum more to the spirit of the age. It's a liberal age and a constitutional age. Ye must be liberal and constitutional. It's no use excommunicating kings and Imperors, and prime ministers and sinators. Look at the way they do in America. They take possession of the ballot-box, and thus become shuprema. Go, says I, into politics, bald-headed! Direct the votes of the people. They're all yours. Out of twinty

millions of Italians how many d'ye think ye have on yer own side? There's tin million females. Out of the other tin million min five million are boys who are all under the control of their mothers. Out of the remaining five million adult min four million are adult pisaints, altogether under the control of the priesthood, and riddy to vote as they suggist. It is a great allowance to suppose a single million as belonging to the Antipapal or Liberal party. If ye wint among these, ye'd find numerous ways of gaining control of three-quarters of thim. Me own opinion is that, out of the twinty millions of Italians, there's only two hundred thousand min who can be called Liberals. And what could they do? Get universal suffrage and the ballot-box, and ye'd swamp thim, so ye would. Ye howld the distinics of the country in yer power, and all ye've got to do is, like children of Israel at the Red Sea, whin Moses came to thim as I do to you and said, as I now say, 'Go forward,' or, like the same, when Joshua the son of Nun said to them, 'Behold the promised land! Go ye up and possess it!'"

From such high themes as these the conversation gradually faded away—Gwyn absorbing Bessie, and Kevin Magrath alternately addressing Inez and Kane. But Inez evidently took no interest in what she considered politics, and thus Kane was left as the only collocutor or listener or whatever else he may have been. Collocutor he certainly was not, however, for he simply listened, not attending particularly to Kevin Magrath's remarks, but rather thinking about the best way of seeing him alone, so as to ask him about those things which now were uppermost in his mind. At length Inez left the room. Gwyn and Bessie were taken up with each other, and then it was that Kane made known his feelings.

"I should like very much," said he, "to ask you about some things that are of importance to me. Can I see you alone for a few moments?"

Kevin Magrath smiled graciously.

"With the greatest plisure in life," said he. "Come along with me to me own room, and we'll make a night of it."

With these words he rose and led the way along the corridor to a room at the end of it. Entering this, Kane found himself in a large and elegantly-furnished apartment, opening into a bedroom. On a sideboard

were bottles, decanters, and tobacco-boxes. On the table was a meerschaum-pipe, a box of cigars, and the latest *Galignani*.

Kevin Magrath rolled up an easy-chair beside the table.

"Make yerself comfortable," said he, cheerily. "Ye'll take something warrum, won't ye—and a pipe or so? I've whiskey here by me, Scotch or Irish—'Cœlum non animum mutant,' ye know; 'qui trans mare currunt;' and, for my part, I carry a bottle of Irish whiskey with me wherever I go—and Scotch too, for that matter; though, on the whole, I object to Scotch whiskey, for it savors somewhat of Calvinism. Howandiver, ye'll take one or the other."

Kane mildly suggested Irish.

Kevin Magrath smiled.

"It's charrumed I am with yer taste, and I take it as a compliment to me country," and he poured out a wineglassful, which he handed to Kane, after which he poured out another for himself. "Here," said he, "lifting it to his lips, 'here is a libation which I've powered out in honor of old Ireland, let's drink to the first flower of the earth and first gem of the sea.'"

They both drank solemnly.

"And now," said Kevin Magrath, "having performed the first duties of hospitality, I'm altogether at your service. But won't ye take a pipe or a cigar?"

Kane declined.

"The fact is," said he, drawing a long breath, "my name is not Hellmuth."

"The devil it isn't!" said Kevin Magrath.

"Circumstances," said Kane, "made it necessary for me on my former visit to take that name. At present there is no such necessity. I have dropped it, and have taken my own again."

"Deed, thin," said Kevin Magrath, "I hope that yer circumstances, whatever they are, have changed for the better."

Kane sighed, and regarded the other gloomily and fixedly.

"My name," said he, "is a familiar one to you. It is Kane Ruthven. I am the man that married Clara Mordaunt, and caused her death. I wish to talk to you about her. I wish also to show you that, for any evil which I did to her whom I loved, I have atoned for by life-long remorse."

At the first mention of this name a sudden and astonishing change came over Kevin Ma-

grath. His easy, placid smile passed away, a dark frown came over his brows, he pushed his chair back and started to his feet, and regarded Kane with a black, scowling face.

"You!" he cried.

"Yes," said Kane.

Kevin Magrath looked at him for some time with the same expression, but gradually the severity of his features began to relax.

"I've prayed," said he, slowly, "and I've longed for the time to come when I could see ye face to face; and thin again I've longed and I've prayed that I might never see ye."

I've prayed to see ye that I might have vengeance for Clara's bitter wrongs, for her betrayal, for her broken heart, for her death, for the dishonor of a noble name, and the shame of a lofty lineage; and I've prayed not to see ye, so that I might niver have another man's blood on my hands, for I felt sure that, if I ever did see ye, that moment I'd have yer heart's-blood. But, somehow," continued he, after a moment's pause, "somehow—pow that I do see ye face to face—sure, I don't know how it is at all at all, but the desire for bloody vingince has gone out of me; and ye seem to have the face of a man that's paid the full pinalty already of any wrong ye've ever done, so ye do. And whither it is this that's the matter, or whither it is that I can't rise against the man that's drunk with me—but sure to glory I'm changed—and so I say to you, Kane Ruthven, in the name of God, what is it that ye seek me for, and have ye any thing to say for yerself in regyard to yer dealings with the young gyerrul that ye—destroyed?"

Kevin Magrath's manner was most impressive. It was that of a lofty, rigid, impartial judge, who will exact strict justice, yet is not altogether disinclined to mercy. Kane sustained his gaze with tranquillity, and looked at him with a solemn, sombre brow. When he had finished, he said:

"You are mistaken about me in many ways, and, when you hear what I have to say, you will have a less harsh opinion of me than the one you expressed in London."

"Go on, then; let me hear what you have to say, for it's meself that would be the proof man if ye could clear yerself of any of the guilt that's seemed to be attached to ye."

Kane now proceeded to tell his whole story. He told it frankly and fully, heaping blame upon himself lavishly, yet clearing

himself of all those  
grath had uttered as  
After it was over  
ing for a long time.

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"that she should be buried  
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himself of all those worse charges which Magrath had uttered against him.

After it was over, Magrath remained musing for a long time.

"Sure," said he, at last, "there was villainy, though not with you. Your brother was hard, but it was my poor friend Hennigar Wyverne that was the arch-traitor and rogue. But how in the world did it happen that Clara did not know herself that she was the daughter of Bernal Mordaunt, and heiress of Mordaunt Manor?"

"I can't account for it at all."

"I've heard it stated on imminent authority," said Magrath, "that a boy who leaves his home, or is taken from his home, at the age of ten, and is thrown into a foreign land among strangers, will in five years forget his own name, his father's name, and his native language. I never believed it before, but now this looks like it. Clara lost her home and her father at ten; she had not lived regularly at Mordaunt Manor either, and was sent into France; and thus it has happened that she forgot in a few years the most important things."

"It must have been so," said Kane. "She knew her name, but had no recollection of Mordaunt Manor—at least she said nothing about it—and she certainly had no idea that she was an heiress."

Another long silence followed.

"Kane Ruthven," said Magrath, at last—"or perhaps I ought to say Sir Kane—what you have said clears you completely and utterly from the suspicions which I had formed about you. You have not been guilty, as I now see, of any thing worse than carelessness, or thoughtlessness. For that you have suffered enough. I must say that my conscience condemns shulcide, and in that act you were clearly wrong; it was unnecessary; she would have drifted home or into my hands, for I was close upon her track at that very time. How and ever, what's done can't be undone, and, as you're an innocent and a suffering man, why—there's my hand."

With this he reached out his hand, Kane took it, and Magrath shook it heartily.

"I have understood," said Kane, anxiously and hesitatingly, "that—that she—she was removed from the cemetery."

"It was her father's wish," said Magrath, "that she should be buried beside her mother in Rome."

"She is now in Rome, then?"

"Yes, with her mother; and the other two daughters, Inez and Bessie, are going to pray over the graves for the repose of the souls of their mother and their sister."

"I should think that they would have been taken rather to Mordaunt Manor."

"It was Bernal Mordaunt's doing," said Magrath. "But they are all united, for Bessie's filial piety has accomplished one of the last wishes of her father; and, while she was living at Ruthven Towers, her father's remains were exhumed and taken to Rome."

Kane hardly heard these last words. His mind was occupied exclusively with thoughts of Clara. Magrath's information was conclusive. It was what he had wished to know, and there was nothing more to be learned. About the affairs of Inez he thought no more. She was safe now with loving friends; the mysterious circumstances about her late imprisonment were no doubt satisfactorily explained, and he himself had no further interest in the matter.

It was with a feeling of satisfaction, however, that Kane reflected on the formal acquittal which Magrath had given him of evil acts. For Magrath was now to him a stern, a just, and a wise judge, from whom a declaration of this sort was valuable, indeed. There was at the conclusion of this interview a deeper solemnity than usual in the manner of each of them, and Magrath did not press him to stay, or ask him again to take a drink.

That night Gwyn bade Bessie farewell. She was to start with Inez early on the following morning for Rome.

"You'll come on soon, Gwynnie darling," said she, tenderly.

"Immediately, of course, Bessie dearest."

"And you'll bring dear Kane?"

"Of course."

Bessie looked at him earnestly.

"We're beggars now, so we are, Gwynnie dear, but I love you, and we can be as happy in our poverty as ever we were in our wealth, so we can."

Gwyn pressed her to his heart and left.

As he walked away, his heart was full of bitterness. Kane and Inez seemed now like interlopers, who had come between him and his darling, casting her down from the wealth and luxury with which he had thought he had endowed her. Kane again had been the innocent cause of this foul wrong which he had

done his wife, and Inez came forward as her supplanter in Mordaunt Manor, and also as in some sort a rival to himself, since she had drawn Bessie away from him.

All these things filled his heart with bitterness, and with these feelings he sought Kane's apartments that night.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### DE PROFUNDIS CLAMAVI.

For a long time Blake lay senseless, but at last struggled back into consciousness. When he did so, the constraint of his position, the weakness of his limbs, and the hard stone which met the first feeble movements of his arms, all tended to retard the approach of sense, while the deep darkness all around added to his bewilderment. By a mere animal instinct, he drew himself up from the place where he had fallen, and turned his eyes around, seeking to find some visible object in that worse than midnight darkness. But nothing whatever was to be seen, and not one ray of light, however faint, appeared in any direction. Confused and perplexed, and not as yet able to collect his thoughts, or comprehend his situation, he stood for a few minutes thus, staring blindly into the gloom; and then his limbs, which had not yet recovered their full strength, gave way under him, and he sank down upon the rocky floor of the passage-way, immediately outside the sepulchre, through which he had made his ill-fated entrance here.

Here his mind struggled to establish a connection with its former self, but for some time was baffled. Blake was aware of his own identity, and could recall much of his past life, particularly that which referred to his adventures at St. Malo and Villeneuve. But every thing since then was dull and indistinct, nor could his memory recall any thing that had occurred since his parting with Inez. There was a terrible sense of disaster, a desolating sense of some irreparable calamity, and somehow it seemed to be connected with Inez, but how he could not tell. Then there dawned slowly upon his mind the knowledge of the place where he was. The rocky floor and wall, the rocky cell which he had just left, served to suggest this; yet, for a time, he was quite unable to account for

his presence here. He was in the Catacombs, imprisoned here, without light, without hope of escape. Who had done this thing?

Gradually the remembrances of the past returned. First came the recollection of those last words as they sounded, hollow and terrible, through the piled-up stones, "*Blake Wyverne, farewell forever!*" Then the thought of O'Rourke, his desertion and betrayal; of the plot that had been made to entice him here; of the long preparation, and final completion of it. Each incident seemed more terrible than its predecessor, and at length every thing was recalled, and the whole horror of his fate stood revealed, rendered now doubly so by that horror of great darkness which closed in all around him.

He was here, shut in among the dead—himself as good as dead. He was buried here—in the Catacombs! The existence that yet remained was but a mockery, a life in death, a prolongation of woe, a lingering out of his capacity for suffering, and better would it be to destroy himself than to wait for the slow and agonizing approaches of that death which was inevitable. With a shudder he recalled the story of Aloysius, and the dread fate of the lost Onofrio—a fate which, by a terrible coincidence, was now to find a counterpart in his own. Between him and the world there lay an impassable barrier; he was buried alive, and the stones at the door of his sepulchre could be moved away by no power of his.

Suddenly there came to his ears a rushing sound, the patter of footsteps. He started up to his feet in horror, and, for a moment, though he had thus far been a stranger to superstitious feelings of any kind, there came to his mind a terrible thought, the thought of Onofrio, of disembodied spirits, and of all those other horrors which beset even the boldest in such a situation. But the pattering sound came nearer, and something brushed against his feet, and his hasty, superstitious fancy was displaced by the discovery of the truth. That truth was hardly less formidable, however, than the fancy had been, for he now knew that this was an army of rats, and he knew, too, that in such a place these animals are bold and ravenous. He feared, too, that they had scented him from afar, and had come to him to begin their abominable work.

A moment before he had not thought it

possible that any horror of his situation, something which a death. But it did to activity—to see an enemy was something to fight! at once, and he was roused, even out of his despair, to action.

Now, no sooner with the instinct compared to do battle with an enemy, than all his soul's vigorous activity of mind regained tone. Instantly he took the measure of his assailants, and the first

Now, for the first this impenetrable darkness. He held his lantern. Hastily, he felt in the cell for a great joy found it in matches in his pocket. He usually carried a lantern, but on this occasion he could not find it. He felt an emotion of joy that he had not felt for a long habit. In a few moments he was fully lighted, and the rats, so black like wild animals, were a gleam of light in such a dark place. He was in fear; and Blake heard steps dying away in the distance of that way which led to the entrance of the cell, and over which he had just passed.

The rats were thus driven out, but Blake knew they would return, especially at night. That precious light he guarded with care, for he had no other light, and he dared not cherish. There was a deliberate. He would not of his lamp while it yet was burning. He was hurriedly set out along the opposite direction to which he had just taken him, with a vague idea that he would reach the vaults of San Antonio, and perhaps find an opening through the wall. It was not long before he was in the passage. This surprised him, as he expected to find any. He had, however, and walked thus a much greater distance than

possible that any thing could increase the horror of his situation, but now he recognized something which added to the bitterness of death. But it did more. It stirred him up to activity—to self-defence. This mortal enemy was something against which he had to fight at once, and well was it for him that he was roused, even in such a way as this, out of his despair, and forced to some sort of action.

Now, no sooner had he started to his feet with the instinct of self-defence, and prepared to do battle against this ravenous enemy, than all his soul started up into strenuous vigilant activity, all the powers of his mind regained tone and force, and in an instant he took the measure of himself and his assailants, and the scene of conflict.

Now, for the first time in the midst of this impenetrable darkness, he thought of his lantern. Hastily reaching out his arm, he felt in the cell behind him, and to his great joy found it lying there. He had matches in his pocket, which, being a smoker, he usually carried with him; and on this occasion he could not help feeling a fervent emotion of joy that he had ever acquired that habit. In a few moments the lantern was lighted, and the rats, squeaking and shrinking back like wild animals from the unaccustomed gleam of light in such a place, hurried away in fear; and Blake heard their pattering footsteps dying away in the distance, in the direction of that way which O'Rourke had led him, and over which he had returned.

The rats were thus driven off for the present, but Blake knew very well that they would return, especially if his lamp should go out. That precious light would have to be guarded with care, for upon this alone now rested any hope, however feeble, which he dared to cherish. There was no time to stand and deliberate. He would have to make use of his lamp while it yet was burning, and so he hurriedly set out along the path in the opposite direction to where O'Rourke had taken him, with a vague idea in his mind that he would reach the vaults of the Monastery of San Antonio, and perhaps be able to effect an opening through the walled-up archway.

It was not long before he came to a cross-passage. This surprised him, for he did not expect to find any. He kept straight on, however, and walked thus until he had gone a much greater distance than that which lay

between the house by which he had entered and the street on which the Monastery of San Antonio stood. Here, at length, he came to a chamber, something like the one which he had visited with O'Rourke, out of which two passages led. At this point he paused.

It now became slowly apparent that there was no archway walled up, no vaults of San Antonio contiguous to the Catacombs, and consequently no further hope for him in this direction. He began to believe now that there was probably no Monastery of San Antonio, but that this, like the monk Aloysius, and the monk Onofrio, had all been the creature of O'Rourke's imagination. Again, he had to make the discovery that the whole story of the monk's manuscripts, down to the minutest particular, had been narrated only for the purpose of enticing him here, and that it only agreed with facts so far as it was necessary that it should.

Once more, full of the conviction that what was to be done should be done quickly, Blake turned and hastily retraced his steps, thinking as he went on about what his best course now was. His first thought was to get the clew and the ladder, without which he was but ill prepared for penetrating in any direction. With these he felt able to make some vigorous explorations as long as his lamp held out. Now, as he turned, he heard in the distance before him the pattering footfalls of his ravenous pursuers, and knew that they were watching him all the time. As he advanced now, they turned and fled, their footfalls dying out far away. It seemed to Blake that their haunts lay in that direction. It seemed, too, that they must have some communication with the upper world, for in these Catacombs there was nothing upon which they could live. A faint hope arose, therefore, that if he should continue his searches in that direction he might possibly reach some opening.

As he walked on, he at length came to the place where the ladder was. This he took possession of. Not long after he came to the clew, which lay on the ground, and this he proceeded to wind up for future use; for he felt sufficiently familiar with the way thus far to go without the clew in case of necessity. But there came to him, even while he was winding it up, a mournful thought of the utter uselessness of the clew to one in his circumstances, who would not wish to re-

trace his steps, but rather go on till he should find signs of some way of escape.

And now his active mind busied itself, as he went on, in the endeavor to discover what direction might give the best promise of escape. In spite of his conviction that the whole of O'Rourke's story was a fiction, he still thought that some portions of it might give him information; and, as his description of portions of the paths had been true, so also might his assertions about the general direction of this path on which he was going. O'Rourke's assertion had been that it ran toward the Palatine Hill, and the whole point of his narrative had consisted in the theory that it actually passed under the Palatine, and was possibly connected with some of the ancient vaults. If this were so, it seemed to Blake that an opening might be found through these vaults, and that thus his escape could be made.

With this in his mind, Blake concluded to go on as rapidly as possible along that very path by which O'Rourke had tried to lead him to destruction. In a short time he came to that place which O'Rourke had called the Painted Chamber, and, hurrying on quickly, yet cautiously, he soon reached the opening into the lower passage-way. Down this he descended, and, as he passed down, his eyes caught sight of those holes in the wall which he had so laboriously made. But it was not a time to yield to emotions of any sort, or to feed his melancholy in any way.

He now walked on very cautiously, for he was afraid of openings in the floor, and it was necessary to look well to his path. He expected before long to reach some larger chamber, which might mark the neighborhood of the Palatine Hill. For O'Rourke's story had still so strong a hold of his mind that he fully expected to see that place which had been called the "Treasure Chamber," though of course he had not the slightest expectation of finding any treasure, nor was there any possibility that one in his desperate circumstances should feel the slightest wish to find it.

As he went on, he found that the cross-passages were much less numerous than they had been. The path also along which he went had but a slight deflection from a straight course—so slight, indeed, that it was the same to Blake as a straight line. No pitfalls lay in his way, and it seemed to him

that he had reached the lowest level on which the Catacombs had been made.

At length he had walked on so far that he began to hesitate. It was time for him to have reached that chamber under the Palatine, but he had found nothing in his way which, by any stretch of fancy, could be called a chamber. It had been a narrow passage-way, preserving the same dimensions all along, and the characteristic features which distinguished all the passages here. He seemed to be wandering on interminably, and at length the vague hope which thus far had encouraged him, or at least led him on, now faded away altogether, and he walked on slowly, merely because it seemed better than standing still.

There was no treasure, that he already knew; but he had now found out that there was no chamber either, no connection with any ancient vaults, and possibly no approach to the neighborhood of the Palatine. That part of O'Rourke's statements seemed now evidently thrown in to stimulate the fancy by giving plausible grounds to his theory of the treasure of the Caesars. And where, now, should he go? In what direction should he turn? Might he not be wandering farther and farther away from the path of safety?

With such thoughts as these, amid which not one ray of hope presented itself, Blake wandered on more and more slowly. At length he reached a cross-passage, and here he came to a full stop. To go on any farther along this passage-way seemed useless. Here, too, his hesitation was succeeded by a discovery that promised the very worst. Already he had noticed that the lamp had become dimmer, but he had refused to believe it, and had tried to think that it was the hardening of the wick, but now the fact could no longer be concealed. Even as he stood here for a few moments, that light—which to him was symbolical of the light of life—faded more and more. With a despairing hand he opened the lantern, and picked off the top of the wick that had caked over, feeling all the while the utter hopelessness of such an act, for how could that prolong in any degree the life of the dying flame? It did not prolong it; the flame died down lower and lower.

Upon this, Blake, actuated by a sudden impulse, blew it out. He thought that the small quantity of oil yet remaining might better be preserved for some extreme mo-

ment of his life, a minute might be now. So he extinguished and preserved the flame, and might yet be given.

All was now dark, appalling. His situation in absolutely nothing that it would have been moment if he had not seemed now as though something, had he dared the task of moving of the stony barrier up. A little reflection that this would have recollected the immensity of the opening, and these were other matters that way was impossible.

He was at the entrance and he had no idea what might be best to go. The silence was tremendous. The silence around, was almost as if he had listened, that sounds which to him were than the silence. The of those ravenous faces during his progress was now, while he stood in a stack him. It was seemed to know it. The sound of their advancing rapid, pattering feet, things past him, the that sent a shudder to had descended to this seen nothing of them, had forgotten them. The presence felt and feared the passage-way on his by the sounds that they he could feel that they

To stand still there so would simply be to m. Once he struck a match light revealed a sight was glad to have the again—a multitude of from the ravenous little back at the sudden blast any moment to spring.

He must move, for his safety. The narrowness

ment of his life, when a ray of light for but a minute might be of far more value than now. So he extinguished it for the present, and preserved the minute or so of light that might yet be given for future need.

All was now darkness, dense, impenetrable, appalling. His long search had resulted in absolutely nothing, and he began to think that it would have been better for him at this moment if he had never set out upon it. It seemed now as though he might have effected something, had he devoted all this time toward the task of moving away some portion of the stony barrier which O'Rourke had set up. A little reflection, however, showed him that this would have been impossible. He recollected the immense masses that closed up the opening, and considered that behind these were other masses. No; escape by that way was impossible.

He was at the intersection of two paths, and he had no idea now in what direction it might be best to go. The darkness was tremendous. The silence, also, that reigned all around, was almost equally impressive. Now, as he listened, that silence was broken by sounds which to him were more terrible even than the silence. They showed the presence of those ravenous foes who had held aloof during his progress with the light, but who now, while he stood in darkness, prepared to attack him. It was their hour, and they seemed to know it. From afar came the sound of their advance, the movement of rapid, pattering feet, the hurry of abominable things past him, the touch of horrible objects that sent a shudder through him. Since he had descended to this lower level, he had seen nothing of them, and in his other cares had forgotten them. Now they made their presence felt and feared. They came up from the passage-way on his right. He could tell by the sounds that they were very numerous; he could feel that they were very bold.

To stand still there was impossible; to do so would simply be to make an attack certain. Once he struck a match, and the flash of the light revealed a sight so abhorrent that he was glad to have the darkness shut it out again—a multitude of eager, hungry eyes, from the ravenous little monsters that shrunk back at the sudden blaze, but were ready at any moment to spring.

He must move, for movement was his only safety. The narrowness of the passage fa-

vored him, for he could not be surrounded; he might possibly drive them before him. To move along this passage, by which they were advancing upon him, was necessary. Perhaps, also, it might be best. These animals must have some communication with the outer world; and it might possibly be found in this direction. This way, then, seemed to him to be by far the most promising, or, rather, to be the one which had less of despair. He could not help wondering why the rats had not appeared when O'Rourke was with him. Could it have been the greater light or noise that deterred them, or the sound of human voices?

No sooner had Blake thought of this than he resolved to break the silence himself, and to use his own voice against them, hoping that the unusual sound might alarm them. Already they were leaping up his legs. He swung his ladder around, and advanced, pushing it before him, and wriggling it backward and forward. This was partly to drive the rats before him, and partly to feel his pathway, so as to guard against openings. Thus he set forth, and resumed his journey in the dark.

But not in silence. He was to try the effect of a human voice over his assailants. But with what words should he speak, what cry should he give there, commensurate with that appalling gloom, that terrible silence, these abhorrent enemies? No common words, no words of every-day speech, were possible. Where should he find words which might at once be a weapon against the enemy and at the same time be concordant with the anguish of his soul? No words of his could do this. He would have to make use of other words. Back went his thoughts to words heard in years past—the solemn and sublime words of the services of his Church, heard in childhood and boyhood, and remembered, though of late neglected and despised. In his anguish his soul caught up a cry of anguish—the cry of despairing souls in all ages, which never sounded forth from a more despairing soul, and never amid more terrific surroundings, than when Blake, wandering wildly on, burst forth:

*"De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine; Domine, exaudi vocem meam.*

*"Fiant aures tuas intendentes in vocem deprecationis mee."*

Nor was this the first time that this cry





for a moment scarcely able to believe in the reality of his good fortune. It was an opening into a space beyond, about three feet long and two feet high, formed by the removal of some blocks of stone. The space beyond was an arched passage-way constructed of enormous blocks of stone, about six feet in height, and much wider than the passages of the Catacombs. At the bottom water was flowing along. Thrusting his head farther through, he looked up and down. In the one direction all was dark, but in the other, at no very great distance, there appeared the glad outer world, over which was brightening the morning sky, with fields and houses reddening under the flush of dawn.

He remained here some time, drinking in great waves of this ever-increasing light with something like adoration, quaffing it like one intoxicated, hardly able to satisfy himself, but giving himself up altogether to the ecstasy of the moment. And what was this place, he wondered, upon which he had thus so strangely stumbled? What was this archway of Cyclopean stones, hoar with age, with its floor filled with rubbish, and running water passing on? A broken fragment of one of the massive rocks composing its sides had been removed, and formed the opening which had given him life once more. Doubtless this fragment had been removed in past ages by fugitives who thus were able to escape pursuit by plunging into the Catacombs. Perhaps those who removed the broken fragment cut the passage-way along to those farther in; or perhaps it was the work of some of the early Christians in the ages of persecution, and this may have been one of the secret and unsuspected entrances to the subterranean hiding-places. But what was this ancient arch itself? No place of graves—no passage-way among many others like it, was this. It was unique. It stood alone; and Blake, though a stranger in Rome, had sufficient knowledge of its most remarkable monuments to feel sure that this place upon which he had so strangely come was no other than the most venerable, the most ancient, and in many respects the most wonderful, of all the works of ancient Rome—the Cloaca Maxima.

But this was not a time for wonder, or for curiosity, or for antiquarian researches. Death lay behind him. Light and life lay before him. The horrors through which he had passed had produced their natural effect

in extreme prostration of mind and body. Some rest, some breathing-space, was required; but, after that, if he would save himself, if he would not perish within the very reach of safety, he must hurry on.

He crawled through and stood in the Cloaca Maxima. It ran before him, leading him to the outer world, giving him light and life. The treasure of the Roman emperors, which he had dreamed of finding, had been missed; but he had found the work of the Roman kings, which to him, in his despair, was worth infinitely more. He stood in ooze and slime, over which passed running-water, which flowed to the Tiber. Blake did not wait, but hurried onward as fast as he could. The brightening scene, visible in the distance, and growing more brilliant every moment, drew him onward, and the terrors behind him drove him forward; so that this combined attraction and repulsion gave him additional strength and speed. He hurried on, and still on, and at length reached the mouth of the arched passage. Here he saw sloping banks on either side; and, clambering up the bank on the right, he stood for a moment to rest himself.

In that brief period of rest he had no eyes and no thoughts for the scene around, though for some that scene would have possessed a charm greater than any other that may be met with in all the world. He did not notice the Aventine, the Capitoline, the Janiculum, in the distance, and the yellow Tiber that flowed between. He was thinking only of rest, of refuge. He longed for some sort of home, some place where he might lie down and sleep. He only noticed that it was the morning of a new day, and consequently perceived that he must have spent a whole night in the Catacombs.

In that night what horrors had he not endured! As he stood there panting for breath, the recollection came over him of all that he had passed through. He thought of that first moment when he discovered that he was alone; that the ladder and the clew were gone; that he had been betrayed. He thought of his despair, followed by his efforts to escape; his long labor at the walls of stone; his ascent to the upper floor and pursuit of O'Rourke; his arrival at the opening, and his discovery that it was walled up. Then he heard the rattle of stones, and the voice of his betrayer, saying, "*Blake Wyverne, save*

well forever!" He recalled his fainting-fit, his recovery, and his renewal of his efforts to escape; and then followed that long horror, that night of agony, in which he had wandered along that terrific pathway, with its appalling surroundings. In such a situation a man might well have died through utter fright, or have sunk down to death through despair, or have wandered aimlessly till all strength had failed him. It was to Blake's credit that, even in his despair, he had preserved some sort of presence of mind, and had not been without a method in his movements. Yet the suffering had been terrible; and the anguish of soul that he had endured intensified his bodily fatigues, so that now, in the very moment of safety, he found himself unable to obtain the benefits of that safety; and so extreme was his prostration and so utter his weakness that it was only with difficulty that he kept himself from sinking down into senselessness on the spot.

This would not do. He must obtain some sort of a home, some kind of a lodging-place, where he might rest and receive attention. His strong and resolute nature still asserted itself in spite of the weakness of the flesh, and he dragged himself onward, unwilling to give up, unable to surrender himself too easily to the frailty of his physical nature. The instinct of self-preservation also warned him to seek some shelter, where he might be concealed from the discovery of O'Rourke; for, even in the weakness of that hour and in the confusion of his mind, he had a keen sense of impending danger, together with a desire to maintain the secret of his escape. Animated by this, he went on, but by what ways and under what circumstances he was never afterward able to remember.

Afterward he had only a vague recollection of streets and houses. Few people were to be seen. The streets were narrow, the houses lofty and gloomy. It was the older, the meaner, and the most densely-peopled part of the city. The early morning prevented many from being abroad. He watched the windows of the houses with close and eager scrutiny, so as to discover some place where he might rest. At length he found a place where there was a notice in the window for lodgers. He knew enough Italian to understand it, and entered by the door, which happened to be open. An old woman was standing there, and a young girl was coming toward

her from an inner room. Blake accosted her in broken Italian, and had just managed to make her understand that he wished to engage lodgings, when his exhausted strength gave way utterly, and he sank, with a groan, to the floor at her feet.

It was fortunate for Blake that he had encountered those who possessed common feelings of humanity, and were not merely mercenary and calculating people, who would have turned away from their doors those who promised to bring more trouble than profit. It is probable that this old woman would have been quite ready to overreach, or, in fact, to cheat any stranger who came to her in an ordinary way; and yet this same old woman was overcome by the sincere compassion at the sight of this stranger who had fallen at her feet. Such apparent contradictions are not rare, for in Italy there is more tendency among the common people to swindle strangers than there is in our own country; and yet, at the same time, there is undeniably more kindness of nature, more tenderness of sympathy, more readiness of pity, more willingness to help the needy, than may be found among our harder and sterner natures. So this old woman, though a possible cheat and a swindler, no sooner saw this stranger lying prostrate and senseless, than, without a thought for her own interests, and without any other feeling or motive than pure and disinterested pity and warm human sympathy, she flew to his assistance. She summoned the servants, she sent for a doctor, and in a short time Blake was lying on a soft bed in a comfortable room, watched over most anxiously by perfect strangers, who, however, had been made friends by his affliction, and who now hung over him, and tended him, and cared for him, as though he had been one of their own, instead of a stranger and a foreigner.

Blake was in a high fever—a brain-fever—accompanied with delirium. A long illness followed. He lay utterly unconscious; his mind was occupied with the scenes through which he had passed of late; and all his wandering thoughts turned to the terrible experience of that night of horror. During all this time he was tended most carefully and vigilantly by the kind-hearted old woman and her daughter, who were filled with pity and sympathy. Not one word did they understand of all his delirious ravings, nor did



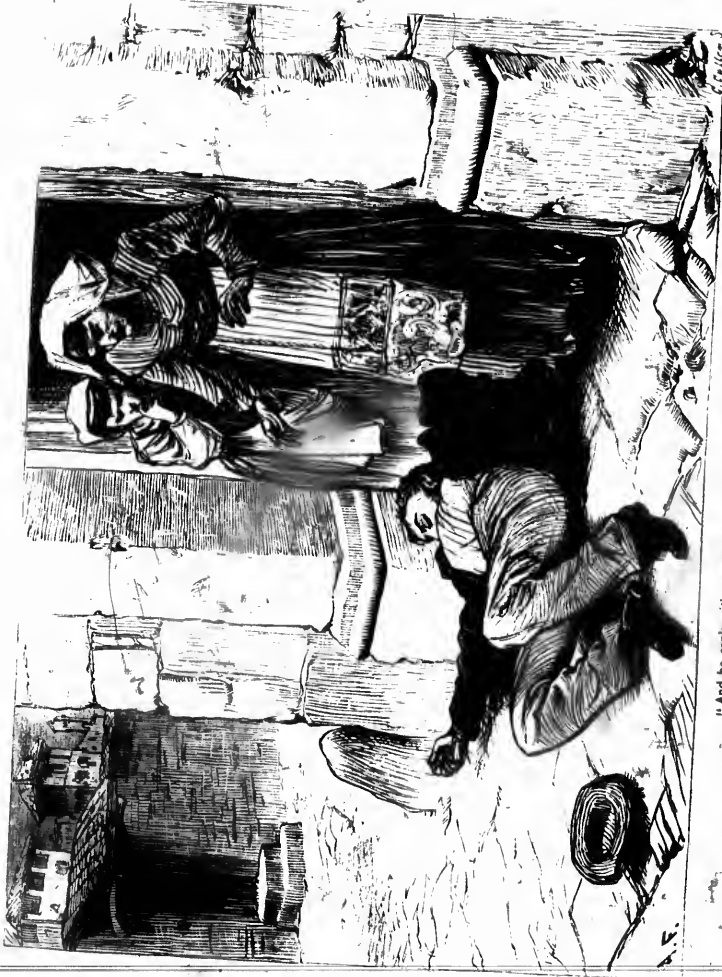
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"And he sank with a groan to the ground at her feet."—Page 200.





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they know even what language it was. It might be German, or Russian, or Bohemian, or Turkish, or English, but this made no difference to them. They maintained the part of the good Samaritan, and denied themselves every comfort for the sake of their afflicted lodger.

At length the crisis of the disease was successfully surmounted, and Blake began to recover. In course of time he regained consciousness, and began to understand the situation in which he was. His gratitude to these kind-hearted people knew no bounds, and his earnest expressions of his feelings had to be checked by his careful attendants. These good people had grown to regard him as some one who was dear to them, and to watch for his recovery as for something of the utmost importance. But Blake's prostration had been extreme, and his recovery was very slow. There was also something on his mind. This was a desire to communicate with his mother. But he was unable to write himself, and these good people, though most anxious to serve him in every possible way, were quite unable to write a letter in English at his dictation. So Blake was forced to wait.

At length Blake gained sufficient strength to write what he wished. It was a feeble scrawl, and the handwriting itself expressed the whole of his weakness; but Blake, from a motive of pious deceit, tried to conceal the full extent of his illness. He wrote something about his journey to Rome on "business" (a very convenient term), and about his contracting an illness from the unhealthy climate. He assured her, however, that he was better, urged her not to be at all anxious, and entreated her to come on at once and join him. This letter he directed, and the good people of the house mailed it for him, after which they waited with hardly less anxiety than that which was felt by Blake himself for the result.

That result soon took place. In about ten days an elderly lady came to the house, and inquired, in a tremulous voice, for Dr. Blake. She was a woman of medium stature, slender figure, hair plentifully sprinkled with gray, and a face of gentleness and refinement mingled with firmness and dignity, which also bore evident marks of sorrow. She was unmistakably a lady, and she also had undoubtedly experienced her full share

of those ills to which all flesh is heir. The moment that she appeared, the good people of the house recognized her as the mother of their lodger; and, while some went to announce her arrival so as to spare Blake the excitement of a sudden surprise, others endeavored to soothe her evident anxiety by lively descriptions of the great improvement which had taken place in the health of the invalid.

In this manner a way was prepared for a meeting between these two, and mother and son were soon in one another's arms.

At first that mother had nothing to do but to nurse that son, to soothe him, and to prohibit him from mentioning any exciting circumstances. But the son had a strong constitution, which had favored his recovery, and that recovery was now materially hastened by the arrival of that mother whom he tenderly loved; whose presence at his bedside acted like a healing balm, and whose very words seemed to have some soothing, some vivifying power. After her arrival, his recovery grew more rapid, and at length he was strong enough to give to her a full and complete account of his whole history, without excepting any thing whatever. In that history she found many things to question him about. She asked very particularly about Inez and Bessie. She interrogated him very closely about the scene at the death-bed of Hennigar Wyverne, and also asked him many questions about his friend Kane Hellmuth. She was struck by the fact that Hellmuth was an assumed name; made Blake describe his personal appearance; learned from him the history of his marriage with Clara Mordaunt; and was anxious to know whether Blake had not found out his real name. But her chief interest was evinced in O'Rourke, about whom she questioned Blake over and over again, seeking to know all about his personal appearance, his age, his height, his gestures, his accent, his idioms, his peculiarities of every sort. The conclusion of all this was that she at length, with a solemn look at Blake, exclaimed: "This O'Rourke has been deceiving you, and under an assumed name. His real name is Kevin Magrath. It is impossible that these names can belong to any other except one man."

"Kevin Magrath!" exclaimed Blake. "I never heard the name before."

"I suppose not, dear," said his mother; "and so, as you are now strong enough, I will

tell you all about him. You will be able to understand what his designs were about you."

## CHAPTER XLIX.

MRS. WYVERNE.

BLAKE'S mother regarded him very earnestly for a few moments, and then said, in a low voice:

"You remember well, dear, every incident at the death-bed of Mr. Wyverne; you have not told me, however, all, I am sure."

Blake looked hastily at his mother. It was true, he had not told her all. The dying man had claimed him as his son; this he had not mentioned to her—how could he?

But now, as he looked at her, he saw an expression in her face which showed him that she had divined his secret, and had suspected that Mr. Wyverne had said more. The look which she gave him invited further disclosure, without keeping any thing back. Yet, still, Blake hesitated.

"When he said that Inez was not his daughter, had he nothing to say to you?" she asked. "He must. He did. I see it in your face. You are keeping it back. Don't be afraid; I am going to tell you all, and there is nothing in this that should make you hesitate about telling me."

Upon this Blake hesitated no longer, but told her all the particulars of the last scene in which he and Inez took part—he being owned as a son, and Inez rejected as a daughter.

His mother listened attentively to it all, without any comment whatever. After he had ended, she said:

"I should have explained it all at once if I had only seen you, dear, but we have never had an opportunity since then. There was no reason for reticence on your part, and there is nothing in it that is to be dreaded either by you or by me. In the first place, then, Basil dear, I may say that Mr. Wyverne's dying declaration is true. You are his son, Basil Blake Wyverne, and I am Mrs. Henniglar Wyverne, your mother and his wife."

For the latter part of this declaration Blake was utterly unprepared. In his former speculations as to the probability of Mr. Wy-

verne's statement, he had never thought of his mother as having lived under an assumed name. He had only thought of her as Mrs. Blake, and from this point of view the question was one which he did not care to open up. Now, however, by this simple statement, his mother had cleared up the apparent mystery. Still, another wonder remained, and that was the very fact that she had stated. If she had been Mrs. Wyverne, why had she left her husband? Why had she lived in seclusion under an assumed name? Why had she kept her secret so carefully, and brought him up in such total ignorance of his parentage? Together with these, many other questions occurred to his mind which only served to bewilder him.

But now all bewilderment was to end. His mother held the clew by which he could pass to the innermost centre of this tortuous labyrinth of plot, and counterplot, and mystery, and disguise.

"You must know all, Basil dear," said she. "I will therefore begin at the beginning and tell you the whole story."

Basil made no reply, but the eager look of his face showed how great was his desire to hear that story.

"My dear papa," said Mrs. Blake, "was a doctor in London. He was engaged in a large practice, but the style in which he found it necessary to live consumed all his income. When he died there was nothing left but a life-assurance policy of five thousand pounds, which was settled on me, and has been my support in late years. Some time before his death, however, I married Mr. Wyverne, and you were born, and we lived very happily until the death of Bernal Mordaunt, and the arrival of this Kevin Magrath upon the scene.

"Your papa and Bernal Mordaunt were relatives, first or second cousins, I am not sure which, and had always been bosom friends. This Kevin Magrath was some relative of Mr. Wyverne's, not very near, though, and Mr. Wyverne's father had helped him on in life very greatly. He sent him to college at Maynooth to study for the priesthood; but Magrath got into difficulties there, and had to leave. He afterward explained the affair in a way very satisfactorily to the elder Mr. Wyverne, who received him again into favor. This Mr. Wyverne was a solicitor—I mean your papa's father—and admitted Magrath into his office, with the intention of

making him partner with my husband, but he was gaged in the business. Mr. Wyverne, however, had gained the upper hand, so that he had no need to search of an occasion to assist him, and I myself ascended to the position of partner with this there about the man in favor; but, after a few scrupulous, and, poor, dear boy he

"I did not survive after the death of my wife. We used to have the children very tenderly attached to her last illness, prostrated by the fever, so that he was at length he went to the children under the care of a priest, and go about a year's absence, confirmed by himself. The children for the sake of the arrangements for the

"These arrangements He left the children to me like a mother, their guardian. He year we heard that in Alexandria.

"Now was the time I commenced. Your papa gave me hints about the children, sending Clara away, wished to adopt Inez, her Inez Wyverne. I seemed merely foolishly laughed at them as people, however, he dwelt upon I saw that he was in the actual course of operations, I should actual course of operations, I should myself placed in the hands of these poor designs of a man who of duty, honor, and af-



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
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making him partner, I believe. His own son, my husband, had disliked law, and was engaged in the banking business. The elder Mr. Wyverne, however, died before Magrath had gained the full benefit of this connection, so that he had once more to look about in search of an occupation. Your papa now assisted him, and Magrath soon acquired an immense ascendancy over him. He was apparently the soul of frankness and honor, and with this there was a vein of quiet humor about the man that was very much in his favor; but, after all, he was wily, selfish, unscrupulous, and, in short, all that you, my poor, dear boy have found him to be.

"I did not see very much of him until after the death of poor Mordaunt's wife. We used to see  Mordaunt's children were great  mine—Clara and Inez. Mrs. Mordaunt and I also were very tenderly attached, and I nursed her during her last illness. Poor Bernal was utterly prostrated by the blow, and for a time it was feared that he would either die or go mad. At length he went to the Continent, leaving the children under my care. The next we heard of him was that he was going to become a priest, and go to Asia or Africa. After about a year's absence, this news was confirmed by himself. He visited us to see his children for the last time, and to make arrangements for their future welfare.

"These arrangements were simple enough. He left the children with me, for they loved me like a mother, and appointed your papa their guardian. He then left, and in about a year we heard that he had died of the plague in Alexandria.

"Now was the time that my troubles commenced. Your papa began to drop mysterious hints about the children. He talked about sending Clara away to France, and then he wished to adopt Inez as his child, and call her Inez Wyverne. At first these proposals seemed merely foolish and unmeaning, and I laughed at them as preposterous. Gradually, however, he dwelt upon it so incessantly that I saw that he was in earnest about it; and I found that I should have to enter upon an actual course of opposition. I found the children threatened by my own husband, and myself placed in the painful position of defender of these poor orphans against the evil designs of a man who was bound, by every tie of duty, honor, and affection, to guard them.

"This discovery was soon followed by another. It was not your papa himself who had originated this. I hope and believe that he was incapable of it. Kevin Magrath was the real originator, and he had gradually insinuated it into your papa's mind until he had familiarized his thoughts with it. I have said already that Magrath had gained a strange ascendancy over him. In this case he stood behind your papa like some tempter, some Mephistopheles, insidiously whispering his evil and cruel schemes into his ear.

"If it had been my husband only, dear Basil, I am certain I could have defended those poor lamba successfully; but, unfortunately, Kevin Magrath was always behind him, and whenever my remonstrances or my appeals to his better nature produced any little effect, it was sure to pass away in a short time through Magrath's evil ascendancy. And so I found that my own influence was growing less and less, your papa was becoming alienated from me, and I was very miserable. I had no friends to whom I could go, and my only relatives were very distant ones whom I had never seen. About a year passed, and your papa finally grew impatient to carry out his measures, so one day he took Clara away, during my absence from the house. When I came home I found poor little Inez sobbing in a most heart-broken manner, and I learned the truth. Then all my indignation burst forth. Your papa and I quarrelled. I denounced him in the strongest language. I was wild with indignation, and the opinion that I had of the man Magrath made me certain that poor little Clara's life was in danger. Your papa stormed at me—declared that Clara was safe—that she had gone to a convent-school in Paris, and would receive a good education. I threatened to inform against him, but he sneeringly asked what charge I could bring. At this I was silenced; for in the first place, as a wife, I could hardly bring my husband into the public gaze as a criminal; and, again, the charge which I had to make could not be sustained.

"I still tried to protect the remaining child from their machinations. Your papa was bent on carrying out his design of changing her name. What that design really aimed at I did not then know, but I fully believed that the intention was to deal dishonestly and foully by both Inez and Clara. Under these circumstances your papa and I grew more

and more estranged, more and more hostile, until at last his dislike or even hatred toward me became evident to all. He wished to get rid of me on any terms—he wished to put Inez under other influences, so as to bring her up, no doubt, in ignorance of her real name and real rights, and I stood in the way. It became more and more an object with him to get rid of me. At length, one day, Inez was taken, and sent away I knew not where. Upon this I grew quite wild in my despair—once more there was a furious scene, in which I threatened to denounce him in the face of the world. Once again he laughed at my threats, and told me that, on removing the children from my care, he had only sought their own good, because I was not a fit person to take care of them—that he could produce them at any moment, if they were needed, and silence easily any silly clamor that I might raise. In fact, once more I perceived that I was powerless.

“But your papa had designs, and my presence, together with my suspicions, was very unwelcome. He became eager to get rid of me, no matter how. At length he himself proposed this. He said that, if I would go, he would allow me to take you; but, if I refused, he would find a way to make me. I then dreaded that he might deprive me of you also, and this last fear was too much. Besides, living there under the baleful influence of Kevin Magrath was intolerable, and so, at length, I accepted this offer.

“That is the reason why I separated from your papa, Basil dear. It was not my act—it was his. Fortunately, I was quite independent of him. He had stipulated to give me an allowance, and I pretended to assent to this; but, the moment I had got safely away with you, I resolved to put myself out of his reach altogether. With this intention I changed my name, and went to live in a little village in Wales, near Conway—the place, in fact, which you knew as your home; and for years neither your papa nor Kevin Magrath had the faintest idea where I was, or whether we were alive or dead.

“The opinion which I formed then as to the plot of this Kevin Magrath—the plot which he induced your father to try to carry into accomplishment—I have never changed since; but, on the contrary, subsequent events have all tended to confirm that opinion only too painfully. I thought that he was trying no

less a thing than to get control of the great Mordaunt inheritance. I am not sure, but I think, that your papa was next of kin to Bernal Mordaunt, after his own children; and, consequently, if these children should by any means be put out of the way—if it could be made to appear that they were dead—why, then, your papa would gain the great Mordaunt inheritance, and possibly Kevin Magrath would himself obtain such a share of the prize as might be commensurate with his own services. Now, I saw Clara taken away to a foreign country, and never expected to see her again. This I considered the beginning of that policy which was to make the children as good as dead, so as to clear the way for the next of kin. When Inez followed, then I felt sure that she was the next victim.

“It appears, however, that Kevin Magrath did not intend to lay violent hands on them. His purpose, no doubt, was to get them out of the way, and either make up a plausible story of their death, accompanied, of course, by the necessary proofs, or else bring forward creatures of their own as substitutes. Who this Bessie Mordaunt can be, of whom you speak, I cannot imagine. There are no relatives named Mordaunt. Your papa was the next of kin, and it looks as if this Bessie may be some one used by these arch-plotters as a means of gaining the estate. I cannot imagine where your papa could have obtained her, but I take it for granted, of course, that she is some creature of Kevin Magrath's. He had a little family, I remember—a wife and daughter—but that is out of the question, of course.

“Well, I may as well go on with my story. After I had left your papa, I was not idle. I put you at a boarding-school, and spent three months in Paris searching after Clara Mordaunt. I succeeded in finding her at last. She was quite happy, and I did not like to distress her by telling her what was going on. I therefore did not speak to her at all about any of her family affairs, but was satisfied to find that she remembered me and loved me. She, of course, knew me by my true name. She called Mr. Wyverne her guardian, and had no suspicion of any evil on his part. She had never seen him since she left our house. She thought my visit was known to him. After this I kept watch over her. I could find out nothing about Inez, however, for some time. At length, to my horror, Clara disappeared

They told me at match, and I found true. She had married. I learned He belonged to a “Ruthven!”

“Yes,” said the astonishment of her son as heaven, younger son and a man of business away with her, it was the old, old dear, at that time was the doing of M was his emissary done to remove the way. It is the picture always to carry out his purpose natural means; thus of violence himself be in his way, he removal in such a guilt from attaching injure Clara directly utterly ruined by who was only too

“Well, you may I learned this, and I could find no trace and wondered how chafed all the time and helplessness. I knew that, in the eye been committed by prove no crimes. Magrath they had kept reach of human law.

“In the midst of Clara, I received a told her once before her to suppose that too, trusting her wife knew that she would divulge it, since she So she wrote to me, Mrs. Wyverne. I plausible story to the little shop where as to get that letter, Wyverne was an ass up a story to suit it was able to get it letter. She spoke

They told me at the school about a runaway-match, and I found out that it was only too true. She had married some adventurer, they said. I learned that his name was Ruthven. He belonged to a good family."

"Ruthven!" exclaimed Blake.

"Yes," said Mrs. Wyverne, not noticing the astonishment that was visible in the face of her son as he said this—"yes, a Mr. Ruthven, younger son of a great family, but a *roué* and a man of bad reputation. He had run away with her, they said, and, in short, it was the old, old story. For my part, Basil dear, at that time I had no doubt that this was the doing of Magrath; that this Ruthven was his emissary, and that this had been done to remove Clara Mordaunt out of his way. It is the peculiarity of this man's nature always to avoid crime himself, and to carry out his purposes by what I may call natural means; thus, instead of doing any act of violence himself against those who might be in his way, he chose rather to effect their removal in such a way as should prevent any guilt from attaching to him. He would not injure Clara directly, but he caused her to be utterly ruined by means of this emissary, who was only too successful in his purpose.

"Well, you may imagine my despair when I learned this, and when, after all my efforts, I could find no trace of her. I returned home, and wondered how all this would end, and chafed all the time against my own weakness and helplessness. For I could do nothing. I knew that, in the eyes of Heaven, crimes had been committed by these men, yet I could prove no crimes. Through the craft of Magrath they had kept themselves out of the reach of human law.

"In the midst of my unhappiness about Clara, I received a letter from her. I had told her once before where I lived, allowing her to suppose that Mr. Wyverne lived there too, trusting her with my secret, because I knew that she would not be in a position to divulge it, since she never saw your papa. So she wrote to me, addressing the letter to Mrs. Wyverne. I had to make up some plausible story to the post-woman, who kept the little shop where the post-office was, so as to get that letter, pretending to her that Wyverne was an assumed name, and making up a story to suit the occasion, and thus I was able to get it. It was a heart-rending letter. She spoke of poverty, danger, de-

spair, and death, and entreated me to hasten on and do something to save her. It was vaguely expressed, but I saw that she was in great danger. She signed herself Clara Ruthven, by which I saw that she was married, or at least supposed herself to be. I hastened on. I hurried to the house which she mentioned as her lodgings, and arrived there only to find her in a raging fever. The people of the house told me that she had only been there a few days; that she had come in a great state of excitement, and, after sending off a letter which they supposed was to me, she had been seized with illness, which had grown worse and worse. She was delirious for a long time, but eventually recovered. I remained with her and nursed her, as I had nursed her mother; but she, more fortunate, yet perhaps, after all, less fortunate, was saved from her mother's fate, and was restored eventually to life and health.

"I found her grateful beyond all power of language, to express—most touchingly so—yet there was over her a profound and invincible sadness, which bordered on despair. On the events which had occurred since her elopement she would not speak. She made no reference whatever to her letter. She preserved a most obstinate silence about all these things, and I know no more of them now than you do. Something terrible, however, had happened. Her husband—for I will call him this—had either died or he had forsaken her. I do not know which; and, whichever it was that had taken place, the effect was to crush out in her young heart all joy and hope forever.

"I tried to induce her to return to England and live with me, but she refused. I then told her the truth about her life. She was actually ignorant that she was the heiress of Mordaunt Manor. She did not remember much about her youth. She had lived so long amid foreign scenes, that this remembrance had died out. Besides, she had not lived very constantly at Mordaunt Manor, but had lived in Italy for several years with her mother, who was an invalid. But, when I told her the truth, it had no effect whatever. I told her about her sister Inez, but she was indifferent. She would not leave Paris. There was some mournful attraction about the place which kept her there. She only longed to find some home there, where she might live in peace and seclusion. At length she conceived

a strong desire to become a Sister of Charity. She thought that such a life would give her the seclusion and peace which she longed for, and, at the same time, that she would have sufficient occupation to distract her thoughts and save her from despair.

"From that resolve I found it impossible to move her. Every thing that I mentioned was received with indifference, and at length I found it necessary to desist and to yield to her desires. She found a sisterhood at last, and entered upon her novitiate. Then I left her, and have never seen her since, though we have exchanged letters every year."

### CHAPTER L.

#### A MOTHER'S PLOT.

BLAKE had listened thus far almost in silence, but these last revelations about Clara filled him with the strongest emotion. He had already heard from Kane the story of Clara's marriage, and the tragic termination of that married life; but his mother's story furnished an appendix, or rather a sequel, to that story scarcely less tragic than that which Kane had told of. Yet Kane's perfect belief in her death, his vigils over her grave, in Père-la-Chaise, were so well known to Blake that they had inspired him with the same belief, and now he could hardly credit his mother's revelations.

"Do you really mean to say," he exclaimed at last, as she paused in her narrative, "that Clara Mordaunt, after all, is not dead?"

"She certainly is not dead," said his mother, placidly. "Have I not been telling all about her life?"

"She is alive now—really and truly?"

"Really and truly. But it seems to me that you show a very strange kind of feeling about it. How agitated you are, Basil dear!"

"Alive!" repeated Blake, musingly; "alive—and a Sister of Charity? That is—a nun—a nun in black—"

"What is all that?" asked his mother. "What are you saying about nuns, and things?"

"Oh, nothing," said Blake; "only, its confoundedly strange. But I'll tell you all about it."

Upon this Blake proceeded to tell her about Kane, and Kane's account of his marriage, and Kane's fancy about apparitions. To all of this his mother listened in evident surprise, and with much emotion.

"Wonders will never cease," she exclaimed. "Who could have imagined this? So your friend Kane Hellmuth must be Kane Ruthven—and so he is not 'an emissary of Magrath's, but an honest man."

"An honest man!" cried Blake. "I tell you, mother dear, he is one of the noblest fellows that I ever saw. There was no humbug there, I can tell you. No man ever loved a woman better than he did Clara Mordaunt. Why, only think of him now, with his blighted life, and his misery and remorse!"

"So—that was it," continued Mrs. Wyverne; "and that accounts for poor Clara's despair. She escaped death, and he died—or she thought he did. But how strange, in such a solemn and really awful attempt at suicide, that both should escape, and each go into despair about the other."

"Why, they must have met over and over. These meetings have seemed to Kane to be apparitions. I wonder if they have seemed so to her? Oh, why didn't she speak? Why didn't she explain, instead of giving him silent, despairing looks?"

Mrs. Wyverne sighed.

"I can understand," said she. "It's all over with them—she is dead to him."

"Dead to him?"

"Yes; she is a Sister of Charity. She has taken the vows, and so she is dead to poor Kane—and that, no doubt, is the reason why she has looked at him so—in dumb despair. I can understand it all. She thought him dead. His absence for years confirmed that belief. These meetings must have affected her as they affected him. She is, at least, as superstitious as he is. But, in any case, it is just as well, since they never can belong to one another again."

At this sad thought Blake was silent. His first feeling had been one of joy. He thought of flying at once to tell Kane the news, but now he saw that such news as this had better not be told to his friend.

"But I must go on," continued Mrs. Wyverne, "and tell you something about my share in these later events of your life, Basil dear. Well, then, for years I had no communication with your father, and preserved my

recognition and my heard, however, was alive, though any thing about his education in Paris, and ought to know yet I did not know for it seemed to me tell a son about a I thought that, if you, he might feel and possibly, if h tion with you in a influence over his which the fatal as be destroyed.

"With these h London very secre ing out all about y I learned that he had learned that he had young ladies, one Wyverne, and the Who Bessie Morda nor do I now know verne, there could once that he had rather Magrath's o and that my poor brought up in the Wyverne, and that Yet even this diac pursuit of his purp hope which I had fo through you.

"Circumstances learned that he was g his health, and that tion. And now, Ba why I wrote you s health; why I insiate having some recreatio most ordered you to must have wondered a woman's whim; bu dear; it was someth insisted on your going hoped that you might father. But I did no made sure of a meetin him a letter, and res past; of that better ence, of love, and o minded him of the chi

*incognito* and my seclusion most carefully. I heard, however, from time to time, that he was alive, though he never could have heard any thing about me. At length you had finished your education, and you got that situation in Paris, and it seemed to me that you ought to know something about your past, yet I did not know exactly how to tell you, for it seemed to me to be a terrible thing to tell a son about a father's guilt. Then, again, I thought that, if your father could only see you, he might feel some emotion of affection; and possibly, if he were brought into connection with you in any way, you might gain an influence over his better nature, by means of which the fatal ascendancy of Magrath might be destroyed.

"With these hopes I made a journey to London very secretly, and succeeded in finding out all about your papa's circumstances. I learned that he was in very feeble health. I learned that he had a family consisting of two young ladies, one of whom was named Inez Wyverne, and the other, Beesie Mordaunt. Who Beesie Mordaunt was I did not know, nor do I now know; but, as to Inez Wyverne, there could be no doubt. I saw at once that he had carried his old plan—or rather Magrath's old plan—into execution, and that my poor darling Inez had been brought up in the belief that her name was Wyverne, and that she was his daughter. Yet even this discovery of his unflinching pursuit of his purpose did not destroy the hope which I had formed of working on him through you.

"Circumstances favored my wish. I learned that he was going to the Continent for his health, and that St. Malo was his destination. And now, Basil dear, you understand why I wrote you so earnestly about your health; why I insisted so strongly upon your having some recreation; why, above all, I almost ordered you to go to St. Malo. You must have wondered at what you considered a woman's whim; but it was not that, Basil dear; it was something far deeper. And I insisted on your going there solely because I hoped that you might meet with your own father. But I did not trust to accident. I made sure of a meeting between you. I wrote him a letter, and reminded him of all the past; of that better past, the past of Innocence, of love, and of domestic joy. I reminded him of the child whom he once loved

before his soul had become darkened and his heart hardened through the wiles of the Tempter. I told him that his son—our son—the associate of his better past, and of the days of his innocence, was now a man—an honorable gentleman; and that this son would be at St. Malo's, ready there to become his better angel, and lead him back to virtue and peace. I told him how you had been brought up, Basil dear; how ignorant you were of all his faults; how ignorant you were of the fact that he had any connection with the name of Wyverne. I told him that I had heard of his proposed journey to St. Malo's, and had made you promise to go there, with the hope that the guilty father might meet with the innocent son, and might be moved to repentance through a father's love.

"And, O Basil dear, how can I tell you the feelings that I had as I received your letters—those letters which showed me that he had yet lingering in his heart the feelings of a father? He had not forgotten the child whom he once loved. Avarice had hardened his heart, but sickness and weakness had softened it again, and the sight of you awakened a deep yearning within him. Now you know all. Now you understand why it was that the poor invalid elung to you, why he yielded to you, why he threw at you those looks of deep affection, why he loved to see you with the injured Inez. He had repented. He was longing to make amends. He could not tell you all that was in his heart to say. He could not reveal to you the truth about his past life, for fear that you would scorn him. He had my address, and wrote me one or two letters, full of repentance for his past. He implored my forgiveness. He promised to make amends. He spoke of his deep love for you. He entreated me to find some way of making known these things to you without exciting your detestation. He wished me to come on at once, and join him, and tell all to you in such a way that you might own him for your father. He spoke of your regard for Inez, and expressed the hope that a union between you two might be brought about; for somehow he seemed to consider this the best sort of atonement that he could make.

"I was overcome. I was not very well just then, and could not travel. Besides, I thought it best to wait, leaving you two to know one another better. The profound reverence which you expressed for him

touched me, and I wished this reverence to deepen into affection; and then I thought I would join you, and my work of reconciliation would be made easier. Oh, if I had but gone on then! How much suffering would have been prevented for all of us! But I seted for the best.

"Well, dear Basil, you know the rest. You went away to Switzerland, and there your poor papa died. That letter which you spoke of struck him down. I don't know what was in it, but it was undoubtedly some communication from Kevin Magrath—some threat—some terror. At any rate, he sunk down to death, and strove vainly, at the last, to make some feeble amends by expressions of remorse, by a declaration of the truth. O Basil! that father's heart yearned over you then, as Death stood near; and I believe—I know—that his repentance was sincere. Pray, Basil dear—pray for your father; pray for the repose of the soul of the repentant Hennigar Wyverne!"

Mrs. Wyverne stopped, overcome by deep emotion. Blake also felt himself profoundly moved. His mother's story brought up vividly before him the form of that venerable invalid who had manifested such a strong regard for him—the form of that dying man who, at the last hour of life, had claimed him as a son. It had been all a mystery, but now all was revealed. What he had considered a strange coincidence was now shown to be no coincidence at all, but the result of his mother's management, and of her desire to bring father and son together.

There was nothing which he could say on such a subject. It was a painful one from any point of view. His father's past could not be discussed, as it was a past filled with wrong-doing too late repented of. His father's death-bed was too sad a theme for conversation.

But there were other thoughts which had been suggested by these revelations, and prominent among them was his mother's conviction that O'Rourke was no other than Kevin Magrath. O'Rourke, he well knew, must have some motive. Down in the gloom of the Catacombs, at that first appalling moment of desertion, he had fancied for a time that his betrayer must be a madman; but after he had heard those words stealing through the piled-up stones to his ears, "*Blake Wyverne, farewell forever!*" he saw

that this treachery must have been premeditated, and that it must have arisen out of his relation to Hennigar Wyverne. Now, when that relation was assured, it became a more certain cause than ever for O'Rourke's treachery. Yet why it should be a cause, and what benefit O'Rourke could hope to gain, remained so much a mystery as ever.

"It may be true, mother dear," said he, "that O'Rourke is only your Kevin Magrath under an assumed name. I don't deny it, since you are so sure about it; but I confess it is a puzzle to me why O'Rourke, or Magrath, or whoever he is, should take the trouble to elaborate so intricate a plot against such an insignificant personage as I am. What am I, that he should labor so secretly, so persistently, and for so long a time, to compass my destruction? What benefit could he get by it? I must say, it seems to me, in the hackneyed French phrase, "the play isn't worth the candle."

Mrs. Wyverne looked gravely up.

"You speak now," said she, "as Basil Blake, not as Basil Wyverne. You forget that, though Basil Blake is insignificant, Basil Wyverne is very much the contrary. He is the son and heir of Hennigar Wyverne, a well-known London banker of great wealth. What he had of his own was immense; what he has appropriated from the Mordaunt property, I cannot tell; but certain it is that you, his son, are the heir of a vast fortune. This of itself would be a prize sufficient to induce Kevin Magrath to get you removed. Supposing that you were removed, I do not see exactly how he could enter upon the possession of the estate of your papa, but I have no doubt that he would manage to do it. At any rate, you may be sure that this was his motive. He went to the Catacombs with you, as he said, for a great treasure—not, however, for his pretended treasure of the Cesars, but for the sake of the more commonplace treasure of the Wyvernes. Such a treasure was worthy, in his estimation, of such a deed. And you see, Basil dear, his hand. You see how cautiously, how elaborately, he has worked. He has tried to remove you from the world, so that you should leave no trace whatever. If you had not escaped, there would not have been even the faintest indication which might have disclosed your fate. You would have vanished from the scene utterly. Your incoherent letter to

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Kane's journey to Lond

me told nothing at all, and I imagine the letter that you wrote to your friend Kane must have been equally unintelligible. When I received your letter, I had just recovered from a severe illness, and the fears which it created almost sent me back again."

"Illness, mother dear?" said Blake, anxiously. "You never mentioned that before."

"Illness? O my boy!" said Mrs. Wyverne. "It is not worth speaking of, since it is past; but, while it lasted, I was as near to death as you were in the Catacombs. It was the news of the death of your poor papa that struck me down. It came so sudden, and at the very time, too, when I was indulging in such bright hopes. I was preparing to join you, and to perform the part of general reconciler. I hoped to be joined at last to the husband of my youth, with whom I had lived in the happiest part of my life. O Basil, dear boy, you do not know, you cannot imagine how strongly I had set my heart on this reunion, on this reconciliation. But suddenly the news came, and all these hopes were dashed to the ground. The blow was a terrible one, and for a time all hope died out, and all desire for life. I was utterly prostrated, and remained so for weeks. During all that time I heard nothing from you, and a great anxiety came over me. This made it worse. Your incoherent and unintelligible letter gave me nothing but uneasiness, and, as nothing followed it, I sank into despair. At length I recovered my bodily strength, and was able to move about; but still, dear boy, I could never find any respite whatever from the dreadful suspense and anxiety in which I was about you. At last your letter came, telling me that you had been ill, and wanted me. Such a letter at ordinary times would have been sad indeed, but to me, under those circumstances, it was like a resurrection from despair. I found new life and strength, and hurried on to you at once. But, apart from my own misfortunes, what you told me about yours, Basil dear, makes me feel certain that your Dr. O'Rourke is no other than Kevin Magrath. He's no more a doctor than I am. He played the part of one merely for the purpose of making your acquaintance. He is no more a doctor than he is a priest."

"It was as a priest that Kane saw him," said Blake, who then went on to tell about Kane's journey to London.

"Yes, yes, oh, yea," said Mrs. Wyverne, as he ended. "Every thing that you tell me only shows more and more plainly the unmistakable marks of Kevin Magrath. Now, not one word of all that he told Kane was true. Inez was not the daughter of Hennigar Wyverne, and he knew it. Hennigar Wyverne did not die poor, for he left an immense property, which perhaps Magrath is now trying to gain for himself. Above all, Clara is not dead, and he could not have known any thing about her."

"But, mother dear, if this terrible Kevin Magrath is so anxious to get the Wyverne property, what will he do about you?"

"About me? Well, I don't know. I have taken care to keep out of his reach. He is not the man to overlook me, however insignificant I may be. No doubt he has his designs with regard to me. I dare say he has formed some plan, if he can find me, to work upon my love for you, to invent some story about your going to America, and entice me away, where I shall never trouble him again. That is his mode of action. If you, dear, had not written to me, he might have done this, for I would have gone to the north-pole after you, even on the strength of a forged letter or a trumped-up story; but now, Basil boy, since I have you, there is no need for us to conjecture any thing as to what Kevin Magrath might have done."

"Did you stop in London on your way here?" asked Blake, after a moment's pause.

"Stop in London, dear Basil? Of course not."

"You did not hear any thing, then, about Inez?"

"Oh, no. I was too anxious about you, dear."

Blake sighed.

"I did not know," said he, "but that you might have heard something about them."

"No, Basil dear, not a word. You see, I came on at once, almost from a bed of illness, to you, for your sake, dear boy."

Basil was silent. He was longing to hear something about Inez.

"I shall be able to travel, dear mother," said he, after a time, "in a day or two, and

Rome is horrible to me, after what has happened. I should like to go to England at once—to London—but I suppose on our way we ought to stop at Paris. I want to see Kane, to tell him what you have told me; or,

at any rate, to see him, whether I tell him that or not."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wyverne, "that is no more than right. I also wish to go to Paris, for I should like very much to see poor, dear Clara."

"I do not know whether I ought to tell Kane about her or not," said Blake, doubtfully.

"Well, I'm sure I don't," said his mother; "and it seems to me that you'll have to be guided by circumstances. At any rate, I shall see her, and I think it probable that I shall tell her all that I've heard from you about poor Kane. For, dear Basil, I have come to pity that poor man, with his undeserved remorse, and his ruined life; and my sympathy with you makes me look upon him with something of your feelings, Basil dear?"

"Kane is the noblest man I have ever met with," said Blake.

"Poor fellow!" sighed Mrs. Wyverne. "And only think that, while poor Clara is, after all, really alive, she is the same as dead to him."

"Well," said Blake, "the more I think of it, the more I feel that Kane ought to know it. At the worst, it cannot be so bad as his present belief. He thinks now that he is little better than a murderer; if he were to know that she did not die, he might have more peace of mind, even though she could never be his."

"I am quite of your opinion, Basil dear, quite," said Mrs. Wyverne.

They now went on to talk of many things, and more particularly about this *Bessie Mordeant*, whose exact position amid all these affairs Mrs. Wyverne was anxious to ascertain. She therefore made very particular inquiries about her personal appearance, manner, tone, accent, etc., and gradually a light began to dawn on her mind.

## CHAPTER LI.

### A DISCOVERY.

BLAKE had reasons of his own for keeping his escape a secret. He therefore did not go out of the house, even though he needed exercise, but quietly waited till he was strong enough to travel. He did not know but that O'Rourke, or rather Kevin Magrath, as he now

believed him to be, might still be in the city; nor did he know but that he might have emissaries abroad. For many reasons he did not wish Magrath to know that he was alive; and accordingly he determined to travel in disguise, so as to guard against the possibility of discovery. This disguise was very easily procured—a false beard, spectacles, and a priest's dress, being sufficient to make him unrecognizable by his own mother. In a few days they set out, and reached Paris without any further incident.

Blake remained in his room that day. Mrs. Wyverne rested a few hours, and then, in the afternoon, went out with the intention of finding Clara. Toward evening Blake left the hotel, and went to visit Kane Ruthven.

Kane was alone. In answer to the knock at the door he roared, "Come in!" The door opened, and a man entered in a priest's dress, for Blake's caution would not allow him as yet to drop his disguise. Kane rose, and looked inquiringly at his visitor, but without the slightest sign of recognition. Upon this Blake removed his beard and spectacles, and revealed to Kane the pale face of his friend, upon which were still visible the marks of the sufferings through which he had passed.

"Good Lord!" cried Kane Ruthven, springing forward and grasping Blake's hands in both of his. "Blake, old fellow, is it really you? Why, how pale you are!"

He stopped abruptly, and looked anxiously at Blake, still holding his hands.

"I've had a hard time of it, old fellow," said Blake; "been sick; and am hardly well yet."

"Ah, that accounts for your strange silence. Why, I've been at my wit's ends about you. You decamped suddenly, leaving a crazy, unintelligible letter, and vanished into midnight darkness. Sick, ah! So that's it—but where?"

"You've just said it," said Blake, solemnly. "I vanished into midnight darkness."

"I don't understand you."

"Well, perhaps I'd better tell you all about myself, for I want to get your assistance, old boy. You're the very man I need now, and you're the only man."

"You may rely upon me to the end of an extent, my boy," said Kane, earnestly. "But come, sit down now. We've given queer confidences to one another in this room, and

it looks as though you'll talk."

"Thanks—"

"What—"

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Blake refused.

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it looks as though this would be the queerest. But you'll take something, won't you?"

"Thanks—no."

"What—not even ale?"

"Well, perhaps a glass of ale wouldn't be unwelcome," said Blake, taking his seat on the sofa. Kane at once poured out the draught, and Blake slowly drank it. Thereupon Kane offered a pipe, which, however, Blake refused.

Kane now sat down, and Blake told him the whole story. He listened in a state of mind which was made up of astonishment and horror, and said not a single word.

After this, Blake proceeded to give him the outlines of his mother's story, without hinting, however, at the fact of Clara's flight and subsequent life. This he did not feel prepared as yet to divulge. He merely wished Kane to understand what he had learned about his own birth, and about that of Inez; to explain the character of Kevin Magrath, and try identifying him with O'Rourke, to disclose the motive which had animated his betrayer.

The effect of all this upon Kane was tremendous. The last phase which his opinion about Magrath had undergone was one of reverence. He had sought him out as a culprit; he had pleaded his own cause before him as before a judge; he had humbly and most gratefully listened to his acquittal, and had received the grasp of his hand as a symbol of the forgiveness of some superior being. Now, in the light of Blake's story, Kevin Magrath stood at last revealed in his own true character—a villain, cold-blooded, remorseless, terrible!

But with this discovery there came a throng of thoughts so painful that he hardly dared to entertain them. At once he thought of Inez—of Bessie—now in the power of this man, who could take them where he wished, since they had been formally intrusted to him by their best friends—by Kane and Gwyn—the husband, the brother; thus handing them both over unsuspectingly into his keeping. The terror of this thought was too much.

Blake saw the horror of Kane's soul, and understood at once that his story had served to arouse within his friend feelings and troubles that were connected with himself, and that some new grief had arisen before Kane out of the light of this revelation. What it

was he could not conjecture. He thought at first that Kane's troubles perhaps referred to Clara; and then he thought that they might be connected with Inez. For already Blake's speculation upon Magrath's course had made him think that his next victim might be Inez. And now the sight of Kane's agitation made him feel so sure at last that Inez was really involved, that he was afraid to ask, for fear that he might learn the truth that he dreaded to hear.

There was now a long silence. Each had much to say, but did not know how to say it. In the mind of each there was that which he dreaded to make known to the other.

Kane was the first to break the silence.

"Settled in Rome! for good—for good!" he repeated, recalling the statement of Magrath—"settled in Rome for good!"

"What do you mean by that?" asked Blake, in surprise.

"It was what I heard about you."

"About me?" cried Blake. "Who said it?"

"What horrible irony! What cold-blooded, remorseless humor—for he had a sense of humor—the humor of a demon; and I can imagine him enjoying this, all by himself—settled down—yes, down—in Rome—and for good!"

"There's only one man that could have said that of me. What do you mean? Have you seen him?"

Blake trembled from head to foot. The danger was growing greater, and drawing nearer to Inez.

"Only one man—yes," said Kane. "Of course; you are right. Your O'Rourke must be Kevin Magrath, and he was the man that said that of you."

Blake started to his feet.

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes," said Kane, solemnly.

"You know something, that you're holding back," said Blake, in feverish excitement. "Magrath has been doing something more, which you know of; and now, since I have told you his true character, you are horrified. There is danger abroad, to which friends of yours are exposed—are they friends of mine, too?"

Before Kane could answer, there was a knock at the door. Blake looked impatiently around. It was Gwyn. Kane introduced them to one another, and explained Gwyn's

position as the husband of the young lady whom he had known as Bessie Mordaunt.

"Before I answer your last question, Blake," said Kane, "let me explain all this horrible business to my brother here, for I assure you he is as deeply concerned in what you ask about as you yourself are—perhaps more so."

At this Blake regarded Gwyn with sad curiosity. Kane's words meant that he was implicated, probably as Bessie's husband, and that if there was danger to Inez, Bessie was also involved. He was now content to explain all to Gwyn, so as to have his co-operation in any duty that might now arise before them, and also to get the benefit of any advice which one so deeply interested might be able to give.

Gwyn had never experienced any of those alternations of opinion about Kevin Magrath which had been felt by Kane; indeed, he had not thought much about him, inasmuch as he had only known him for the last few days. During that time he had thought of him as rather an eccentric, but still a good man, and had only objected to him on the ground that he formed one of those who were taking Bessie from him. But now, as he learned the truth about this man, and reflected that he had allowed Bessie to go with him—thinking also that Bessie, as one of the Mordaunts, might be implicated in the fate of those whom he yet believed to be her sisters—a great fear arose in his heart, and he sat looking at the others in mute horror.

"He—he—could not harm her—he—loves her—she always called him her dear grandpa, you know," faltered Gwyn, at last.

"Is your wife with him?" asked Blake, rightly interpreting the meaning of those words.

"Yes," said Kane, "and Inez, too."

At this, Blake said not a word. He had dreaded it; he had expected it; but was none the less overwhelmed when he actually heard it.

"It's a mixed-up story, and the devil himself couldn't have worked with more patient, cold-blooded craft," said Kane. "I didn't like to tell you, and I don't like to now, but Inez has had a hard time of it."

"Go on," said Blake, in a whisper.

Upon this, Kane told Blake the whole story of Inez—her imprisonment, her escape, his meeting with her, his journey to Ruthven,

and Bessie's departure to meet her friend, followed by himself and Gwyn. Some of this was news to Gwyn, for he had not known before the name of the man who had entrapped Inez. It only added to his terrors about Bessie. To Blake this was all too fearfully intelligible. The long, deep, patient plot was characteristic of Kevin Magrath. He chose to lead his victims to destruction, as his mother had said, by a purely natural process, by their own act and consent, so that he should be himself free from danger. What more? Had Inez and Bessie now gone with him voluntarily to destruction? He trembled to hear.

The rest was soon told. The story of Clara's grave in Rome, of the removal of her remains—all was horrible. He knew well how false it was. He could not tell Kane even then the truth about Clara, so as to show Kane and Gwyn its complete untruth. He could scarcely use his faculties, and it seemed as though his strength of mind and body, which had been so severely tried of late, was about to give way utterly under this new blow.

"They're lost!" he cried at last. "There's no such grave—in all—Rome."  
Kane looked at him, as though he would read his soul.

"Her father," said he in a voice which was tremulous with agitation at a rightful suspicion which came to him—"her father—had her—her remains buried—by the side of her mother—in the Catacombs."

"The Catacombs!" groaned Blake. "O God! The Catacombs! O Heavens! don't you know what that means?"

At this both Kane and Gwyn shuddered.

"Stop!" said Kane, in a hoarse voice, "don't be too fast—you don't know—she was taken away from Père-la-Chaise."

"She was not," cried Blake, who could not say any more.

"What do you mean?" asked Kane.

"Go and ask the keeper—go to the cemetery now—ask him if any such a removal has taken place," gasped Blake.

"By Heavens, I will!" cried Kane. "He had persuaded me. I too was going to the Catacombs, to pray at her grave. I will go this very instant and see—" He hurried out of the room, and banged the door after him, in the middle of his sentence.

Blake and Gwyn sat there in silence, overwhelmed by the anguish of the new fear that had arisen in their minds. Of the two, Blake

was in the deeper. Gwyn's knowledge could not help confirm which he had in Bessie. She had a fond language. Now with the under child. Inez showed ment. Bessie seemed as her own—as if he over, once before, when injure Bessie, he had for Inez alone that he Out of all this he could conclusion that Bessie Inez alone in peril.

That Inez was in What then? What tined to play? Was tention to Inez? If a allow her to go? making use of Bessie Inez the more surely Bessie as a decoy. I that came to him now with horror. Once m flection came of Ruth with her frightful sugg ing moment when she the top of the cliff ar demon—the Tempter in—in the form of one r than life. The remem and once more there v struggle of soul somet had torn him as he foug tion. But the evil th could not easily be dis one of whom he had or become ever again altog recurrence. The thoug made him strike her sens destroyed, nor could Bes late again. Circumstan selves to his mind, and to horrible coloring which tions: her flight from R bringing Inez once more in her refusal to return to h parture with Inez and Ma and to the Catacombs; he ing him that he must bri it only to draw Kane to R him to come? Was she decoy of him? and, since

was in the deeper despair, for he knew all Gwyn's knowledge was imperfect, and he could not help consoling himself by the belief which he had in Magrath's affection for Bessie. She had always spoken of him in fondest language. She rested in his affection now with the undoubting confidence of a child. Inez showed nothing of such a sentiment. Bessie seemed to appropriate Magrath as her own—as if he was her father. Moreover, once before, when he had been able to injure Bessie, he had spared her, and it was for Inez alone that he had spread his snares; Out of all this he could not help reaching the conclusion that Bessie was perfectly safe, and Inez alone in peril.

That Inez was in peril he had no doubt. What then? What part was Bessie destined to play? Was her presence any protection to Inez? If so, why should Magrath allow her to go? Perhaps Magrath was making use of Bessie to work out his will on Inez the more surely. Perhaps he was using Bessie as a decoy. Perhaps the thoughts that came to him now were such as filled him with horror. Once more the terrible recollection came of Ruthven Towers, of Bessie with her frightful suggestions, of that appalling moment when she stood before him on the top of the cliff and seemed a beautiful demon—the Tempter in the form of an angel—in the form of one whom he loved dearer than life. The remembrance was anguish; and once more there went on within him a struggle of soul something like that which had torn him as he fought down the temptation. But the evil thought once indulged could not easily be dismissed, nor could the one of whom he had once formed suspicions become ever again altogether free from their recurrence. The thought which had once made him strike her senseless was not to be destroyed, nor could Bessie ever be immaculate again. Circumstances suggested themselves to his mind, and tormented him by the horrible coloring which they gave to her actions: her flight from Ruthven Towers; her bringing Inez once more into Magrath's power; her refusal to return to her husband; her departure with Inez and Magrath, and to Rome, and to the Catacombs; her last words reminding him that he must bring Kane too. Was it only to draw Kane to Rome that she wished him to come? Was she trying to make a decoy of him? and, since she had failed in

her first temptation, had she resorted to one which was more insidious? And why? Destroy Kane, and Ruthven Towers would be his; destroy Inez, and Mordaunt Manor would be hers!—A groan burst from him in his agony; he started to his feet, and paced the room unconscious of the presence of Blake.

Blake himself had too much to think of to pay any attention to his companion. He had gone, and he knew what news he would bring back. What then? He must know. When? How long was it since he had departed for Rome? Could he overtake them?

Clara's grave! The Catacombs! Abhorrent, appalling thought! The Catacombs! And Kevin Magrath was now leading Inez to that place of horror—the place to which he had been led. And Inez was going of her own free will, as he had gone; drawn there as he had been drawn, by an overpowering motive. Avarice had drawn him; Love was drawing her. He had gone to find the treasure of the Cæsars; she was going to pray at a sister's grave. What damnable art was it that enabled this man to destroy the just suspicions of others?—and, after all that he had done to Inez, to win her confidence, and even that of a world-worn man like Kane? Was he, too, intending to go down into the Catacombs with Kevin Magrath? Would not he, too, wish to pray at the grave? And Gwyn Ruthven! Was he, too, doomed? What part had his wife in all this? Why did she leave her young husband who loved her? What had she to do with the Mordaunts? What connection was there between her and Magrath? His mother knew that she was not a Mordaunt, or at least not of the family of Bernal Mordaunt. Was she true, and deceived; or a deceiver, false like Magrath? Or was she a decoy used by Magrath, though innocent herself?

Blake's thoughts about Bessie were bitter; and present circumstances, combined with what he had heard from Gwyn and Kane about her, had already created suspicions in his mind which he did not care or dared to express. In his own thoughts he doubted her; he feared the worst about her. Thus, in this present terrible moment, it was Bessie's hard fortune to be the subject of the gravest and darkest suspicion, not only in the mind of Blake, but even in that of her husband.

At length, after a long absence, Kane re-

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turned. His face wore a very strange expression.

"Well?" cried Blake.

"It is gone," said Kane, slowly.

"What?"

"It is true. Her—remains—were exhumed—and taken away. I saw the keeper, who showed me the books of record—and I—visited the grave."

He fung himself into a chair by the table and buried his head in his hands.

Blake was bewildered, but a moment's reflection explained all.

"It is part of that villain's consummate and most painstaking style of action. He always works in what he would call a scientific or artistic manner. Yes, he has certainly exhumed—something—and—"

Kane started up and stared.

"This is the second time," he said, with deep agitation, "that you have spoken about—about her—in that tone. In Heaven's name, Blake, what is it? What am I to understand?"

"Tone?" said Blake, confusedly. "I was not conscious of speaking in any particular tone."

With a disappointed look, Kane sat down again.

"We must act, or I must, and at once," cried Blake. "Tell me—have I time?"

Gwyn and Kane looked at one another.

"I tell you his removal of—of that—is only to make his work more thorough. He will have something to show them."

Kane looked up.

"That is what I mean by your tone. I can't understand you, but I see how agitated you are. I'll talk about it to-morrow. But if you are going to do any thing, Gwyn and I will help you. Magrath left for Rome yesterday morning only, with Inez and Bessie. Gwyn wanted me to leave with him to-morrow, but I was going to remain a week or two. Still, as things are now, we ought all of us to leave by the very next train."

"Will you go—that's right," said Blake. "Yesterday morning!—and Magrath is prompt in his acts always; but this time he may be more leisurely about it, he may not suspect pursuit. He knows nothing of my escape. No—no—I think he will go about this work leisurely, and assist those of you who wish to—descend into the Catacombs—and pray at Clara's tomb.—When does the next train go,

to-night? Can't we start at once? I will go now. I'll only stop a minute to write a few lines to my mother."

"Wait, Blake, boy," said Kane, as Blake, after these incoherent words, arose, and walked to the door. "There's no train till morning. We had better all leave at the same time. You can write your letter here, or you'll have time to go and see your mother yourself."

"No; I won't go and see her," said Blake. "She would make objections, and all that, or insist on coming with me. No, I'll write her, and if you can find some one to take it to her address, I'll be obliged."

Kane now offered Blake some writing-materials, and he wrote very hurriedly the following letter:

"DEAR MOTHER: I have heard the very worst. Inez has fallen into the hands of Kevin Magrath, who has taken her to Rome. You know what that means. I am going back there by the first train to-morrow morning, in the faint hope of being able to save her. If you have any news about Clara, you had better come on also. Kane Ruthven and his brother Gwyn are going to accompany me. I have said nothing to Kane about Clara.

"If you come to Rome you will find me, or hear of me at the old lodgings.

"Your affectionate son,  
"BASIL."

## CHAPTER LII.

### CLARA MORDAUNT.

Mrs. WYVERNE had gone out for the purpose of finding Clara, and went at once to the place which had been her last address. It was an ordinary house, which was occupied by some Sisters of Charity, among whom Clara had cast in her lot. She hoped to find her here yet; and, on asking for her, she found to her great relief, that she was within.

Mrs. Wyverne's story to Blake has already shown that Clara was not dead, as Kane had supposed. To Kane the thought of her being actually alive was not admissible. The memory of that one great tragedy obscured all else, and he was incapable of seriously considering that theory which Blake had suggested, namely, that Clara had escaped as he himself had. But, to Mrs. Wyverne, the ill-

ing Clara was the world; and, what, to her was in-  
usual.

She was at once moments Clara herself and with a cry of joy and kissed her again the same time many of gratitude, and of herself was moved part of Clara, and with these signs of a warm tender loving nature had been expected to have worldly ties.

Clara took her to forming her that in the strict in their regulation and that various private intimate association with it was a plainly-furnished window looking out where they were alone together they wished without in

Clara was dressed and the simple costume give an additional charm, and to the beautiful face. She had an extraneous to Inez, having general and the same family Clara, there was a deep in her eyes and in her manifest traces of long Inez, after her escape from just arising from a bed pale from suffering, had counterpart of his lost Clara had in her face as had never shown, for he deeper, and more intense longed.

At first the conversed with anxious inquiries health, and questions about been doing since their professed to have lived Mrs. Wyverne was mourning with the recital of her length went on by details that series of events which on, and with which Clara mately connected. Mrs. cautiously and gradually

ing Clara was the most familiar thought in the world; and, what to Kane was supernatural, to her was in the highest degree natural.

She was at once admitted, and in a few moments Clara herself made her appearance, and with a cry of joy caught her in her arms, and kissed her again and again, uttering at the same time many exclamations of affection, of gratitude, and of delight. Mrs. Wyverne herself was moved by such emotion on the part of Clara, and was rejoiced to perceive these signs of a warm human sympathy and a tender loving nature in one who might have been expected to have grown indifferent to worldly ties.

Clara took her to her own chamber, informing her that in this house they were less strict in their regulations than in other places, and that various privileges were allowed of intimate association with friends or relatives. It was a plainly-furnished room, with a single window looking out upon the street. Here they were alone together, and could say what they wished without interruption.

Clara was dressed as a Sister of Charity, and the simple costume served in her case to give an additional charm to her graceful figure, and to the beautiful and still youthful face. She had an extraordinary resemblance to Inez, having generally the same features and the same family peculiarity. But, with Clara, there was a deeper melancholy visible; in her eyes and in her face there were the manifest traces of long and severe suffering. Inez, after her escape from prison, and while just arising from a bed of sickness, thin and pale from suffering, had seemed to him the counterpart of his lost Clara; but the real Clara had in her face a sadness such as Inez had never shown, for her sufferings had been deeper, and more intense, and more prolonged.

At first the conversation was taken up with anxious inquiries about one another's health, and questions about what each had been doing since their last meeting. Clara professed to have lived her usual life, but Mrs. Wyverne was more frank; and, beginning with the recital of her own troubles, she at length went on by degrees to unfold all that series of events which had been going on, and with which Clara herself was so intimately connected. Mrs. Wyverne did this cautiously and gradually, and now for the

first time Clara learned the full measure of her own rights, the extent of her wrongs, the sufferings of those near relatives of hers whom she had not seen since childhood, but whose names and fortunes now awakened an intense interest; and, finally, the machinations of Magrath, which had first been directed against herself, and of late had turned against her sister Inez. All this awakened deep emotion within her, but this was surpassed by the feelings that were aroused when Mrs. Wyverne brought forward the mention of Kane Ruthven. Kane Ruthven was the intimate friend of Mrs. Wyverne's son. That son, just escaping from unparalleled dangers, was even now about to visit Kane Ruthven. This Kane Ruthven, also, her husband, had been subject to remorse for years on her account, and was still mourning over her as dead. All this came out, and Clara listened with intense emotion, pouring forth a torrent of eager questions, and, forgetting every thing else, evinced an insatiable longing to know every thing that Mrs. Wyverne could tell about him.

On former interviews Clara had been merely a despairing mourner, weary of the world, seeking solace only in the life which she had adopted, reticent about her past, shunning every allusion to it. Now, the revelations which Mrs. Wyverne brought her broke down all her reticence, and poured over her soul a flood of memories which overwhelmed her. It was not the fact that Kane Ruthven was alive, not the fact that he was living in Paris that impressed her, but rather the fact that he was suffering, and for her; that he was bearing this load of remorse, and enduring these stings of conscience, on her account; the fact that he so clung to his memories of her, that he was, even now, living a life which was arranged with reference to her, and that he was associating her in all his thoughts with the angels of heaven.

All her reserve broke down, and she was now eager to tell Mrs. Wyverne her own story, eager to ask Mrs. Wyverne's advice about what she ought to do. The story which she had to tell referred to that event already narrated to Blake by Kane, but, as it regarded it from her point of view, it may be repeated here.

She began by describing her earliest recollections, which were vague reminiscences of splendid homes in England and in Italy.



as if I wouldn't go all over the world with you."

"At this, he looked at me with so strange an expression that I actually felt frightened. For a long time he regarded me in silence—I was bewildered and terrified, and didn't know what to think.

"Over the world," he said, in a whisper, bending down lower, and still holding me in his arms—"over the world?—O my darling!—I know you would do that—but would you do more than that?"

"Do more than that?" I faltered.

"Would you—would you?" he said; and then he hesitated.

"Would I what?" I asked, breathlessly.

"He bent his head down lower yet, and whispered in my ear:

"Darling! would you go with me out of the world?"

"O dear Mrs. Wyverne! how can I tell you the unutterable horror that there was in that question? The whisper hissed itself through me; and every nerve and every fibre tangled and thrilled at its awful meaning. I felt paralyzed. I did not say one single word. He, on his part, went talking on in a strange, wild way, and was too intent on framing some argument for persuading me to notice the perfect agony of fear that this proposal had given me.—To die! Oh! to die! and I so young! and when I had been so happy! This was my only thought. Remember what a child I was. And to die! and so suddenly! Oh, horror of horrors! And worse, to administer death to myself! O dear, dear Mrs. Wyverne! how can I possibly tell you the utter anguish of such a thought?—Well, he went on speaking more, but I didn't hear a word, or, at least, I didn't understand, you know, for I was really quite stupefied. But I gathered, in a vague way, from what he said, that he had all along been looking forward to this, and that he had decided what to do. For himself, he was calm; but he felt uncertain about me, and had not dared to mention it before. He had gone out that morning to buy the drug that would furnish the deadly draught. This he showed me. The sight of it had the same effect on me which the sight of the gallows may have on the condemned criminal. But he was too much taken up with his own thoughts to notice my horror; and so he went on, working himself up into an eloquent rhapsody—in which he described

the joys of the spiritual state, and of the world beyond the grave. But oh! his words fell only upon the dull, dead ears of a terrified and panic-stricken girl.

"At length he made a proposal that each should pour it out for the other, or I made it in my despair—I forget which. He himself was in a very peculiar mood by this time; he was at once so absorbed in the purpose over which he had brooded so long, and at the same time so taken up with his own thoughts, that I saw the utter uselessness of any thing like remonstrance. I only thought of evasion—not of resistance; so I caught at once at the plan of pouring out a draught for myself, and in this way I hoped to escape this terrible fate which he was meditating for me. So I got up, and stammered something about getting the glasses. He smiled, and said nothing, but threw himself back in his chair. His face was turned from me. With a trembling hand I poured out some wine in a glass, and, taking this in one hand, I took two empty glasses in the other, and then went back very softly; stooping down, I put the glass of wine under the place where I had been sitting on the sofa. Then I handed him the empty glasses; he took them with an abstracted air and an enthusiastic smile. Then he made me sit down.

"Then he poured out the draught in each glass, and handed one to me. I took it—my hand trembling so that I could scarcely hold it, and looked at him as he sat there with his eyes turned toward me; but his eyes seemed fixed on vacancy, with that same excited and abstracted look which I have already mentioned.

"Now," said he, after some silence—"now—my own darling—we both hold in our hands the means of escape from the darkness of poverty and the sorrow of life! Come, let us both drink together, and so pass away. When I raise my glass, do you raise yours, and thus we shall drink together, and—die!"

"At this a fresh anguish of despair rushed through me. I was filled with horror, and in that last moment of agony a sudden thought came to me.

"What is the matter, my darling?" he asked, noticing my agitation.

"Oh, hark! oh, listen!" I cried. "There is some one at the door."

"He started, and rose and went to the door. The moment his back was turned, I



hastily changed the glass of poison for that of wine which was under me. By the time that I had done this, he had come back.

"You are excited," he said. "There is no one there."

"With these words he resumed his seat. On his noble face I saw a glow of lofty enthusiasm, and, as he fastened his eyes on me, they glowed with unutterable tenderness. There was also the moisture of tears in his eyes, and there was a smile on his lips. He held his glass in his left hand, while his right hand took mine. I noticed at that awful moment how warm his hand was, and how steady. It was the warmth and steadiness of perfect coolness and perfect health; but my hand was as cold as ice, and clammy, and tremulous, for I was shuddering and shivering in excitement and fear. We sat in this way for a moment or two, and then he said:

"Now!"

"He raised the glass to his lips. I did the same. We both drank at the same time. Each of us drank, and oh, how different in each case! Then we put down the glasses, and still sat there in the same position. How long we sat I cannot tell, for my brain was in a whirl, and a dark horror was over me. I had escaped death, but I was losing him who was dearer than life. With my woman's love and yearning over him, there was a child's panic fear of death and its accompaniments. At length his grasp began to relax. He fell forward against me. I gave a shriek. I had a wild idea of going for help, and a wilder idea of flight; and so, with my mind almost in a state of delirium, I rushed from the room, and fled I hardly knew where.

"I remember getting lodgings, and writing to you, the only friend I had in all the world, and you came, and you nursed me, but I have never told you this till now."

Clara paused here for some time, and at length resumed:

"Well, dear, you know how I was. Thinking only of Kane's death, I gave myself up to despair. Life had lost all its value, and I only wished to find some occupation where I might also have the consolations of religion. This I found among those dear Sisters among whom I came to live and to work.

"Well, now, dear, I must mention a discovery that I made. It was about a year after this event. I was nursing at a hospital, and by the merest accident I heard of

the case of a man who had been poisoned and sent here. The poison was too weak, or the amount was too small, and the work was not done. I was struck by this very forcibly, and on inquiry found out the date and the place. It was the date of our tragedy, and the place, too. They had not found out his name, but I knew that this patient could be no other than Kane. He had recovered! He had gone away! He had not died! He was alive! I cannot possibly convey to you, dear, the slightest idea of my feelings at such an astonishing discovery.

"After that I was in a constant state of watchfulness. I was on the lookout for him everywhere. Years passed, however, and I never saw him. At last I gave him up, and concluded that he had gone away, though, after all, I could not help indulging the hope of meeting him again. You have mentioned his strange fancies about me, dear. You now understand, and I can understand; we met by chance. He had come back here. The first time was at Notre-Dame, the next in the rail-cars, the next on the street. On each of those occasions I was as much affected as he was. The first meeting showed me that he was alive, though I knew not where to find him. This thought filled my mind to the exclusion of every thing else. The second meeting only confirmed this thought, and made me think also that he knew of my escape from the fate that he had prepared for me.

"But oh! I cannot tell you what I suffered. I had grown reconciled to this life. The discovery that he was alive destroyed all my peace of mind. It brought back all my past. Above all, I was filled with shame at the thought of the deceit of which I had been guilty. I had saved my life by a cowardly trick. He had gone, in good faith, to death, as he supposed; and had thought that I loved him well enough to go with him. But I did not. I was a coward, and in my terror I had deceived him, I dared not meet him. I was terrified at the sight of him, even though I longed to tell him all. One evening I saw him seated in the street in front of a *café*, and I caught his look. It seemed to me that he was regarding me with a stern, reproachful glance. I almost fainted in utter anguish; but I managed to reach my home. At another time I saw him at a distance. I followed him, with a vague idea of accosting him. I followed him to the cemetery of

Père-la-Chaise, and I saw him kneeling before a hiding-place—a little, and he looked shrank back again, and I remained there all plains to you all about, poor fellow! though you see, too, dear, stand, the reason why I make myself known to

"But oh! if it had sense of dishonor—if feeling which I had then and that he would never I would have told him I was afraid. I knew, and remembered a fidelity in me. And Mrs. Wyverne—even can I even now let him utterly despise me? I for an imaginary crime from him from this; but how will only change his feet contempt? Oh, how I would do!"

Mrs. Wyverne won't Clara's language, not so feelings which she expressed her cowardice as long which she possessed from whom her vows were her. Nor, indeed, could she

"Ah, Mrs. Wyverne, is something yet to be gathered a Sister. I found died in less than a year, them, and this always infers here. For a married woman a Sister without the form of husband, and in my case a question. Besides, my peculiar, you know. I entered the full intention of becoming thought he was dead, but he was not prevented me. But the Sisters knew that the intention of doing so, alone that I was a widow. circumstances, they all pitifully have made allowances for me to remain."

This information set Mrs.

Père-la-Chaise, and watched him for hours. I saw him kneeling before a tomb. I wondered very much, and looked at him for a long time from a hiding-place. At last I ventured forth a little, and he looked up and saw me. I shrank back again, and was so terrified that I remained there all night long. This explains to you all about our meetings, which he, poor fellow! thought were supernatural; and you see, too, dear, and you can understand, the reason why I was too frightened to make myself known to him.

"But oh! if it had not been for my own sense of dishonor—if it had not been for the feeling which I had that I had deceived him, and that he would never forgive it, how gladly I would have told him all! But I dared not. I was afraid. I knew so well his lofty nature, and remembered so well his proud confidence in me. And now, even now, O dear Mrs. Wyverne—even now—even now—how can I even now let him know? Will he not utterly despise me? He feels remorse now for an imaginary crime, and I long to save him from this; but how can I, when to do so will only change his feelings from remorse to contempt? Oh, how I wish that I knew what to do!"

Mrs. Wyverne wondered very much at Clara's language, not so much, indeed, at the feelings which she expressed about what she called her cowardice as at the evident longings which she possessed after a husband from whom her vows must have separated her. Nor, indeed, could she help mentioning it.

"Ah, Mrs. Wyverne," said Clara, "there is something yet to be told. I am not altogether a Sister. I found out that he had not died in less than a year after I had joined them, and this always influenced my position here. For a married woman cannot become a Sister without the formal consent of her husband, and in my case this was out of the question. Besides, my case was so very peculiar, you know. I entered their house with the full intention of becoming a Sister, for I thought he was dead, but the discovery that he was not prevented my taking the vows. But the Sisters knew that I had come with the intention of doing so, under the impression that I was a widow. They knew my circumstances, they all pitied me, and so they have made allowances for me, and permitted me to remain."

This information set Mrs. Wyverne thinking.

## CHAPTER LIII.

## GOING TO PRAY AT CLARA'S GRAVE.

BESSIE and Inez were in a comfortable apartment in an ancient house in Rome. The ancient house was that one which had been described to Blake as having been recently obtained; but the appearance of the interior gave indications of a long occupation. The room in which they were was filled with antique furniture, and looked out upon a courtyard, surrounded by venerable walls, with a grotesque fountain in the midst.

"What a very particularly quaint old house this is, Inez darling, isn't it? and did you ever see such a dear old place—so ancient—so stately—such massive walls? And sure there's a kind of solemnity about it that's fairly delightful, so it is."

"Yes," said Inez; "I really never saw such a perfect reproduction of the romance of the middle ages."

"Sure, but it isn't romance, then, that I'm thinking of, at all at all, Inez darling; but it's religion, so it is. I don't feel like being in a feudal castle; but much more like being in some sweet, peaceful convent, where I'm settled for the rest of my days. And sure and it wouldn't take much to make me now consent to be made a nun of, and take the veil on the spot, so it wouldn't."

"That would be rather too rash a thing, Bessie dear," said Inez, with a smile, "for a bride hardly out of her honey-moon."

"Sure, and didn't I run away from poor old Gwynnie for the sake of friendship? and mightn't I run away from him again for the sake of religion?"

"Not very likely, I fancy, dear," said Inez, who was much amused at such an idea entering the head of so loving a girl as Bessie.

Bessie was silent and pensive for some time. Her glorious blue eyes were veiled by their heavy lashes, and were downcast and sad, while over the youthful beauty of her face there was a gentle melancholy, which threw around her a touching grace and charm.

"And O Inez darling!" said she, at length, in a low voice, "doesn't it seem sweet, then, to you, to think of those dear ones reposing in that holy place that dear grandpa has told us so much about?"

"It does seem sweet," said Inez. "I had heard in a vague way of the Roman Catacombs, but never knew what they really were. I had an idea that they were dangerous and dreadful."

"Sure, that's from the silly romances that we've read. But dear grandpa has known them all his life, so he has; and oh, but it's the holy man that he is himself, with his long life of fasting and devotion; and it's the great friend he was of our dear papa, Inez dear!"

"Yes, dear Inez," they must have been congenial, I feel, with I had known him before. What an enthusiasm he had for the study of human character—the monks of the middle ages; and how he manages to kindle the same feelings in another! I feel it, and I know you do too, Bessie dear, for that was what made you make your remark just now about wishing to take the veil."

"Sure and I don't deny, then, that it was just that same, Inez dear; and really it would be so charming, you know; but then, poor dear Gwennie would go on so, and be so sad, that I'm afraid I should not have the courage to do it."

"I should think not," said Inez.

"Well," said Bessie, "it must be the prospect of going to that sacred place that gives me these feelings. I've been fasting all day, and preparing myself. I could not go there as I would go to a picture-gallery. I go to the graves of my nearest, and dearest ones, so I do; and sure I hope that we may be buried there some day, Inez darling—don't you, dear?"

"Yes, dear; I can think of no sweeter burial-place."

At this instant Kevin Magrath entered the room, and Inez and Bessie both rose with pleasant smiles to meet him. He regarded them both with that genial smile of his, which was benignant, tender, and paternal.

"Well, my dear gerruls," said he, in a tone of gentle melancholy, "you may get ready now, and don't forget to put on something warm, for I would like ye's to catch cold. In the hot summer even, when people go down to saunter about for the afternoon, ye'll see them all dressed like Russians, so ye will."

"Oh, you have warned us enough, grand-

pa dearest," said Bessie. "We'll be careful, never fear."

Leaving the room, they completed their preparations, and soon returned. Kevin Magrath then led the way, and they followed him. Reaching the lower floor, he lighted three lanterns, each of which gave a most brilliant glow; and then descended into the cellar, followed by the two. Not the slightest hesitation was shown by either of them. The lustre of the lamps illumined the cellar brilliantly, and the look which they cast about the place showed nothing more than curiosity and interest. The opening into the place was very much larger than it had been at Blake's visit, for the lower tombs had been knocked away, and it was thus large enough for Inez or Bessie to enter with only a slight inclination of their heads. There was also a small door, with a lock, with which the opening could be closed. The door was very massive, and so was the frame.

Kevin Magrath stopped for a short time, and looked at Inez and Bessie.

"Ye're about to enter a holy place," said he. "It's a place that will not inspire alarm after what I've told ye's; but it will surely give ye's a sentiment of solemn awe—from the sacred, the rivirintial, and the viorible associations around. Ye'll see numerous passages; but ye can't lose yer way with me; and, as to the solitude, why, it's only apparant, for there's plenty here moving about, and ye'll meet hundreds, so ye will, before ye get out."

With these words he passed through the opening, and Bessie and Inez came after him.

"There's nothing more illvating in life," said Magrath, standing still and looking around, "thin a visit to this sanctified spot. There's a certain divine charrum here that imprissin ivery mind. I've alriddy told ye the whole history of this place, its nature, uses, offices, intint—so I can say no more on that. But now, dear gerruls, before we go further, let us pause a moment for to achune our minds to the grandeur of the place; let us feel that we are surrounded on ivery side by a great cloud of witnesses."

After waiting a little while, he proceeded at a slow pace, and Inez and Bessie followed. Their eyes rested on the scenes which Blake had viewed before, in the same company. The lights were dim, but did

ray in the gloom before while Magrath walked, made remarks from time to time with the natural ease.

"It's a holy place, very dust is holy, so ways were excavated by the feet, and hallowed apostles, saints, martyrs and holy innocents; yes, dead around us, the glorious saints, the glorious confessor and the white-robed anchorite, above all, we shall place of those who were

"See there," said he, "it's a touching thing into child-martyrs—buried here in plenty of opporchun, Inez darling, so ye will now."

In this way they went the first cross-passage.

"Now," said he, "ye regard this passage street, as it were; the right of the crypt of the *Chiese*, while the left one runs into the true holy city of Rome; this is the tirstirist its population of martyrs I love. And here come for the peace of Jerusalem that are weary of the vawurruld, to hold communion with the departed. All these passages sometimes to houses of devotion with the streets all start in hot weather and vying one of these underground yet see these passages this, with busy life too. here—yes, thousands, so I

At length they reached Blake had known as the *P*

"Here," said Magrath, "central points from which he irradiated all around. from our destination, so let moment, to prepare our minds. There's a solemnity about this fails to impress me—an awe and never have I felt it at

way in the gloom before and behind. After while Magrath walked closer to them, and made remarks from time to time in accordance with the nature of the surrounding scene.

"It's a holy place," said he. "Even the very dust is holy, so it is. These passages were excavated by the hands, worn by the feet, and hallowed by the blissful relics of apostles, saints, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and holy innocents; yea, here we have, in very deed around us, the goodly fellowship of the saints, the glorious company of the apostles, and the white-robed army of martyrs; here, too, above all, we shall see the last resting-place of those who were so dear to us.

"See there," said he, pointing to a small tablet; "it's a child-martyr, and sure, but it's a touching thing intirely to think of these child-martyrs—buried here—but ye'll be having plenty of opporhunites to see them all yit, Inez darling, so ye will—so we won't stop now."

In this way they went on till they reached the first cross-passage.

"Now," said he, "ye observe what I told ye—regard this passage-way—it's a cross-street, as it were; the right hand brings ye to the crypt of the *Chiese di San Pietro in carcere*, while the left one runs to *Chiese di Gesu*. This is the true holy city—this subterranean Rome; this is the tirristrial Jerusalem, with its population of martyrs—the true Zion that I love. And here come all them that pray for the peace of Jerusalem; here resort them that are weary of the vanities of the upper worruld, to hold commune with the spirits of the departed. All these paths lead to churches, or sometimes to houses that have easy connection with the streets above, so that ye can start in hot weather and visit a friend by taking one of these underground streets. Ye'll yet see these passages thronged, so ye will—ye, with busy life too. I've seen hundreds here—ye, thousands, so I have."

At length they reached that place which Blake had known as the Painted Chamber.

"Here," said Magrath, "is one of the central points from which sanctity seems to be irradiated all around. We are not far from our destination, so let us wait here for a moment, to prepare our minds for the last. There's a solemnity about this place that never fails to impress me—an awe I always feel—and never have I felt it stronger than now.

Look, Inez darling; look, Bessie jool, at them painted walls. These walls speak, and see what a past they tell about."

Inez and Bessie looked around, and gazed with deep interest upon the objects visible there, and listened to the explanations of their guide. As for Magrath, he seemed to lose himself in his lofty theme, and rose every moment to a higher strain of eloquent rhapsodizing.

"Ye must contimplate the Christian worruld in the times of persecution," said he, "In those times the Catacombs opened before them as a city of refuge. Here lay the bones of their fathers who, from generation to generation, had fought and died for the truth. Here they brought their relatives as one by one they died. Here the son had borrun the body of his aged parint, and the parint had seen his child committed to the tomb. Here they had carried the mangled remains of those who had been torn by the wild beasts of the arena, the blackened corpses of those that had been committed to the flames, or the wasted forrums of those most miserable, who had sighed under their lives amid the lingering agonies of crucifixion. The place was hallowed, and it was no wonder that they should seek for refuge here.

"Here, thin, the persecuted Christians turruned, and they peopled these paths and grottoes—by day assimbling to exchange words of cheer and comfort, or to bewail the death of some new martyr; by night sinding forth the boldest among them, like a forlorrun hope, to learrun tidings of the upper worruld, or to bring down the blood-stained bodies of some new victim. So they saved thimselves, but at what a cost!

"Yis, at what a cost—living here amid the damp vapors and the dinse smoke of their torches!—Sure to glory, but to me the Roman spirit that enured all this towers up to grander proportions than were ever attained in the days of the republic. The fortichude of Regulus, the devotion of Curtius, the constancy of Brutus, were here surpassed, not by the strong man, but by the tindr virgin and the weak child. And thus, scorruning to yield to the fiercest powers of persecution, these migwent forth, the good, the pure in heart, the great, the brave. For them, death had no terrors, nor that appalling life in death which they had to enjure here in this subterranean worruld.

"Look around ye's now. What is it that ye see? Ye behold the tokens, the imblims, of the thoughts and feelings that animated them, and the constant efforts which they made to console their minds by rissrince to shupernatural truths. In that ancient worruld, ye'll remember, art was cultivated and cherished more generally than in the modern worruld. Wherever any number of min and women gathered together, an imminae proportion had the taste and the talint for art. When the Christians peopled the Catacombs, the artist was hero too, and his art was not unmployed. These chambers were to the Christian population like squares amid the narrow streets around; and hero it was that they made efforts for addorrunmint. So, ye see, they covered the walls with white stucco, and they painted on thim pictures of the saints and martyrs, the apostles and prophets, the confessors and witnesses for the truth. If, in the hour of bitter anguiah, they sought for scenes or for thoughts that might relieve their souls and prouice fresh strength within thim, they could have found no other objects to look upon, so strong to encourage, so mighty to console."

"Yia, in these graves around me," he continued, rising to a higher strain of enthusiasm, "I behold the remains of those who' illivated humanity; of whom the worruld was, not worthy. They lived at a time whin, to be a Christian, was to risk one's life. They did not shrink, but boldly proclaimed their faith, and accepitid the consequenee. They drew a broad line between thimsilvea and the heathin, and stood manfully on their own side. To utter a few words, to perform a simple act, could always save from impinding death; but the tongue refused to speak the formula, and the stubborn hand refused to power the libation. They took up the cross, and bore the reproach. That cross was not a figure of speech, as it now is in these days of emasculated Christianity. Witness these names of martyrs—these words of anguiah! These walls have carried down to us, through the ages, the words of grief, of lamentation, of ever-changing feeling, which were marked upon them by those who once sought refuge here. They tell their mourrunful story to us in these latter days, and raise up before our imagination the forrums, the feelings, and the acts of those who were imprisoned here. And, just as the forrums of life are taken up-

on the plates of the camera, so has the great voice, once forced out by suffering from the very soul of the martyr, become stamped upon these walls all around us wheriver we turn our eyes."

He paused for a moment, and then, clasping his hands, looked with a rapt gaze at vacancy, and burst forth:

"Yis, ye humble wittissnes of the truth, poor, despised, forlorrun, and forsaken, in vain your calls for mercy wint forth to the ears of man: they were stifled in the blood of the slaughter and in the smoke of the sacrifice! Yet, whero your own race only answered your cry of despair with fresh torramints, these rocky walls proved more merciful; they heard your cries, they took thim to their bosoms, and so your words of suffering live here, trisured up and graven in the rock for ever!

"Ah, my childrin! ah, Inez darling! Besie joel! let your imagination have full swing, and try to bring before yer mind's eyes the truth of these surroundings. Contemplate thim as they once were. Ye'll see these passages not left to the silent slumber of the dead, but filled with thousands of the living. Wan, and pale, and sad, and oppressed, they find, even amid this darkness, a better fate than that which awaits them in the worruld above-ground. Busy life animates the haunts of the dead; these pathways ring to the sound of human voices. The light of truth and virtue, banished from the upper air, burruns anew with a purer rajiance in this subterranean gloom! The tender greetings of affection, of frindship, of kinship, and of love, arise amid the mowldering remains of the departed. Here the tear of grief bejews the blood of the martyr, and the hand of affliction wraps his pale limbs in the shroud. Here in these grottoes the heroic soul rises up superior to sorrow. Hope and faith smile exultingly, and the voice of praise breathes itself forth from the lips of the mourrunner!"

He stopped abruptly, and was silent for some time.

"Sure but it's rhapsodical! I am intirely dear gyerrule," said he, at last, "but I can't help it. Whiniver I get upon these themes I am carried away beyond myself. I ought to have held me tongue, and given meself up to contemplation. But it's difficult to be calm amid such scenes as these."

But Inez assuredly hear him talk in this that she could have delight and with ins "Well, well," said you to say that, so aniable ye are intrwinta little beyond ye be losing time, so let that our minds'll be sacred juties and hol befower us. Come on, Inez darling—conlow me, children dear spot, so we are."

With these words followed by Inez and the Painted Chamber.

Inez followed first which lay between the that opening in the floor. She was perfect Of the gloom and the had not the faintest idea as fearlessly as though the Corso, as though a nave of St. Peter's, but solemnity, and a holier er awe

This may easily be had entertained the of the Roman Catacombs anything very particular had read about them in the course of her res terred terrible tales of lost in these endless these had been dismissed had given her a different

From him she learned dangerous at all, but w of devotees; that, instead of labyrinthine passages were in reality connecte with the houses above certy was not how to rather how to find some would not lead into the the crypt of some church believed herself to be in common resort, a place on there were passages the upper world. With impossible.

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But Inez assured him that she loved to hear him talk in this way in such a place, and that she could have listened far longer with delight and with instruction.

"Well, well," said he, "it's very kind for you to say that, so it is, and I know how amiable ye are intirely, but—I'm thinking I wint a little beyond ye; howandiver, we needn't be losing time, so let's go on now, in the hope that our minds'll be in fitting trim for the sacred juties and holy contemplations that lie befower us. Come on, dear gyerruls—come on, Inez darling—come on, Bessie jool. Follow me, children dear, for we're close by the spot, so we are."

With these words he turned, and, followed by Inez and Bessie, walked out of the Painted Chamber.

Inez followed first along the passage-way which lay between the Painted Chamber and that opening in the floor into the realms below. She was perfectly and utterly fearless. Of the gloom and the terrors around her she had not the faintest idea. She walked there as fearlessly as though she was walking along the Corso, as though she was passing up the nave of St. Peter's, but only with a deeper solemnity, and a holier calm, and a profound awe.

This may easily be explained. Once she had entertained the common opinion about the Roman Catacombs. She did not know any thing very particular about them. She had read about them in a general way, and in the course of her reading she had encountered terrible tales of people who had been lost in these endless labyrinths. But all these had been dismissed. Kevin Magrath had given her a different opinion about them.

From him she learned that they were not dangerous at all, but were a common resort of devotees; that, instead of being a series of labyrinthine passages without end, they were in reality connected in countless places with the houses above; and that the difficulty was not how to avoid being lost, but rather how to find some passage-way which would not lead into the cellars of a house, or the crypt of some church. Thus Inez believed herself to be in a place which was a common resort, a place where in every direction there were passages leading straight to the upper world. With this belief fear was impossible.

But she had stronger feelings than this

belief—the feeling of religious ardor evoked by the enthusiastic declamation of Magrath, who, from being earnest, had grown rhapsodical. She felt her soul kindling at his vehement words; she felt her most intense religious fervor evoked by the thoughts which he had called up of that sublime past, when this was a city, not of the dead, but of the living; when the faithful sought refuge here from persecution; and where, amid the relics of dead saints, there stood those living saints who themselves were destined to swell the ranks of the "white-robed army of martyrs."

Beneath all this was her solemn purpose for which she had come—the end of her pilgrimage to Rome—the graves of her father, her mother, and her sister. For this she had prepared herself, and this lay before her. For this the scenes thus far had only served to prepare her soul, and the words which she had heard seemed a fitting prelude to the solemn devotions before her.

Kevin Magrath stopped.

Inez looked around.

At her feet she saw a step-ladder. A little in front she saw an opening in the path, black, yawning!

"It's an opening into a passage below like this," said Kevin Magrath. "It's down there that we're going; there, Inez darling, they lie—the loved ones—waiting for you and for us. I brought the ladder here this morning. It's only a short distance, and I'll help ye's both down easy enough. Ye'll find it just the same down there as it is up here."

The sight of this pit at first startled Inez, but Magrath's words reassured her.

"It looks dangerous," said he, "but people always carry lights, and so there's niver any accident. Besides, it's only in out-of-the-way places that we find these lower stories. It's only a few feet, too."

Saying this, he pushed the step-ladder down into the opening. It touched the floor below, and rested there, with the top of it projecting a short distance above.

"It's a mighty convenient thing intirely," said he, "and I'll help ye's both down. You may come down first after me, Inez darling—and thin, Bessie jool, I'll fetch you."

With these words he descended, and soon reached the place below. He placed his lantern on the floor, and the bright gleam illuminated the passage-way, showing that it was

the counterpart of the one above. Kevin Magrath stood and looked up. There was a gentle smile on his face, and with this there was an expression of solemn awe which was in keeping with the scene around.

"Here," said he, "not far away, is the resting-place of the loved ones; here, your father and I with our own hands, Inez darling, bore the precious relics of poor Clara; and here afterward it was me own mournful privilege to—but wait till I help ye, dear; give me yer hand thin."

While he was speaking Inez had begun to descend, and Magrath stopped short in his remarks, to help her. He stood on the lower step of the ladder, and reached out his hand. Then, not satisfied with that, he went up a few steps, holding her so as to help her down. At length Inez reached the floor below.

The lamp was burning then brightly. Inez, full of the solemn purpose before her, and roused up to a high enthusiasm by the scene around, and by the events that had thus far occurred, cast one look up the pathway, and another look down, and then stood waiting for Bessie, with her eyes downcast, and her mind preparing itself for what was before her. So, in deep abstraction, stood Inez.

Bessie was on the floor above, at the head of the ladder. Kevin Magrath was on the floor below, at the foot of the ladder. He looked up and said nothing. Bessie looked down. Their eyes met.

"It makes me so dizzy, grandpa dear," said Bessie. "It always makes me dizzy to climb ladders, or to look down places, so it does. Inez was always wifflly brave."

"Dizzy is it? Sute to glory but its the big coward ye are thin," said Kevin Magrath. "Sure if ye're afraid, I'll go up and carry ye down in me arrums, so I will."

Inez was standing there. She held in her hands the lantern which she had carried. She heard these words. At the same time her eyes were struck by a flash of light in the passage at some distance. There was also the sound of hurrying footsteps, as of some one advancing. She could not help feeling some curiosity. That some one should be advancing was not at all surprising to her, for Kevin Magrath had given her to understand that the Catacombs were visited and traversed by people at all hours of the day and night. These perhaps, she thought,

might be like herself, mourners, visitors to the graves of departed friends. So she stood looking.

Kevin Magrath was looking up, his back being turned, and his attention absorbed by Bessie and with his own thoughts. He had not seen that gleam of light, nor had he heard the footsteps. He was so absorbed in his own purposes.

"Inez darling," said he, not turning to face her, not choosing now to look at her, "I'll have to go up to carry Bessie down. Sure but it's the big coward she is thin!—Bessie, jool, if ye won't come down, or if ye can't, why ye needn't. Wait a moment, and I'll bring ye in me own arrums.—Wait a moment, Inez darling. It's only a minute I'll be, ye know, and then we'll rezume our wanderings—to the holy graves—and—we'll perform the last mourrunful rites, so we will."

He had spoken slowly. He seemed to think that Inez would be wright to have him go up even for a minute, and so tried to reassure her and to strengthen her by reminding her of the purpose before her. There was, in reality, no need of this, since Inez did not have the slightest suspicion, and from perfect ignorance, was perfectly fearless.

At this moment also, and while he was speaking, her eyes were fixed on an advancing figure hastening along. A strange thrill came over her. It seemed incredible. She could scarcely stand. The figure came nearer, nearer, nearer. It was a man, who was hurrying at a rapid run; he had a lantern, which revealed his form and face.

The noise of those advancing footsteps could now not fail to force itself through Kevin Magrath's abstraction of soul, into which he had fallen from the pressure of his own purpose. Already he had one foot on the lowest step of the ladder, and his left hand had grasped it so as to ascend, when that strange and startling noise came to his ears.

He stopped and turned.

And then, full before him, and rushing toward him, he saw it. Rushing toward him with impetuous haste, with a face ghastly white, with fierce, eager eyes, with one hand holding a lantern, and the other hand outstretched as if to strike; wild, terrible, menacing, he saw it! What? The tremendous apparition of the man whom he had led down here, and left to die in this very place; from

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"A well-blamed Wyvern, the man whom he knew to be dead."—Page 226.

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whom he had fled up this very opening; the form of the dead; the apparition of horror! It was Basil Wyverne; the man whom he knew to be dead, but whom he saw to be living—living in this drear home of death; a spectacle of anguish unutterable; a figure appalling and abhorrent; a sight and a thought that man might not face; before which Reason trembled and vanished; and the strong, remorseless nature, hardened to acts of crime, shuddered and sank away.

"Why, Dr. Blake!"

It was the voice of Inez.

It was followed by a gasp and a groan; then the sound of rushing footsteps in panic flight, and Kevin Magrath disappeared, swallowed up in thick darkness, while the sound of those footsteps came up from afar, lessening gradually till all was still, from that passage up which the fabulous Onofrio had fled.

At the same moment a piercing cry came from Bessie in the passage-way above. For she had been stooping down low, and, startled by the movement of Kevin Magrath, she knelt down and put her head lower still, so as to see what it was that caused this agitation. And in that one instance she saw it all.

The sudden arrival of Blake upon the scene can be accounted for in the most natural manner. He had hurried to Rome with Kane and Gwyn, full of anxiety. He had found the Via dei Conti, and had recognized that gloomy building which had been pointed out by Kevin Magrath as the Monastery of San Antonio. Turning down the street at the corner, he went on until he had reached and fully recognized the house to which he had been taken by his betrayer. He could find out nothing about it now. People said that it was uninhabited, and its aspect seemed to confirm the statement.

Kevin Magrath had informed Gwyn that he would stop at the Hôtel dell' Europe, but on inquiring there, they could learn nothing whatever about him. This made Blake feel certain that he had taken Inez at once to that house. At first he thought of communicating with the police; but the fever of his impatience made him resolve to act for himself. He could not get admittance to the house by the door, but he remembered that he could penetrate into that prison through the Catacombs. Iron crow-bars and the stout arms of his friends could soon break

through into the cellars, and Inez could be reached and rescued in this way far sooner than by the movements of the police.

The emergency of the case, and his new anxiety, dispelled the terrors of the Catacombs, and Kane and Gwyn were willing to accompany him. They took all the materials that were requisite for their purpose, and hurried to the mouth of the Cloaca Maxima. Their movements excited no attention, for they looked like one of those exploring parties which may often be met with in Rome.

In due time they came to the broken stone, and passed through. After this, they had to move more carefully. But at length Blake discovered, lying on the floor, something which gave him an unmistakable clew to the path which he should take. It was that burnt match which he had lighted while standing at the intersection of the two paths, when the light had revealed the horrible spectacle of his assailants. Here lay the match, at the intersection of the two paths, and he was able at once to take up the course which was to lead him back over the scene of his wanderings.

Here the course was perfectly straight, and they at length reached the opening above. Up this Blake climbed by means of those very holes which he had cut before, when his ear caught the sound of voices; and, as his head arose above the opening, he saw a glow of light before him. He hung there listening.

It was Kevin Magrath's voice, speaking in a high key, in the Painted Chamber; and Blake heard nearly all. He now knew that he had not been a moment too soon, and that Inez was already descending to her living tomb. As Kevin Magrath ceased, he let himself down again, and they hurriedly deliberated about what they should do next. It was agreed to retreat, lower their lamps, and watch from a convenient distance. This they did, and from the gloom around them they saw all. They saw the ladder come down. They saw Inez descend first. They saw Kevin Magrath go away. They heard all that passed between him and Bessie. They heard his last words, and saw him prepare to ascend.

Then they could wait no longer, and Blake sprang forward upon his horror-stricken enemy.

## CHAPTER LIV.

## CONCLUSION.

The perfect fearlessness of Inez in this terrible situation, and her utter unconsciousness of danger, have already been explained. Nor did the appearance of Blake seem to her very extraordinary. Kevin Magrath had given her to understand that the Catacombs were a place of common resort, easily accessible, and, in some parts, actually used as a thoroughfare in hot weather. That Blake should be here was not unaccountable. In a moment she accounted for it, and thought that Magrath must have told him of her presence in Rome, and of her intended visit to this place. The incongruity of a lover's visit, with this sacred purpose before her, was certainly evident; yet she was conscious of no vexation; nor did she feel any other emotion than sincere joy. Thus she saw his appearance with the same quiet pleasure with which she would have greeted it in the Corso or on the Pincian Hill.

This was but for a moment or so, when she first saw who it was. A few moments more, and these feelings were succeeded by others of a more violent character.

It was indeed Blake, and he was advancing at a headlong speed, his pallid face showing an agony of anxiety and eagerness. To rescue Inez, and to avenge his own injuries, had brought him here; and, as he saw her before him, standing there, yet safe, he at first was only conscious of her; nor did the other figure, with its white face of horror and staring eyes, attract his regards. His only impulse was to seize Inez in his arms—to clasp her to his heart. His only thought was of that fate which had been prepared for her—the terrific, the appalling, the living grave, with its awful accompaniments! Even here, already in that grave, she was standing; and here he had found her! He could not know what there was in her mind, nor could he understand her ignorance of danger; but he could see in her face her innocent fearlessness and the bright welcome of her glance. It was infinitely touching.

With an inarticulate cry he caught the astounded Inez in his arms, and pressed her to his heart again and again. She overwhelmed with amazement at such unexpected passion and vehemence; bewildered at such

treatment from a man whom she certainly knew as her lover, but who yet had never declared his love; half terrified, yet not altogether displeased—at first tried to shrink away, and then yielded helplessly. But, from his broken words and exclamations, she was not long in gathering suggestions of something of that terrible doom which had just now been awaiting her here. A vague horror came over her, but in her ignorance and bewilderment that horror took no definite shape.

Though Blake had thus yielded so utterly to the rapture of his soul at finding Inez, he did not long remain forgetful of his other purpose. Lights and footsteps came up from behind him, and in a few minutes two others had reached the spot, whom Inez in her amazement recognized as Kane and Gwyn. In the faces of both there was an expression so awful that new fears were awakened in Inez; while Blake, roused by their approach, turned away from Inez to look for his enemy.

He had seen him but a short time before, standing at the foot of the ladder, staring at him. As he now looked that figure was gone, but in place of it there was another.

It was Bessie.

Her face was of a waxen hue, her lips bloodless; she looked like a marble statue, except for the bright blue of her glorious eyes, which now were fixed upon the party before her, wide open, with an expression of childish wonder.

"How very, very funny!" she said, at last.

All the others looked at her in silence. There was perplexity in the minds of Kane and Blake and Gwyn; nor could they as yet decide what her part had been. Gwyn's long agony of soul about her had gone on increasing, and finding her here now seemed a confirmation of his worst suspicions. For he had seen her coming down the ladder, and knew that she had allowed Inez to be taken down first. That one thing filled his mind with anguish.

"Sure but this is an unexpected meeting entirely," said Bessie, in a simple, unaffected manner; "but what in the wide world has happened to poor, dear grandpapa?"

At this Inez, with a start, perceived that Magrath had disappeared.

"He was here but a few moments ago," said she.

"He has gone," said Blake, in a solemn

voice, "to his own place." He passed through him, a thought of the fabled here that the scene of laid in this very place continued, looking upon the unspeakable tenderness. "Inez! O Inez! you have escaped. It is so that I cannot bear to tell put it off to some time; things might not be so if it must not be put off. for we are all here, and eating Bessie's—who is and others are here who depend upon the answer spare yourself, Inez. Trust coming. In the first place. What was it that brought

Inez looked with awe of the speaker. Her voice she replied to his question

"I came down here to my dear papa, and—"

"Your father? in your father! Do you doubt?"

"Yes."

"And have you not heard him say to her?" he exclaimed.

"That truth? of agitation."

A silence followed. But at them as before, but not at her. They averted their eyes. The answer of Inez opened up end

Blake, after a time, with the whole truth about her turn and death, of Bessie's and receiving her father's blessing.

As the truth began to be fired her eyes upon Bessie's describable wonder and she looked at her with un

As soon as Blake had ended

"O Bessie! is this all true? Sure and it is, then, I word of it, and I'm glad it's a sore load on my heart, a ban."

"But why didn't you tell

"Sure it's because I could darling. You'd have thought I'd deliver—as a supplanting Jac

voice, "to his own place!" A shudder passed through him, and he paused, for he thought of the fabled Onofrio, and remembered that the scene of his flight had been laid in this very place. "Inez," he continued, looking upon her with a gaze of unspeakable tenderness and compassion—"Inez! O Inez! you little know what you have escaped. It is something so appalling that I cannot bear to tell. I should prefer to put it off to some time when our surroundings might not be so fearful, but I see that it must not be put off. I must tell it now, for we are all here, and she is here"—indicating Bessie—"who is so deeply implicated, and others are here whose whole life now depends upon the answer she may give. Prepare yourself, Inez. Try to bear what is coming. In the first place, answer me this: What was it that brought you here?"

Inez looked with awe at the solemn face of the speaker. Her voice was tremulous as she replied to his question:

"I came down here to pray at the grave of my dear papa, and—"

"Your father?" interrupted Blake—

"Your father! Do you mean Bernal Mordaunt?"

"Yes."

"And have you not heard the truth about him, Inez?" he exclaimed.

"What truth?" asked Inez, full of agitation.

A silence followed. Bessie stood looking at them as before, but none of them looked at her. They averted their eyes, for this answer of Inez opened up endless suspicions.

Blake, after a time, went on, and told Inez the whole truth about her father's return and death, of Bessie's taking her place, and receiving her father's blessing.

As the truth began to dawn on her, Inez fixed her eyes upon Bessie with a look of indescribable wonder and reproach, while Bessie looked at her with unalterable placidity.

As soon as Blake had ended, Inez asked her: "O Bessie! is this all true?"

"Sure and it is, then, Inez darling, every word of it, and I'm glad it's out, for it's been a sore load on my heart all the time, so it has."

"But why didn't you tell me?"

"Sure it's because I couldn't bear to, Inez darling. You'd have thought of me as a deceiver—as a supplanting Jacob—when all the

time I was as innocent as a child. Really, Inez darling, I could not bring myself to tell it, and I was so troubled about it, too, all the time."

"But why did you always talk as though he were buried here, and come with me to pray over his grave?"

"Because, Inez darling, he is buried here, with dear mamma and poor, dear Clara. His remains were brought here from Mordaunt Manor by poor, dear grandpa; and oh! but it's myself that's fairly heart-broken with anxiety about him this blessed moment, so it is."

"He was never brought here," said Blake, sadly; "none of those graves are here. Do you want to know why you were brought here? I'll tell you—I must—though it is torment even to think of it."

And now Inez had to listen to the story of Blake. Under any circumstances such a story would have been awful, indeed; but now, in this place, to hear this was more than she could bear. Blake did not dwell much upon his sufferings, but she could imagine them. Now, too, she first learned the true nature of the Catacombs, and how terribly she had been deceived. Even though that danger had passed away, yet the very thought of it was so terrible that her fainting limbs sank under her, and she would have fallen had not Blake supported her.

But the terror which the thought of this recent danger, and the discovery that she had been the intended victim of Magrath, had given to Inez did not seem to be felt by Bessie. She stood there, pale as before, yet with an unchanged face, listening to Blake's story, and exhibiting nothing stronger than a very deep interest in his narrative. Inez marked her calmness, and she wondered to herself what part Bessie had taken in all this, and turned her sad eyes over in that direction. She remembered those letters to Bessie which had never been answered. She recalled her former feelings about Magrath, and recollected, too, how Bessie had brought her back into his power. What did all this mean? Yet the suspicion that rushed into her mind was intolerable, nor could she bring herself to put any question to one whom she even yet believed to be her sister.

It was Blake who put the question for her. Turning to Bessie, he regarded her for a few moments in silence, and then said:

"As I came up I saw Inez standing here, Kevin Magrath at the foot of the ladder, about to go up, while you were at the top watching. Magrath was going up, and you were up there, and he was going to draw up that ladder, leaving Inez here as he left me."

"Sure he never could have done it at all at all," cried Bessie. "I would never have let him. I think it is too bad, and you are very, very unkind to say such a thing, and it's too bad, so it is. And I'll never believe, so I won't, that it really was my poor, dear grandpa that betrayed you, for there isn't the least harm in life in him."

"What made him go away when he saw me come?"

Bessie clasped her hands, with a look of sudden pain.

"Oh, it's lost he is! Oh, the bitter, bitter blow!—O grandpa darling! where are you, then?—Oh, won't some of you try to save him? Gwynnie dearest—"

She stopped short and looked earnestly at Gwyn. But Gwyn averted his eyes.

Blake's last words had strengthened the suspicions which Inez had begun to feel. Her heart became hardened to Bessie. Her attitude, described by Blake, gave rise to a belief in the very worst; nor was it hard to see that the one who had supplanted her at Mordaunt Manor might have betrayed her in the Catacombs.

"Bessie," said she, and, as she spoke, her voice grew cold and hard, while the indignant feeling that arose within her drove away her weakness—"Bessie, what makes you anxious about this Magrath? He is no relation to you, and you have always believed that the Catacombs were as safe as the upper streets."

"Oh, sure, Inez dear, but how can I believe they're safe now, after that awful story? It's fairly heart-broken I am with the terror of it. And oh! if he isn't my dear grandpapa, he is my best and kindest friend and guardian, so he is."

"What made you give that shirk? You must then have been afraid about him." This question was put by Blake, in whose ears that shirk had rung as he caught Inez in his arms.

"Sure and I was afraid he'd be lost," said Bessie, "for he went off in the dark, without his lantern."

"Then you knew that the Catacombs were a dangerous place before you heard Dr.

Blake's story," said Inez. "Yet you always spoke as though they were a common thoroughfare."

"Not these lowest stories, Inez darling," said Bessie. "Poor dear grandpa—for I really must call him so—always made me understand that they were very, very dangerous, and really scarcely ever used. And I didn't tell you, because I didn't wish to make you feel badly, so I didn't, Inez darling."

"O Bessie!" said Inez, "I would give all I have if I could feel toward you as I used to. But I remember a thousand little things which show that you have never been candid. Why did you take the name of Inez when my poor papa came home?"

"Ah! sure, Inez darling, it was that very thing that always made me have the sore heart, and I couldn't bear to tell you; but I knew how he hated me, and I longed for his love, and so I met him, not as his hated daughter Bessie, but as his loved daughter Inez."

Inez turned away. She felt bewildered, and did not know what to say. She trusted Bessie no longer; yet Bessie thus far had triumphantly maintained her innocence.

"His daughter!" said Blake.—"Inez, that is all a fabrication of our enemy Magrath. My mother has told me all. She was with your mother when she died. There never was any other child but yourself and Clara. And, as to the one who has taken your place, do not let any sisterly feelings shield her from your suspicions, for, by minute inquiries about her, my mother feels certain that she is Bessie Magrath, the daughter of Kevin Magrath. It was for her that he labored. She thus personated you, took your name, welcomed your father, who died believing in her. She is the one who has defrauded you out of your father's home, and your father's heart."

At this Inez was so astounded that she had not one word to say. This disclosure completed the revolution of feeling that had been going on in her; the strange suspicions of her father's prison were turned from Sanders to Bessie; and it seemed now to her that the minute knowledge which Magrath had possessed of her life and feelings had not been communicated to him by her servant, but rather by her friend and confidante. Perhaps it was her assistance that had put her first in Magrath's power. Having learned the truth about her father, she was now able to

estimate that Paris the confederate was had seemed to be. —Bessie's innocent her loving words I-frauded her of her ure—a father's dying Bessie heard E him, and with a ch

"Well, Dr. Bla I don't really see know all about th my dear grandpa. lieged that I was and that Mordaun sure dear grandpa and tell such wick wouldn't; and I'm at all at all, so I v really as 'you say, ar turn out to be my o him like a papa; an and why, oh, why v him? Gwynnie dea own Gwynnie!"

They all stood lo and utterly unbeliev and indignan; Kar solemn as Fate. B Gwyn.

He had seen he place, but had averte given her one look every word. Dark pious had arisen i these were as nothi those that arose wi come and found her l had been enough. N or of exculpation or had uttered, not the face, nor the childlike sion, nor the steadfast glorious eyes, nor the ber manner, could she gree the conclusion As he stood there the lated between him a moment with every n until at last it had gre fixed between them—

These thoughts we of them all was that ec self and him, on the top hung suspended. TI

estimate that Paris plot to its full extent, and the confederate whom Magrath must have had seemed to be Bessie. And yet—and yet—Bessie's innocent face, her winning ways, her loving words!—but then, had she not defrauded her of her dearest and holiest treasure—a father's dying blessing?

Bessie heard Blake without interrupting him, and with a childlike wonder.

"Well, Dr. Blake," said she, "I'm sure I don't really see how your mamma can know all about that, and know better than my dear grandpa. I'm sure I've always believed that I was Inez Elizabeth Mordaunt, and that Mordaunt Manor was mine. I'm sure dear grandpa wouldn't deceive me so, and tell such wicked, wicked stories, so he wouldn't; and I'm sure I shouldn't be sorry at all at all, so I wouldn't, if it were to be really as you say, and if dear grandpa was to turn out to be my own papa, for really I love him like a papa; and oh, where is he now? and why, oh, why won't some one go after him? Gwynnia dear! Oh, my dear darling own Gwynnia!"

They all stood looking at her: Blake cold and utterly unbelieving in her; Inez alienated and indignant; Kane stern and austere and solemn as Fate. But Bessie regarded only Gwyn.

He had seen her as he came up to this place, but had averted his eyes; nor had he given her one look since. He had heard every word. Dark recollections and suspicions had arisen in the mind of Inez, but these were as nothing when compared with those that arose within his mind. He had come and found her here, and the sight of her had been enough. Not one word of excuse or of exculpation or of explanation that she had uttered, not the white innocence of her face, nor the childlike wonder of her expression, nor the steadfast and open gaze of her glorious eyes, nor the unembarrassed ease of her manner, could shake in the slightest degree the conclusion to which he had come. As he stood there the breach that already existed between him and her widened every moment with every new thought of his mind, until at last it had grown to be a great gulf fixed between them—impassable forever!

These thoughts were terrible. The centre of them all was that scene, known only to herself and him, on the top of the cliff, where Kane hung suspended. The dread suspicion that

then had flashed across his mind and caused him to strike her down, now revived in all its force; from those his mind recurred to other recollections, all of which assumed a new meaning. Every act of her life—her sudden arrival at Mordaunt Manor—her attitude toward her supposed father—her flight from himself—her proposal to protract the separation so as to be with Inez—her request that he should bring Kane to Rome—all rose before him full of appalling meaning. Why did she remain with Inez?—to bring her here! Why did she wish him to bring Kane to Rome?—to use him as a decoy in completing the work in which she had failed on the cliff! Upon these conclusions his mind grew fixed; nor could the recollection of her love and gentleness and tenderness shake him from them.

So that now, when Bessie turned from the others to him, and made this direct appeal in her own old tone of love and confidence, he raised his head and turned his eyes upon her. The face which he thus turned showed all the anguish which he was suffering; his brow was dark with fixed and unalterable gloom; and, in the stony look which met her eyes, might be seen despair. It was but for a moment that he looked at her, and then he was about to say something, but he was interrupted by Kane.

"Well," said he, "after all, he is a fellow-creature; and, for my part, I don't want him to perish here. We've come prepared for emergencies—so, Gwyn, what do you say? Let's unroll our string, and explore. You take the ladder, and I'll take the clew. But hadn't you better all go up first?"

"Me go up!" exclaimed Bessie. "And poor dear grandpa as good as lost, and me the heart-broken girl that I am! What a very, very strange proposal! It's myself that would far rather go with you, so I would, and oh, I do so wish that you would let me."

"No," said Kane; "you would be an incumbrance. We must go alone."

Blake would have been glad to get Inez into the upper world, but Bessie was firm in her decision; and, as they could not leave her here, nor let her embarrass Kane's movements, they had to wait with her. So Kane took the clew and lamp, and walked on, unrolling the string as he went, while Gwyn followed, with his lamp and the ladder. He passed Bessie without a word, nor did he look at her, though she was standing close by the ladder

as he took it down. Bessie watched the two as they went far up the passage-way until they disappeared in the distance.

Then she turned around with a little sigh. "I'm sure," said she, "one would think that poor dear Gwynnie had got over all affection for me."

After this she relapsed into silence, and stood there, her face turned in the direction where Kane and Gwyn had gone. Basil and Inez occasionally conversed in low whispers, but they addressed no remark to Bessie. So these three remained for nearly an hour, until at length a light appeared far up the passage-way, and Bessie advanced a few steps in eager anxiety. After a time an exclamation of disappointment escaped her.

There were only two figures!

Soon Kane and Gwyn reached the spot, Gwyn standing aloof.

"We have found nothing," said Kane, "and have come back to make preparations for a more thorough search. I propose now that we go up, and let the ladies find some place of safety. We can then find others to come down and help us here. Meanwhile, I have left the clew, as far as it ran, on the floor. We can also leave the ladder here, and some lanterns with matches."

This proposal was agreed to at once, and they all ascended. Blake led the way to the well-remembered opening. Inez walked by his side. Bessie followed, silent and pensive. Then came Kane. Last of all, Gwyn. On reaching the house, they went to the upper rooms, where Blake perceived, to his surprise, the signs of long occupation.

To his offer that the ladies should leave, Bessie gave a positive refusal.

"Leave, is it?" said she; "and me expecting my dear grandpa every minute? Why, really, how very, very absurd! And you, Inez; why, what can you possibly be thinking of? You won't leave me this way, will you, darling? It'll be so very, very lonely, and so awfully sad to have nobody but poor, dear old Mrs. Hicks Lugin."

Inez said but little. Blake had told her of lodgings where she would be safe; he had also told her of the letter that he had written to his mother, and his expectation that she would come to Rome. He also found time to tell her about Clara. So that, even if there had been no other feeling, the excitement of Inez about this long-lost sister, and

her intense desire to see her, would of itself have drawn her away. But, apart from this, it was impossible now that she should ever again consent to live under the same roof with Bessie. Inez, therefore, went with Basil to the lodging-house already mentioned, where he left her.

They then communicated with the police, and a detachment of men was furnished, competent for the purpose, who accompanied them to the Catacombs. Here a long, painful, and most exhaustive search was made.

But of the fugitive they found not a trace.

The mournful news was communicated to Bessie by Kane. Gwyn still held aloof. Bessie's face wore a look of the deepest possible distress, and she was silent for a long time.

"Sure," said she, with a little sigh, "it's myself that's got the sore heart, and I cannot help feeling very, very uneasy; and it's really awful, you know, dear Kane; but, after all, poor, dear grandpa is so awfully clever that he'll find his way out of it yet." So, I'll wait here, and try to hope for the best. But, do you know, Kane dear, it's awfully lonely here, with only poor, dear old Mrs. Hicks Lugin; and I'm awfully sorry that dear, darling Inez took such a dislike to the house, and I do wish she would come and see me, so I do; or tell me where she is. And oh, how good it is for you and dear, darling Gwynnie to take such pains about poor, dear grandpa! And tell dear, darling Gwynnie that my poor little brains have been so upset by all these long stories that I don't know hardly where I am. I'm not papa's daughter, it seems, and I'm no relation to my darling sister; and sure, I'm beginning to expect to hear next that I'm not dear old Gwynnie's wife. And that would be so very, very sad!"

Bessie ended this in a plaintive voice, and looked mournfully at Kane with her large blue eyes. They were full of pathos, and Kane felt very much perplexed and puzzled, after all, about Bessie.

Kane went away, with his mind full of speculations about Bessie, recalling her as he had known her at Ruthven Towers, and trying in vain to find some way by which she could be reconciled with her husband. But these thoughts were all driven out by new ones, which were suggested by certain information which he received from Blake.

For Blake, on leaving the Catacombs, af-

ter this last vain search, man, had gone to town now was, to inquire on arriving there, had his mother. With already made herself the very time of his were explaining to their respective past, after all. She had no sooner had Mrs. W she resolved to effect two who had been s who still felt such un in the shortest and to persuade Clara to own lodgings. This explanation, to the giving there, Mrs. W son's letter. She had immediately, but had suading Clara to acc To this Clara, at leng her desire to meet her anxiety about her siste found, but the meeting yet to be.

Mrs. Wyverne told urged him to prepare in whatever way he mig after some consideration knowledge of Kane's c that the best way to pr tell him the simple tr to do; and thus, on s the information which put a complete stop for uations of the letter al

Over that meeting b had loved so well, and best to draw a veil, C about what she consider treachery, were not jus of the one who was mos fears about Kane's in founded. It was much from the remorse which ed his life; it was far fr leg from the dead one o had wept, and over who had mourned. In the dence and the recita of nces much had to be ex these explanations was t this was at last account

ter this last vain search after the missing man, had gone to the lodgings where Inez now was, to inquire after her welfare; and, on arriving there, had to his amazement found his mother. With her was Clara, who had already made herself known to Inez, and, at the very time of his arrival, the two sisters were explaining to one another all about their respective past. Clara was not a Sister, after all. She had never taken the vows, and, no sooner had Mrs. Wyverne heard this, than she resolved to effect a reunion between those two who had been so strangely divided, and who still felt such undying love. To do this in the shortest and best way, she concluded to persuade Clara to accompany her to her own lodgings. This Clara did, after a brief explanation to the good "Sisters." On arriving there, Mrs. Wyverne had found her son's letter. She had not been able to leave immediately, but had remained behind, persuading Clara to accompany her to Rome. To this Clara, at length consented, and, with her desire to meet her husband, was mingled anxiety about her sister. The sister had been found, but the meeting with the husband had yet to be.

Mrs. Wyverne told Blake every thing, and urged him to prepare Kane for the meeting in whatever way he might think best. Blake, after some consideration, judged, from his knowledge of Kane's character and feelings, that the best way to prepare him would be to tell him the simple truth. This he decided to do; and thus, on seeing Kane, this was the information which he gave; and which put a complete stop for the time to the speculations of the latter about Bessie.

Over that meeting between these two, who had loved so well and suffered so much, it is best to draw a veil. Clara's self-reproaches, about what she considered her cowardice and treachery, were not justified by the opinion of the one who was most concerned; and her fears about Kane's indignation proved unfounded. It was much for Kane to be freed from the remorse which for years had blighted his life; it was far more to receive as rising from the dead one over whose memory he had wept, and over whose supposed grave he had mourned. In the interchange of confidence and the recital of their mutual experiences much had to be explained; and among these explanations was that grave itself; but this was at last accounted for, satisfactorily

enough to their minds, by the peculiar character of Kevin Magrath, who always did his work thoroughly, and who, if he wished the death of Clara to be believed in, would at once find some means to procure a grave which might pass for hers. Kane thus found that he had been mourning and praying over the grave of a stranger, or perhaps over a box of stones, at the very time when the one whom he mourned had over and over again crossed his path—and at the very time, indeed, when she herself stood before him.

No sooner did Mrs. Wyverne hear about Bessie, and Kane's report of the last interview with her, than she determined to see for herself this young girl whose real character still remained so great a puzzle. She therefore went there with Blake. Bessie was mournful, yet amiable, and received her visitors with sad politeness. She questioned Blake closely about his search, and still evinced a confidence in the return of her "dear grandpa." Mrs. Wyverne expressed a wish to see Mrs. Lugrin, whereupon Bessie at once summoned her.

Mrs. Lugrin appeared, showing no change from what she had been at Mordaunt Manor. She entered the room placidly, and looked around, when her eyes rested on Mrs. Wyverne. Perhaps Bessie had not understood Mrs. Wyverne's true name and position; perhaps she had not given the right name to Mrs. Lugrin; at any rate, Mrs. Lugrin was evidently much agitated at the sight of her. She stood for a moment staring, and then sank into a chair.

Mrs. Wyverne was quite self-possessed. She surveyed Mrs. Lugrin placidly, and then said, in a quiet voice:

"I am very sorry to meet you under such painful circumstances."

She would have said more, but Mrs. Lugrin gave her no chance, for, rising suddenly, and without a word, she abruptly quitted the room, while Bessie looked on in evident wonderment. After this Mrs. Wyverne and Blake soon retired.

"It is as I thought," said she to Blake. "This Mrs. Lugrin is Mrs. Kevin Magrath. I remember her perfectly, and she remembers me. Your Bessie is her daughter—Bessie Magrath!"

"I wonder how much she herself has known of all this?"

"That," said Mrs. Wyverne, "is to me a



perfect puzzle. Your account of her makes her seem guilty; but her own face and manner make her seem innocent. I cannot decide, and it will always remain a mystery to me whether she is innocent or guilty. For she may have been brought up in the belief that she was Bernal Mordaunt's daughter, and may have acted throughout in perfect good faith.

Blake said nothing. His own opinion about Bessie was most decided and most hostile; yet so plausible had been Bessie's own vindication of herself that he hardly knew what to say.

Two days after this Gwyn received a note. It was from Bessie, and ran as follows:

"I have been hoping against hope, Gwynnie darling, about poor dear grandpa, but I'm afraid I must give him up. It's awfully sad, so it is, and I'm quite heart-broken, so I am. I cannot bear to stay here any longer, so do not think it strange, dear, if I tell you that I am going away. I am going with dear old Mrs. Lugrin to her home. It is in Ballyshannon, near Limerick. We are poor now, you and I, Gwynnie darling, and dear Kane is the baronet and the owner of Ruthven Towers, where we were so happy; and dear Inez has Mordaunt Manor, where dear papa died. It is all so very, very strange, and so awfully sad, that it seems like a dream. But you, Gwynnie darling, love me still, I know well, and this is the only thing in life that comforts me. You'll have to get your own living, dear, and I will be patient, and wait till you find something to do, and can make a home for your poor Bessie. And I shall always be looking forward to the time when you will come for me, Gwynnie darling, and I will be content and happy wherever you may take me. I feel very sad, dear, and it seems to me that you have not been quite so kind of late as you used to be, but I know you love me, and you have all the love of your poor little girl. Give my love to darling Inez. I should like to see her, but am too sad. Give my love to dear Kane also, and tell him I shall never forget his kindness about poor dear grandpa. You will let me hear from you soon, Gwynnie darling, and come soon to your poor little loving

"BESSIE."

It was a very sad letter. There were also blots on it that seemed like tears. Gwyn was

moved most deeply, and never showed it to any one; yet he did not do as he once would have done—he did not hasten away after the beautiful young bride who had sent him so mournful and so loving an appeal. No; the decision to which he had come in the Catacombs was unalterable, and he prepared with stern intensity of purpose to carry it into execution.

This decision he announced to Kane. It was to go to America, where he proposed to work out his own fortune in any way which circumstances might present. Kane tried to dissuade him, but in vain. Gwyn was not to be moved.

"It's no use," said he. "It's all up between her and me. I've got nothing to live for. Ruthven Towers is yours, and you're the baronet. I'm an outcast now. You don't know all that's taken place between her and me, you know. We shall never meet again; and still I love her as well as ever. I can't help that. Don't try to persuade me. It's no use. As to money, there's enough for me in a little property of mother's that I found out only last year. I'll take that, and it'll be enough for me to grub along with."

In fact, Gwyn showed himself beyond the reach of argument, and Kane could only conclude to yield to him for the present, and hope for better things in the future. So he made Gwyn promise to write him at times to let him know his movements.

Gwyn left Rome on the following day, and went to America.

In a few days the rest of them returned to England.

Sir Kane and Lady Ruthven went to Ruthven Towers.

Basil Wyverne was married to Inez Mordaunt, and lived at Mordaunt Manor. His mother lived with them. He found that Henegar Wyverne's estate was immense. How much of this had been gained from the Mordaunt property he could never find out; but his marriage with Inez prevented him from feeling any uneasiness on this score. Clara had superior claims to Mordaunt Manor, but to these she, as well as her husband, was utterly indifferent, and insisted on transferring them to Inez. By this arrangement the two sisters were able to be near one another, and their husbands were also able to perpetuate the warm friendship which they had first formed in Paris.

Out of all these two things which ne to Kane Ruthven.

One of these was His last interview w profound impression manner, her innocen expression, had reviv timents of affection had conceived, toward ers. Her own exculp to him to be more ju posed, and he could thought that she ha than deceiving.

The other puzzle of Kevin Magrath. Th had revealed no trac mind this disappearan he perished, he thoug his remains would hav

Out of all these events there remained two things which never ceased to be a puzzle to Kane Ruthven.

One of these was the character of Bessie. His last interview with her had produced a profound impression on him, and her gentle manner, her innocent words, and her sweet expression, had revived for a time those sentiments of affectionate admiration which he had conceived toward her at Rulliven Towers. Her own exculpation of herself seemed to him to be more just than the others supposed, and he could not help clinging to the thought that she had been deceived rather than deceiving.

The other puzzle was the disappearance of Kevin Magrath. The most thorough search had revealed no trace of him. To Kane's mind this disappearance was too utter. Had he perished, he thought that some trace of his remains would have been found. He could

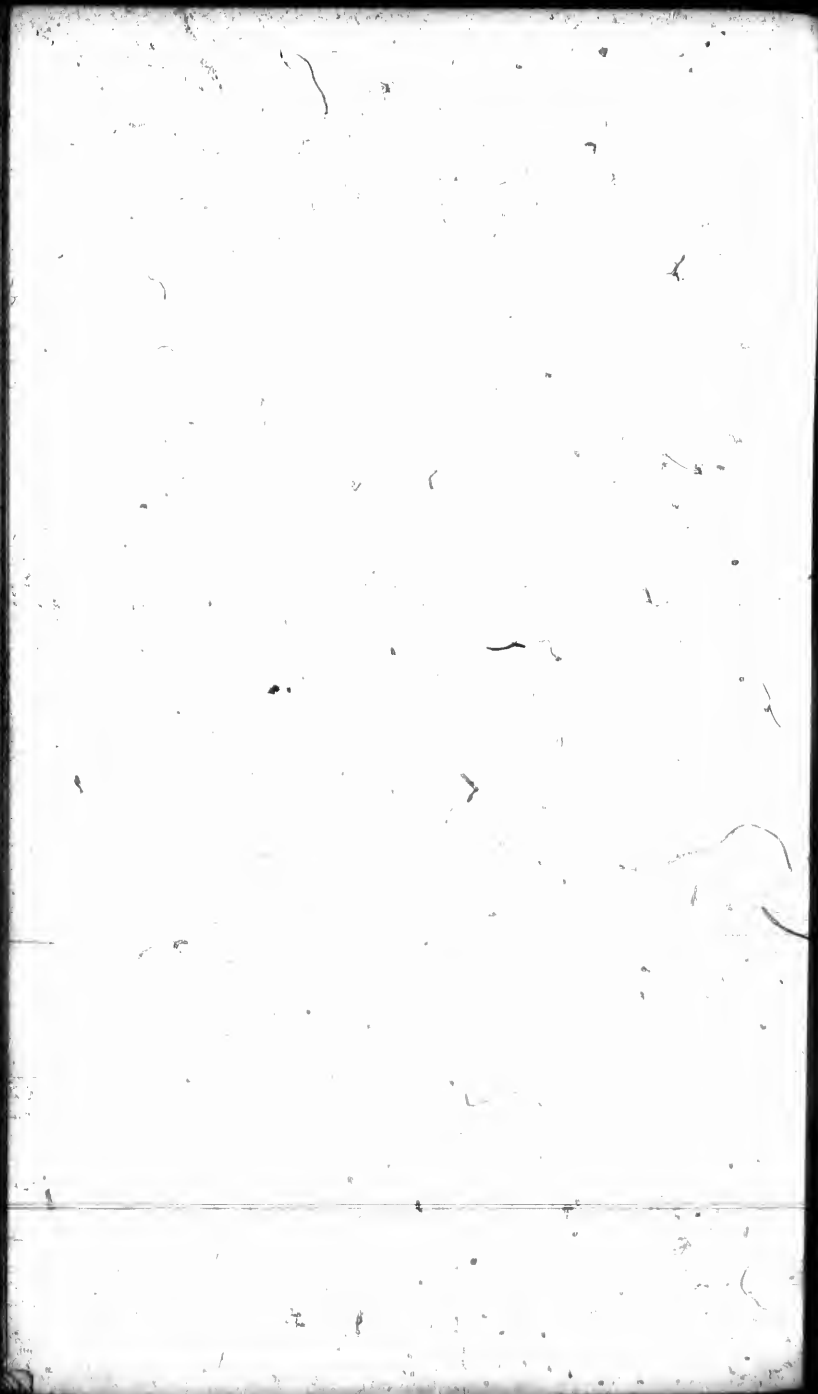
not help believing that he had recovered from his first panic, and had found some mode of effecting his escape; he reflected that he was possibly as familiar with these passages as he had pretended to be, and that so cool and keep a spirit was not likely to yield permanently to a shock of terror. Consequently Kane held the theory of Bessie's innocence and of Kevin Magrath's escape. Moreover, he believed that they were both living very comfortably together as father and daughter with Mrs. Kevin Magrath, the wife and mother, somewhere in Ireland—in Ballyshannon, or some other place.

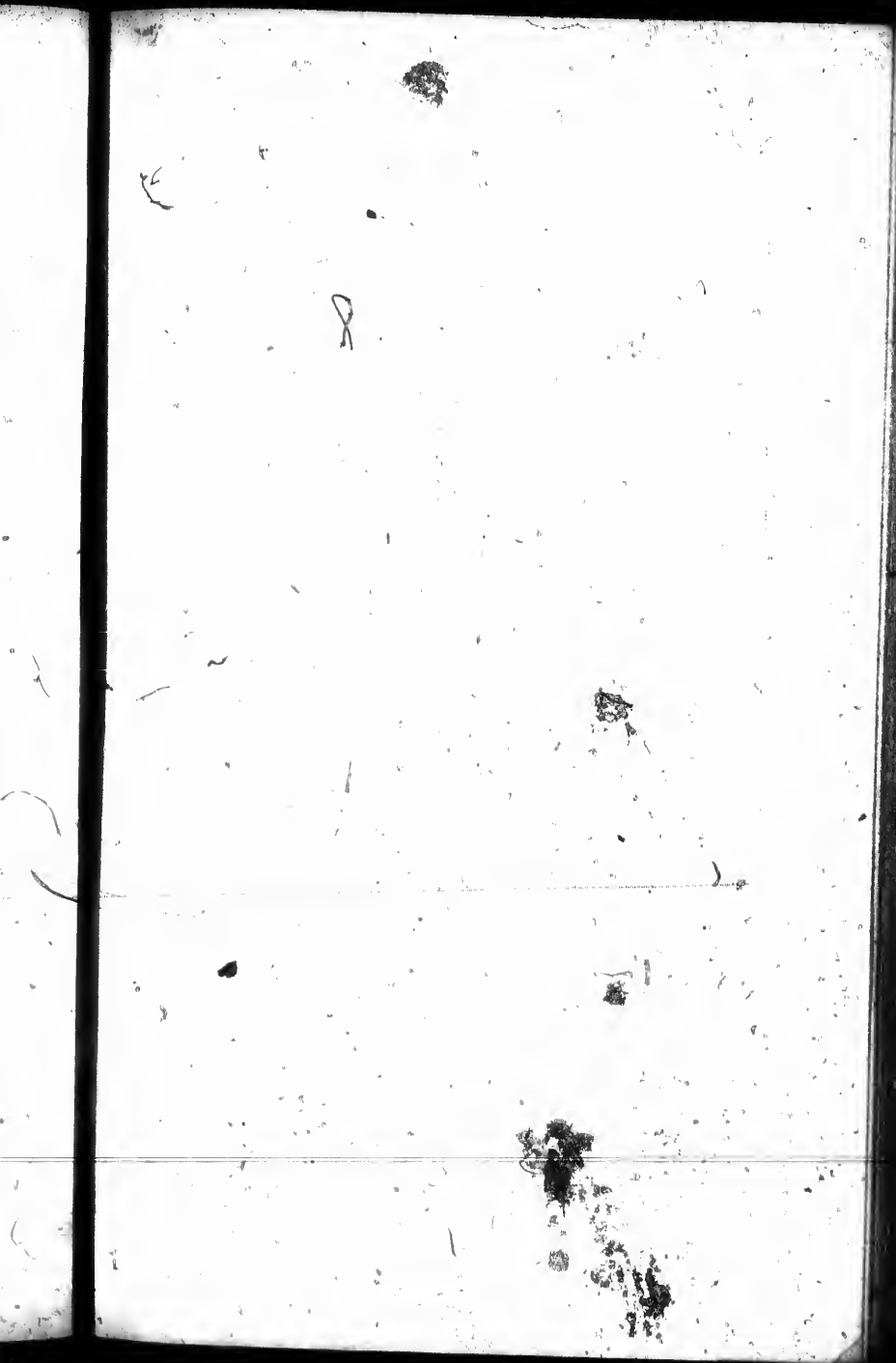
This opinion Clara shared with him.

But all the others believed implicitly in the guilt of Bessie and in the death of Kevin Magrath.

For my own part, if I may offer an opinion before retiring from the scene, I would simply remark that it is an open question.

THE END.







"'Now,' said I, 'is the time for you to exert all your strength.' 'I am ready,' said she."—page 28.

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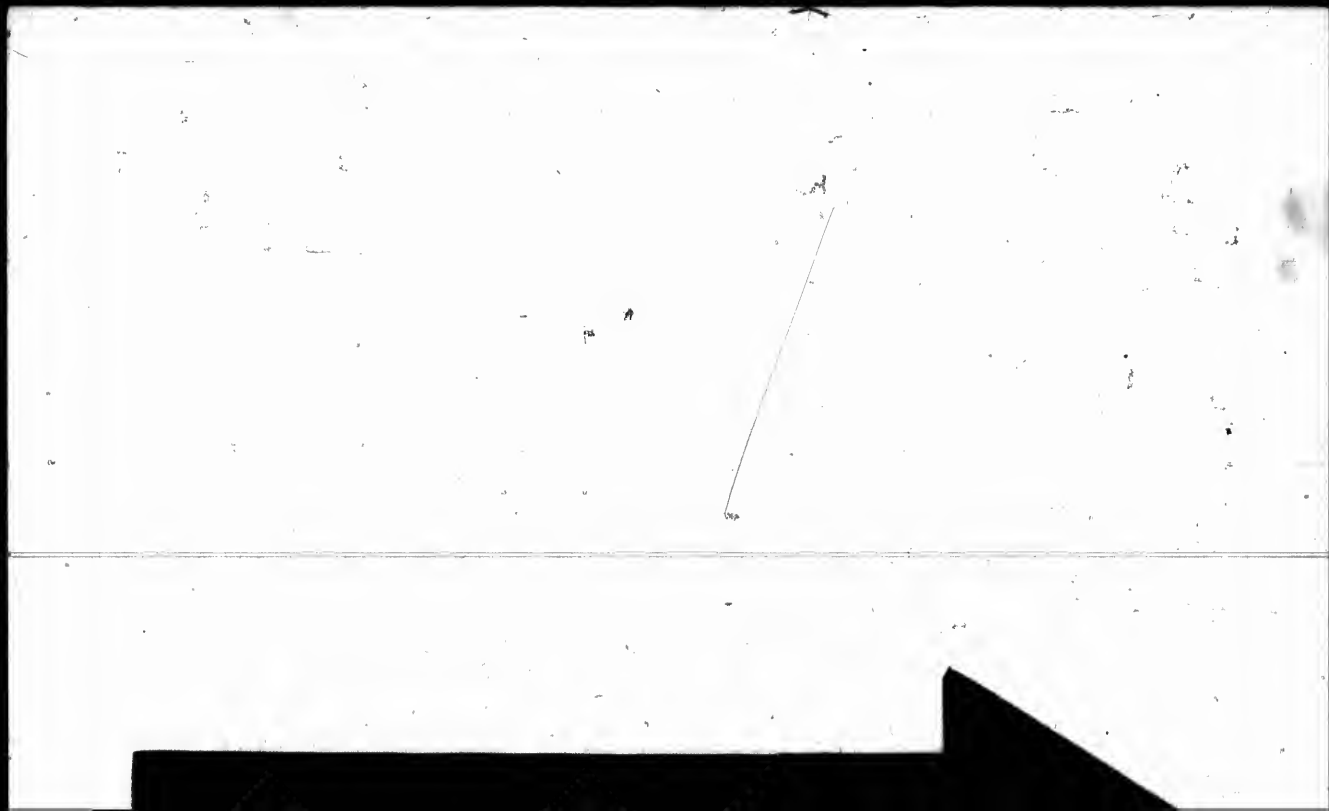
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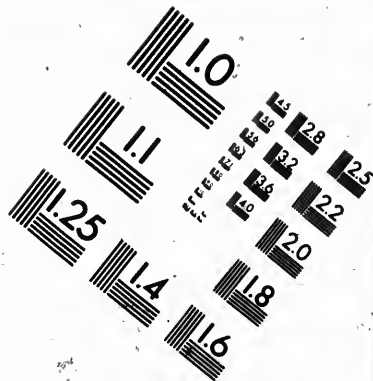
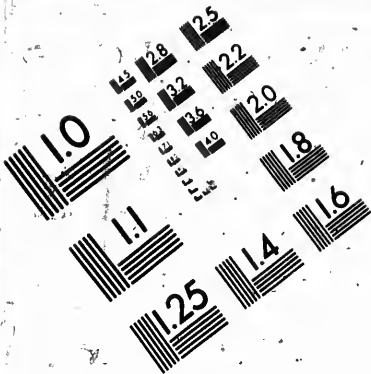
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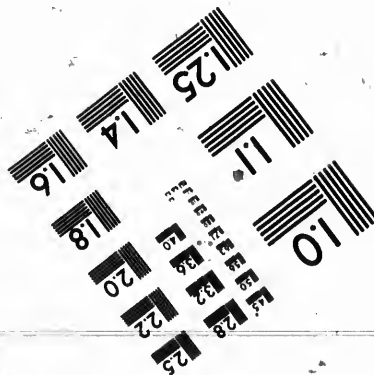
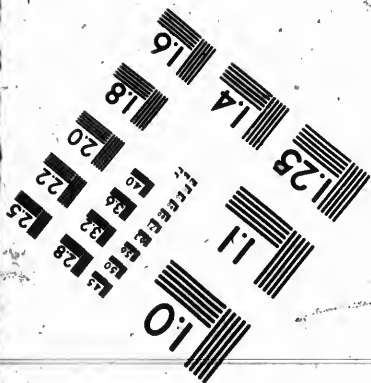
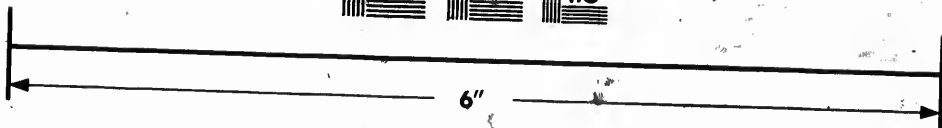
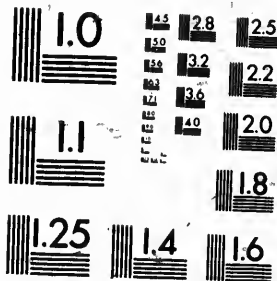








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# THE LADY OF THE ICE.

## CHAPTER I.

### CONSISTING MERELY OF INTRODUCTORY MATTER.

This is a story of Quebec. Quebec is a wonderful city.

I am given to understand that the ridge on which the city is built is Laurentian; and the river that flows past it is the same. On this (not the river, you know) are strata of schist, shale, old red sand-stone, trap, granite, clay, and mud. The upper stratum is ligneous, and is found to be very convenient for pavements.

It must not be supposed from this introduction that I am a geologist. I am not. I am a lieutenant in her Majesty's 129th Bobtails. We Bobtails are a gay and gallant set, and I have reason to know that we are well remembered in every place we have been quartered.

Into the vortex of Quebeecian society I threw myself with all the generous ardor of youth, and was keenly alive to those charms which the Canadian ladies possess and use so fatally. It is a singular fact, for which I will not attempt to account, that in Quebeecian society one comes in contact with ladies only. Where the male element is I never could imagine. I never

saw a civilian. There are no young men in Quebec; if there are any, we officers are not aware of it. I've often been anxious to see one, but never could make it out. Now, of these Canadian ladies I cannot trust myself to speak with calmness. An allusion to them will of itself be eloquent to every brother officer. I will simply remark that, at a time when the tendencies of the Canadians generally are a subject of interest both in England and America, and when it is a matter of doubt whether they lean to annexation or British connection, their fair young daughters show an unmistakable tendency not to one, but to both, and make two apparently incompatible principles really inseparable.

You must understand that this is my roundabout way of hinting that the unmarried British officer who goes to Canada generally finds his destiny tenderly folding itself around a Canadian bride. It is the common lot. Some of these take their wives with them around the world, but many more retire from the service, buy farms, and practise love in a cottage. Thus the fair and loyal Canadiennes are responsible for the loss of many and many a gallant officer to her Majesty's service. Throughout these colonial stations there has been, and there will be, a fearful deple-



tion among the numbers of these brave but too impressible men. I make this statement solemnly, as a mournful fact. I have nothing to say against it; and it is not for one who has had an experience like mine to hint at a remedy. But to my story:

Every one who was in Quebec during the winter of 18—, if he went into society at all, must have been struck by the appearance of a young Bobtail officer, who was a joyous and a welcome guest at every house where it was desirable to be. Tall, straight as an arrow, and singularly well-proportioned, the picturesque costume of the 129th Bobtails could add but little to the effect already produced by so martial a figure. His face was whiskerless; his eyes gray; his cheek-bones a little higher than the average; his hair auburn; his nose not Grecian—or Roman—but still impressive: his air one of quiet dignity, mingled with youthful joyance and mirthfulness. Try—O reader!—to bring before you such a figure. Well—that's me.

Such was my exterior; what was my character? A few words will suffice to explain:—bold, yet cautious; brave, yet tender; constant, yet highly impressible; tenacious of affection, yet quick to kindle into admiration at every new form of beauty; many times smitten, yet surviving the wound; vanquished, yet rescued by that very impressibility of temper—such was the man over whose singular adventures you will shortly be called to smile or to weep.

Here is my card:

*Lieut. Alexander Macroie,*  
129th Bobtails.

And now, my friend, having introduced you to myself, having shown you my pho-

tograph, having explained my character, and handed you my card, allow me to lead you to

## CHAPTER II.

MY QUARTERS, WHERE YOU WILL BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH OLD JACK RANDOLPH, MY MOST INTIMATE FRIEND, AND ONE WHO DIVIDES WITH ME THE HONOR OF BEING THE HERO OF MY STORY.

I'll never forget the time. It was a day in April.

But an April day in Canada is a very different thing from an April day in England. In England all Nature is robed in vivid green, the air is balmy; and all those beauties abound which usually set poets rhapsodizing, and young men sentimentalizing, and young girls tantalizing. Now, in Canada there is nothing of the kind. No Canadian poet, for instance, would ever affirm that in the spring a livelier iris blooms upon the burnished dove; in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. No. For that sort of thing—the thoughts of love I mean—winter is the time of day in Canada. The fact is, the Canadians haven't any spring. The months which Englishmen include under that pleasant name are here partly taken up with prolonging the winter, and partly with the formation of a new and nondescript season. In that period Nature, instead of being darkly, deeply, beautifully green, has rather the shade of a dingy, dirty, melancholy gray. Snow covers the ground—not by any means the glistening white robe of Winter—but a rugged substitute, damp, and discolored. It is snow, but snow far gone into decay and decrepitude—snow that seems ashamed of itself for lingering so long after wearing

out its welcome, revolting a dress like a man sinking and changing its that condition with unpleasant word an object, not a Nature which do contrast. In England foliage, the fragrant; in Canada, blue and altogether w pulsive forms for there, the soft rain fierce snow-squall, there, the field is plough; here, it is or thawing snow babbling onward here, they groan of dingy and sl hummocks; there against the rigor peaceful umbrella; one's self with ca ladies-rubber, with ous boots, steel-cre iron-pointed alpen other articles which and time will not On one of the dark these April days, I in my quarters, when upon my meditations was one of Ours—mine, and of every pleasure of his acc in every respect a r ically, intellectually, company excepted, odds the finest-look ment notoriously men; and to this r ed all the accomplish

out its welcome, and presenting itself in so revolting a dress—snow, in fact, which is like a man sinking into irremediable ruin, and changing its former glorious state for that condition which is expressed by the unpleasant word “slush.” There is not an object, not a circumstance, in visible Nature which does not heighten the contrast. In England there is the luxuriant foliage, the fragrant blossom, the gay flower; in Canada, black twigs—bare, scraggy, and altogether wretched—thrust their repulsive forms forth into the bleak air—there, the soft rain-shower falls; here, the fierce snow-squall, or maddening sleet—there, the field is traversed by the cheerful plough; here, it is covered with ice-heaps or thawing snow; there, the rivers run babbling onward under the green trees; here, they groan and chafe under heaps of dingy and slowly-disintegrating ice-hummocks; there, one's only weapon against the rigor of the season is the peaceful umbrella; here, one must defend one's self with caps and coats of fur and india-rubber, with clumsy leggings, ponderous boots, steel-creepers, gauntlets of skin, iron-pointed alpenstocks, and forty or fifty other articles which the exigencies of space and time will not permit me to mention. On one of the darkest and most dismal of these April days, I was trying to kill time in my quarters, when Jack Randolph burst in upon my meditations. Jack Randolph was one of Ours—an intimate friend of mine, and of everybody else who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. Jack was in every respect a remarkable man—physically, intellectually, and morally. Present company excepted, he was certainly by all odds the finest-looking fellow in a regiment notoriously filled with handsome men; and to this rare advantage he added all the accomplishments of life, and the

most genial nature in the world. It was difficult to say whether he was a greater favorite with men or with women. He was noisy, rattling, reckless, good-hearted, generous, mirthful, witty, jovial, daring, open-handed, irrepressible, enthusiastic, and confoundedly clever. He was good at every thing, from tracking a moose or caribou, on through all the gamut of rink-ing, skating, ice-boating, and tobogganing, up to the lightest accomplishments of the drawing-room. He was one of those lucky dogs who are able to break horses or hearts with equal buoyancy of soul. And it was this twofold capacity which made him equally dear to either sex.

A lucky dog? Yea, verily, that is what he was. He was welcomed at every mess, and he had the *entrée* of every house in Quebec. He could drink harder than any man in the regiment, and dance down a whole regiment of drawing-room knights. He could sing better than any amateur I ever heard; and was the best judge of a meerschaum-pipe I ever saw. Lucky? Yes, he was—and especially so, and more than all else—on account of the joyousness of his soul. There was a contagious and a godlike hilarity in his broad, open brow, his frank, laughing eyes, and his mobile lips. He seemed to carry about with him a bracing moral atmosphere. The sight of him had the same effect on the dull man of ordinary life that the Himalayan air has on an Indian invalid; and yet Jack was head-over-heels in debt. Not a tradesman would trust him. Shoals of little bills were sent him every day. Duns without number plagued him from morning to night. The Quebec attorneys were sharpening their bills, and preparing, like birds of prey, to swoop down upon him. In fact, taking it altogether, Jack had full before

him the sure and certain prospect of some diabolical explosion.

On this occasion, Jack—for the first time in our acquaintance—seemed to have not a vestige of his ordinary flow of spirits. He entered without a word, took up a pipe, crammed some tobacco into the bowl, flung himself into an easy-chair, and began—with fixed eyes and set lips—to pour forth enormous volumes of smoke.

My own pipe was very well under way, and I sat opposite, watching him in wonder. I studied his face, and marked there what I had never before seen upon it—a pre-occupied and troubled expression. Now, Jack's features, by long indulgence in the gayer emotions, had immovably moulded themselves into an expression of joyousness and hilarity. Unnatural was it for the merry twinkle to be extinguished in his eyes; for the corners of the mouth, which usually curled upward, to settle downward; for the general shape of feature, outline of muscle, set of lips, to undertake to become the exponents of feelings to which they were totally unaccustomed. On this occasion, therefore, Jack's face did not appear so much mournful as dismal; and, where another face might have elicited sympathy, Jack's face had such a grimness, such an utter incongruity between feature and expression, that it seemed only droll.

I bore this inexplicable conduct as long as I could, but at length I could stand it no longer.

"My dear Jack," said I, "would it be too much to ask, in the mildest manner in the world, and with all possible regard for your feelings, what, in the name of the Old Boy, happens to be up just now?"

Jack took the pipe from his mouth, sent a long cloud of smoke forward in a straight line, then looked at me, then

heaved a deep sigh, and then—replaced the pipe, and began smoking once more.

Under such circumstances I did not know what to do next, so I took up again the study of his face.

"Heard no bad news, I hope," I said at length, making another venture between the puffs of my pipe.

A shake of the head.

Silence again.

"Duns?"

Another shake

Silence.

"Writs?"

Another shake

Silence.

"Liver?"

Another shake, together with a contemptuous smile.

"Then I give it up," said I, and betook myself once more to my pipe.

After a time, Jack gave a long sigh, and regarded me fixedly for some minutes, with a very doleful face. Then he slowly ejaculated:

"Macrorie!"

"Well?"

"It's a woman!"

"A woman? Well. What's that? Why need that make any particular difference to you, my boy?"

He sighed again, more dolefully than before.

"I'm in for it, old chap," said he.

"How's that?"

"It's all over."

"What do you mean?"

"Done up, sir—dead and gone!"

"I'll be hanged if I understand you."

"*Hic jacet Johannes Randolph.*"

"You're taking to Latin by way of making yourself more intelligible, I suppose."

"Macrorie, my boy—"

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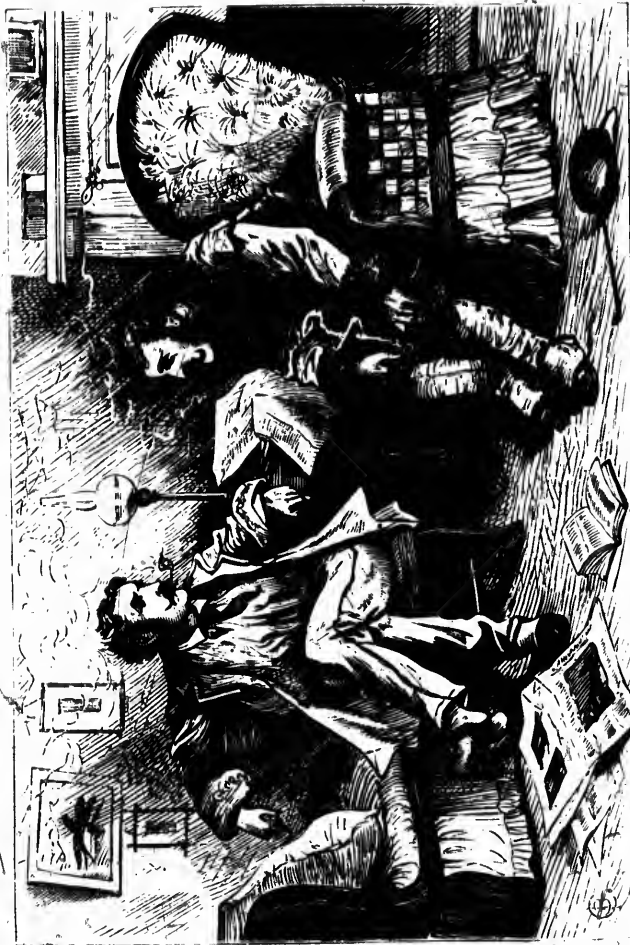
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"Will you be going anywhere near Anderson's to-day—the stone-cutter, I mean?"

"Why?"

"If you should, let me ask you to do a particular favor for me. Will you?"

"Why, of course. What is it?"

"Well—it's only to order a tombstone for me—plain, neat—four feet by sixteen inches—with nothing on it but my name and date. The sale of my effects will bring enough to pay for it. Don't you fellows go and put up a tablet about me. I tell you plainly, I don't want it, and, what's more, I won't stand it."

"By Jove!" I cried; "my dear fellow, one would think you were raving. Are you thinking of shuffling off the mortal coil? Are you going to blow your precious brains out for a woman? Is it because some fair one is cruel that you are thinking of your latter end? Will you, wasting with despair, die because a woman's fair?"

"No, old chap. I'm going to do something worse."

"Something worse than suicide! What's that? A clean breast, my boy?"

"A species of moral suicide."

"What's that? Your style of expression to-day is a kind of secret cipher. I haven't the key. Please explain."

Jack resumed his pipe, and bent down his head; then he rubbed his broad brow with his unoccupied hand; then he raised himself up, and looked at me for a few moments in solemn silence; then he said, in a low voice, speaking each word separately and with thrilling emphasis:

### CHAPTER III.

"MACROBIE—OLD CHAP—I'M—GOING—TO—BE—MARRIED!!!"

At that astounding piece of intelligence, I sat dumb and stared fixedly at Jack for

the space of half an hour. He regarded me with a mournful smile. At last my feelings found expression in a low, solemn, thoughtful, anxious, troubled, and perplexed whistle.

I could think of only one thing. It was a circumstance which Jack had confided to me as his bosom-friend. Although he had confided the same thing to at least a hundred other bosom-friends, and I knew it, yet, at the same time, the knowledge of this did not make the secret any the less a confidential one; and I had accordingly guarded it like my heart's blood, and all that sort of thing, you know. Nor would I even now divulge that secret, were it not for the fact that the cause for secrecy is removed. The circumstance was this: About a year before, we had been stationed at Fredericton, in the Province of New Brunswick. Jack had met there a young lady from St. Andrews, named Miss Phillips, to whom he had devoted himself with his usual ardor. During a sentimental sleigh-ride he had confessed his love, and had engaged himself to her; and, since his arrival at Quebec, he had corresponded with her very faithfully. He considered himself as destined by Fate to become the husband of Miss Phillips at some time in the dim future, and the only marriage before him that I could think of was this. Still I could not understand why it had come upon him so suddenly, or why, if it did come, he should so collapse under the pressure of his doom.

"Well," said I, after I had rallied somewhat, "I didn't think it was to come off so soon. Some luck has turned up, I suppose."

"Luck!" repeated Jack, with an indescribable accent.

"I assure you, though I've never had the pleasure of seeing Miss Phillips, yet,

from your description, I admire her quite fervently, and congratulate you from the bottom of my heart."

"Miss Phillips!" repeated Jack, with a groan.

"What's the matter, old chap?"

"It isn't—*her!*" faltered Jack.

"What!"

"She'll have to wear the willow."

"You haven't broken with her—have you?" I asked.

"She'll have to forgive and forget, and all that sort of thing. If it was Miss Phillips, I wouldn't be so confoundedly cut up about it."

"Why—what is it? who is it? and what do you mean?"

Jack looked at me. Then he looked down, and frowned. Then he looked at me again; and then he said, slowly, and with a powerful effort:

#### CHAPTER IV.

"IT'S—THE—THE WIDOW! IT'S MRS.—FINNIMORE!!!"

HAD a bombshell burst—but I forbear. That comparison is, I believe, somewhat hackneyed. The reader will therefore be good enough to appropriate the point of it, and understand that the shock of this intelligence was so overpowering, that I was again rendered speechless.

"You see," said Jack, after a long and painful silence, "it all originated out of an infernal mistake. Not that I ought to be sorry for it, though. Mrs. Finnimore, of course, is a deuced fine woman. I've been round there ever so long, and seen ever so much of her; and all that sort of thing, you know. Oh, yes," he added, diamally; "I ought to be glad, and, of course, I'm a deuced lucky fellow, and all that; but—"

He paused, and an expressive silence followed that "but."

"Well, how about the mistake?" I asked.

"Why, I'll tell you. It was that confounded party at Doane's. You know what a favorite of mine little Louie Berton is—the best little thing that ever breathed, the prettiest, the—full of fun, too. Well, we're awfully thick, you know; and she chaffed me all the evening about my engagement with Miss Phillips. She had heard all about it, and is crazy to find out whether it's going on yet or not. We had great fun—she chaffing and questioning, and I trying to fight her off. Well; the dancing was going on, and I'd been separated from her for some time, and was trying to find her again, and I saw some one standing in a recess of one of the windows, with a dress that was exactly like Louie's. Her back was turned to me, and the curtains half concealed her. I felt sure that it was Louie. So I sauntered up, and stood for a moment or two behind her. She was looking out of the window; one hand was on the ledge, and the other was by her side, half behind her. I don't know what got into me; but I seized her hand, and gave it a gentle squeeze.

"Well, you know, I expected that it would be snatched away at once. I felt immediately an awful horror at my indiscretion, and would have given the world not to have done it. I expected to see Louie's flashing eyes hurling indignant fire at me, and all that. But the hand didn't move from mine at all!"

Jack uttered this last sentence with the doleful accents of a deeply-injured man—such an accent as one would employ in telling of a shameful trick practised upon his innocence.

"It lay in mine," he continued. "There

it was; I had seized her hand, and I had squeezed it, and she didn't move. I did—I squeezed now it would go; tried it again. Now once again. On lay in mine. I thoughts I had. It was a bitter thing with one like little there was the av thought struck me than Louie's. An sensation came over moment, the lady blushing, arch, with To my consternation—to my horror, I

"Good Lord!"

"A stronger expression of justice to the occasioning himself to a part, the thrill of which was imparted by the within me. There story. I leave the tion."

"The rest? What that this is all?"

"All!" cried Jack. "All? My dear beginning; but it is

"What did she

"Say—say? What mind. Hang it!

Joculars. Don't you was. I had made through the enemy, carrying every thing, and I found my own inferior force, by superiority of numbers, artillery, marines, &

it was; I had seized it; I had it; I hold it; I had squeezed it; and—good Lord!—Macrogrie, what was I to do? I'll tell you what I did—I squeezed it again. I thought that now it would go; but it wouldn't. Well, I tried it again. No go. Once more—and once again. On my soul, Macrorie, it still lay in mine. I cannot tell you what thoughts I had. It seemed like indelicacy. It was a bitter thing to associate indelicacy with one like little Logic; but—hang it!—there was the awful fact. Suddenly, the thought struck me that the hand was larger than Louie's. At that thought, a ghastly sensation came over me; and, just at that moment, the lady herself turned her face, blushing, arch, with a mischievous smile. To my consternation, and to my—well, yes—to my horror, I saw Mrs. Finnimore!"

"Good Lord!" I exclaimed.

"A stronger expression would fail to do justice to the occasion," said Jack, helping himself to a glass of beer. "For my part, the thrill of unspeakable horror that was imparted by that shock is still strong within me. There, my boy, you have my story. I leave the rest to your imagination."

"The rest? Why, do you mean to say that this is all?"

"All!" cried Jack, with a wild laugh.

"All? My dear boy, it is only the faint beginning; but it implies all the rest."

"What did she say?" I asked, meekly.

"Say—say? What! After—well, never mind. Hang it! Don't drive me into particulars. Don't you see? Why, there I was. I had made an assault, broken through the enemy's lines, thought I was carrying every thing before me, when suddenly I found myself confronted, not by an inferior force, but by an overwhelming superiority of numbers—horse, foot, and artillery, marines, and masked batteries—

yes, and baggage-wagons—all assailing me in front, in flank, and in the rear. Pooh!"

"Don't talk shop, Jack."

"Shop? Will you be kind enough to suggest some ordinary figure of speech that will give an idea of my situation? Plain language is quite useless. At least, I find it so."

"But, at any rate, what did she say?"

"Why," answered Jack, in a more dismal voice than ever, "she said, 'Ah, Jack!'—she called me Jack!—'Ah, Jack! I saw you looking for me. I knew you would come after me.'"

"Good Heavens!" I cried; "and what did you say?"

"Say? Heavens and earth, man! what could I say? Wasn't I a gentleman? Wasn't she a lady? Hadn't I forced her to commit herself? Didn't I have to assume the responsibility and pocket the consequences? Say! Oh, Macrorie! what is the use of imagination, if a man will not exercise it?"

"And so you're in for it?" said I, after a pause.

"To the depth of several miles," said Jack, relighting his pipe, which in the energy of his narrative had gone out.

"And you don't think of trying to back out?"

"I don't see my way. Then, again, you must know that I've been trying to see if it wouldn't be the wisest thing for me to make the best of my situation."

"Certainly it would, if you cannot possibly get out of it."

"But, you see, for a fellow like me it may be best not to get out of it. You see, after all, I like her very well. She's an awfully fine woman—splendid action. I've been round there ever so much; we've always been ducced thick; and she's got a



kind of way with her that a fellow like me can't resist. And, then, it's time for me to begin to think of settling down. I'm getting awfully old. I'll be twenty-three next August. And then, you know, I'm so deuced hard up. I've got to the end of my rope, and you are aware that the sheriff is beginning to be familiar with my name. Yes, I think for the credit of the regiment I'd better take the widow. She's got thirty thousand pounds, at least."

"And a very nice face and figure along with it," said I, encouragingly.

"That's a fact, or else I could never have mistaken her for poor little Louie, and this wouldn't have happened. But, if it *had* only been little Louie—well, well; I suppose it must be, and perhaps it's the best thing."

"If it had been Louie," said I, with new efforts at encouragement, "it wouldn't have been any better for you."

"No; that's a fact. You see, I was never so much bothered in my life. I don't mind an ordinary scrape; but I can't exactly see my way out of this."

"You'll have to break the news to Miss Phillips."

"And that's not the worst," said Jack, with a sigh that was like a groan.

"Not the worst? What can be worse than that?"

"My dear boy, you have not begun to see even the outside of the peculiarly complicated nature of my present situation. There are other circumstances to which all these may be playfully represented as a joke."

"Well, that is certainly a strong way of putting it."

"Couldn't draw it mild—such a situation can only be painted in strong colors. I'll tell you in general terms what it is. I can't go into particulars. You know all

about my engagement to Miss Phillips. I'm awfully fond of her—give my right hand to win hers, and all that sort of thing, you know. Well, this is going to be hard on her, of course, poor thing! especially as my last letters have been more tender than common. But, old chap, that's all nothing. There's another lady in the case!"

"What!" I cried, more astonished than ever.

Jack looked at me earnestly, and said, slowly and solemnly:

#### CHAPTER V.

"FACT, MY BOY—IT IS AS I SAY.—THERE'S ANOTHER LADY IN THE CASE, AND THIS LAST IS THE WORST SCRAPE OF ALL!"

"ANOTHER lady?" I faltered.

"Another lady!" said Jack.

"Oh!" said I.

"Yes," said he.

"An engagement, too!"

"An engagement? I should think so—and a double-barrelled one, too. An engagement—why, my dear fellow, an engagement's nothing at all compared with this. This is something infinitely worse than the affair with Louie, or Miss Phillips, or even the widow. It's a bad case—yes—an infernally bad case—and I don't see but that I'll have to throw up the widow after all."

"It must be a bad case, if it's infinitely worse than an engagement, as you say is. Why, man, it must be nothing less than actual marriage. Is that what you're driving at? It must be. So you're a married man, are you?"

"No, not just that, not quite—as yet—but the very next thing to it?"

"Well, Jack, I'm sorry for you, and all

that I can say is, isn't Utah. Being a civilized country, of me how you'd through."

Jack sighed dolefully.

"To tell the truth, the last one that gave me I'd marry the widow with Miss Phillips, and pass the remainder of my life in obscurity, if it were possible."

"You mean by that you don't mention."

"Whose name I intend to," said Jack, "is so peculiar that it is not to be mentioned to the others. I never intend to pass it to anybody, though it has been six or eight months."

Jack spoke with a certain reserve. I perceived the subtle one in his estimation. A frown came over his more cased his more heavy clouds of smothered thought off the face that had gathered round his soul.

"I'll make a chap," said he, at length. "It's a bad life to end."

"You see," said I, "in which he seemed to have thoughts—" "It began to go to New York, on at the same time with her but a deaf some row at the station I helped her out of all the way. At New acquaintance. I expect that is to say, with

that I can say is, that it is a pity that this isn't Utah. Being Canada, however, and a civilized country, I can't see for the life of me how you'll ever manage to pull through."

Jack sighed dolefully.

"To tell the truth," said he, "it's this last one that gives me my only trouble. I'd marry the widow, settle up some way with Miss Phillips, smother my shame, and pass the remainder of my life in peaceful obscurity, if it were not for *her*."

"You mean by *her*, the lady whose name you don't mention."

"Whose name I don't mention, nor intend to," said Jack, gravely. "Her case is so peculiar that it cannot be classed with the others. I never breathed a word about it to anybody, though it's been going on for six or eight months."

Jack spoke with such earnestness, that I perceived the subject to be too grave a one in his estimation to be trifled with. A frown came over his face, and he once more eased his mind by sending forth heavy clouds of smoke, as though he would thus throw off the clouds of melancholy that had gathered deep and dark over his soul.

"I'll make a clean breast of it, old chap," said he, at length, with a very heavy sigh. "It's a bad business from beginning to end."

"You see," said he, after a long pause, in which he seemed to be collecting his thoughts—"it began last year—the time I went to New York, you know. She went on at the same time. She had nobody with her but a deaf old party, and got into some row at the station about her luggage. I helped her out of it, and sat by her side all the way. At New York I kept up the acquaintance. I came back with them, that is to say, with her, and the deaf old

party, you know, and by the time we reached Quebec again we understood one another.

"I couldn't help it—I'll be hanged if I could! You see, Macroric, it wasn't an ordinary case. She was the loveliest little girl I ever saw, and I found myself awfully fond of her in no time. I soon saw that she was fond of me too. All my other affairs were a joke to this. I wanted to marry her in New York, but the thought of my debts frightened me out of that, and so I put it off. I half wish now I hadn't been so confoundedly prudent. Perhaps it is best, though. Still I don't know. Better be the wife of a poor devil, than have one's heart broken by a mean devil. Heigho!"

HEIGHO are the letters which are usually employed to represent a sigh. I use them in accordance with the customs of the literary world.

"Well," resumed Jack, "after my return I called on her, and repeated my call several times. She was all that could be desired, but her father was different. I found him rather chilly, and not at all inclined to receive me with that joyous hospitality which my various merits deserved. The young lady herself seemed sad. I found out, at last, that the old gentleman amused himself with badgering her about me; and finally she told me, with tears, that her father requested me to visit that house no more. Well, at that I was somewhat taken aback; but, nevertheless, I determined to wait till the old gentleman himself should speak. You know my peculiar coolness, old chap, that which you and the rest call my happy audacity; and you may believe that it was all needed under such circumstances as these. I went to the house twice after that. Each time my little girl was half laughing with joy, half cry

ing with fear at seeing me; and each time she urged me to keep away. She said we could write to one another. But letter-writing wasn't in my line. So after trying in vain to obey her, I went once more in desperation to explain matters.

"Instead of seeing her, I found the old fellow himself. He was simply white, hot with rage—not at all noisy, or declamatory, or vulgar—but cool, cutting, and altogether terrific. He alluded to my gentlemanly conduct, in forcing myself where I had been ordered off; and informed me that if I came again he would be under the unpleasant necessity of using a horsewhip. That, of course, made me savage. I pitched into him pretty well, and gave it to him hot and heavy, but, hang it! I'm no match for fellows of that sort; he kept so cool, you know, while I was furjous—and the long and the short of it is, that I had to retire in disorder, vowing on him some mysterious vengeance or other, which I have never been able to carry out.

"The next day I got a letter from her. It was awfully sad, blotted with tears, and all that. She implored me to write her, told me she couldn't see me, spoke about her father's cruelty and persecution—and ever so many other things not necessary to mention. Well, I wrote back, and she answered my letter, and so we got into the way of a correspondence which we kept up at a perfectly furious rate. It came hard on me, of course, for I'm not much at a pen; my letters were short, as you may suppose, but then they were full of point, and what matters quantity so long as you have quality, you know? Her letters, however, poor little darling, were long and eloquent, and full of a kind of mixture of love, hope, and despair. At first I thought that I should grow reconciled to my situation in the course of time, but, instead of

that, it grew worse every day. I tried to forget all about her, but without success. The fact is, I chafed under the restraint that was on me, and perhaps it was that which was the worst of all. I dare say now if I'd only been in some other place—in Montreal, for instance—I wouldn't have had such a tough time of it, and might gradually have forgotten about her; but the mischief of it was, I was here—in Quebec—close by her, you may say, and yet I was forbidden the house. I had been insulted and threatened. This, of course, only made matters worse, and the end of it was, I thought of nothing else. My very efforts to get rid of the bother only made it a dozen times worse. I flung myself into ladies' society with my usual ardor, only worse; committed myself right and left, and seemed to be a model of a gay Lothario. Little did they suspect that under a smiling face I concealed a heart of ashes—yes, old boy—ashes! as I'm a living sinner. You see, all the time, I was maddened at that miserable old scoundrel who wouldn't let me visit his daughter—me, Jack Randolph, an officer, and a gentleman, and, what is more, a Bobtail! Why, my very uniform should have been a guarantee for my honorable conduct. Then, again, in addition to this, I bankered after her, you know, most awfully. At last I couldn't stand it any longer, so I wrote her a letter. It was only yesterday. And now, old chap, what do you think I wrote?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said I, mistily; "a declaration of love, perhaps—"

"A declaration of love? pooh!" said Jack; "as if I had ever written anything else than that. Why, all my letters were nothing else. No, my boy—this letter was very different. In the first place, I told her that I was desperate—then I assured

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her that I couldn't live this way any longer, and I concluded with a proposal as desperate as my situation. And what do you think my proposal was?"

"Proposal? Why, marriage, of course; there is only one kind of proposal possible under such circumstances. But still that's not much more than an engagement, dear boy, for an engagement means only the same thing, namely, marriage."

"Oh, but this was far stronger—it was different, I can tell you, from any mere proposal of marriage. What do you think it was? Guess."

"Can't. Haven't an idea."

"Well," said Jack—

CHAPTER VI.

"I IMplored HER TO RUN AWAY WITH ME, AND HEST A PRIVATE MARRIAGE, LEAVING THE REST TO FATE. AND I SOLEMNLY ASSURED HER THAT, IF SHE REFUSED, I WOULD BLOW MY BRAINS OUT ON HER DOOR-STEPS. —THERE, NOW! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?"

SAYING the above words, Jack leaned back, and surveyed me with the stern complacency of despair. After staring at me for some time, and evidently taking some sort of grim comfort out of the speechlessness to which he had reduced me by his unparalleled narrative, he continued his confessions:

"Last night, I made that infernal blunder with the widow—confound her!—that is, I mean of course, bless her! It's all the same, you know. To-day you behold the miserable state to which I am reduced. To-morrow I will get a reply from her. Of course, she will consent to fly. I know very well how it will be. She will hint at some feasible mode, and some con-

venient time. She will, of course, expect me to settle it all up, from her timid little hints; and I must settle it up, and not break my faith with her. And now, Marcorie, I ask you, not merely as an officer and a gentleman, but as a man, a fellow-Christian, and a sympathizing friend, what under Heaven am I to do?"

He stopped, leaned back in his chair, lighted once more his extinguished pipe, and I could see through the dense volumes of smoke which he blew forth, his eyes fixed earnestly upon me, gleaming like two stars from behind gloomy storm-clouds.

I sat in silence, and thought long and painfully over the situation. I could come to no conclusion, but I had to say something, and I said it.

"Put it off," said I at last, in a general state of daze.

"Put what off?"

"What? Why, the widow—no, the— the elopement, of course. Yes," I continued, firmly, "put off the elopement."

"Put off the elopement!" ejaculated Jack. "What! after proposing it so desperately—after threatening to blow my brains out in front of her door?"

"That certainly is a consideration," said I, thoughtfully; "but can't you have—well, brain-fever—yes, that's it, and can't you get some friend to send word to her?"

"That's all very well; but, you see, I'd have to keep my room. If I went out, she'd hear of it. She's got a wonderful way of hearing about my movements. She'll find out about the widow before the week's over. Oh, no! that's not to be done."

"Well, then," said I, desperately, "let her find it out. The blow would then fall a little more gently."

"You seem to me," said Jack, rather huffily, "to propose that I should quietly

proceed to break her heart. No! Hang it, man, if it comes to that I'll do it openly, and make a clean breast of it, without shamming or keeping her in suspense."

"Well, then," I responded, "why not break off with the widow?"

"Break off with the widow!" cried Jack, with the wondering accent of a man who has heard some impossible proposal.

"Certainly; why not?"

"Will you be kind enough to inform me what thing short of death could ever deliver me out of her hands?" asked Jack, mildly.

"Elope, as you proposed."

"That's the very thing I thought of; but the trouble is, in that case she would devote the rest of her life to vengeance. 'Hell hath no fury like a woman wronged,' you know. She'd move heaven and earth, and never end, till I was drummed out of the regiment. No, my boy. To do that would be to walk with open eyes to disgrace, and shame, and infamy, with a whole community, a whole regiment, and the Horse-Guards at the back of them, all banded together to crush me. Such a fate as this would hardly be the proper thing to give to a wife that a fellow loves."

"Can't you manage to make the widow disgusted with you?"

"No, I can't," said Jack, peevishly. "What do you mean?"

"Why, make it appear as though you only wanted to marry her for her money."

"Oh, hang it, man! how could I do that? I can't play a part, under any circumstances, and that particular part would be, so infernally mean, that it would be impossible. I'm such an ass that, if she were even to hint at that, I'd resent it furiously."

"Can't you make her afraid about your numerous gallantries?"

"Afraid? why she glories in them. So many feathers in her cap, and all that, you know."

"Can't you frighten her about your debts and general extravagance—hint that you're a gambler, and so on?"

"And then she'd inform me, very affectionately, that she intends to be my guardian angel, and save me from evil for all the rest of my life."

"Can't you tell her all about your solemn engagement to Miss Phillips?"

"My engagement to Miss Phillips? Why, man alive, she knows that as well as you do."

"Knows it! How did she find it out?"

"How? Why I told her myself."

"The deuce you did!"

Jack was silent.

"Well, then," said I, after some further thought, "why not tell her every thing?"

"Tell her every thing?"

"Yes—exactly what you've been telling me. Make a clean breast of it."

Jack looked at me for some time with a curious expression.

"My dear boy," said he, at length, "do you mean to say that you are really in earnest in making that proposition?"

"Most solemnly in earnest," said I.

"Well," said Jack, "it shows how mistaken I was in leaving any thing to your imagination. You do not seem to understand," he continued, dolefully, "or you will not understand that, when a fellow has committed himself to a lady as I did, and squeezed her hand with such peculiar ardor, in his efforts to save himself and do what's right, he often overdoes it. You don't seem to suspect that I might have overdone it with the widow. Now, unfortunately, that is the very thing that I did. I did happen to overdo it most confoundedly. And so the melancholy fact remains

that, if I were to all that I've been find an extraordinary such statements tender confession that other occasions convince her that time; and how confess that I am I don't see it. Can do you think of rather a tough situation a man can see his now. Don't you scrape you ever heard hambug."

The fellow seemed feel a dismal kind hopelessness of his at me with a gloomy countenance.

For my part, I saw best of reasons: I had I took refuge in shame.

"You see," Jack help for it. Nobody There's only one thing suggested."

"What's that?"

Jack put the tip forehead, and snapped his third.

"I haven't much to he, "but if I did have little I may have, it settlement of the debt cutting the knot, instead impossible task of would blame me. Even for me, and, above all hearts would feel a my untimely fate. be not cursed, but a class would suffer, and

that, if I were to repeat to her, verbatim, all that I've been telling you, she would find an extraordinary discrepancy between such statements and those abominably tender confessions in which I indulged on that other occasion. Nothing would ever convince her that I was not sincere at that time; and how can I go to her now and confess that I am a humbug and an idiot? I don't see it. Come, now, old fellow, what do you think of that? Don't you call it rather a tough situation? Do you think a man can see his way out of it? Own up, now. Don't you think it's about the worst scrape you ever heard of? Come, now, no humbug."

The fellow seemed actually to begin to feel a dismal kind of pride in the very hopelessness of his situation, and looked at me with a gloomy enjoyment of my discomfiture.

For my part, I said nothing, and for the best of reasons: I had nothing to say. So I took refuge in shaking my head.

"You see," Jack persisted, "there's no help for it. Nobody can do any thing. There's only one thing, and that you haven't suggested."

"What's that?" I asked, feebly.

Jack put the tip of his forefinger to his forehead, and snapped his thumb against his third.

"I haven't much brains to speak of," said he, "but if I did happen to blow out what little I may have, it would be the easiest settlement of the difficulty. It would be cutting the knot, instead of attempting the impossible task of untying it. Nobody would blame me. Everybody would mourn for me, and, above all, four tender female hearts would feel a pang of sorrow for my untimely fate. By all four I should be not cursed, but canonized. Only one class would suffer, and those would be wel-

come to their agonies. I allude, of course, to my friends the Dons."

To this eccentric proposal, I made no reply whatever.

"Well," said Jack, thoughtfully, "it isn't a bad idea. Not a bad idea," he repeated, rising from his chair and putting down his pipe, which had again gone out owing to his persistent loquacity. "I'll think it over," he continued, seriously. "You bear in mind my little directions about the head-stone, Macerrie, four feet by eighteen inches, old fellow, very plain, and, mark me, only the name and date. Not a word about the virtues of the deceased, etc. I can stand a great deal, but that I will *not* stand. And now, old chap, I must be off; you can't do me any good, I see."

"At any rate, you'll wait till to-morrow," said I, carelessly.

"Oh, there's no hurry," said he. "Of course, I must wait till then. I'll let you know if any thing new turns up."

And saying this, he took his departure.

## CHAPTER VII.

CROSSING THE ST. LAWRENCE.—THE STORM AND THE BREAK-UP.—A WONDERFUL ADVENTURE.—A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.—WHO IS SHE?—THE ICE-RIDGE.—FLY FOR YOUR LIFE!

On the following day I found myself compelled to go on some routine duty cross the river to Point Levy. The weather was the most abominable of that abominable season. It was winter, and yet not Winter's self. The old gentleman had lost all that bright and hilarious nature, all that sparkling and exciting stimulus which he owns and holds here so joyously in January, February, and even March. He was de-

crepit, yet spiteful; a hoary, old, tottering, palsied villain, hurling curses at all who ventured into his evil presence. One look outside showed me the full nature of all that was before me, and revealed the old tyrant in the full power of his malignancy. The air was raw and chill. There blew a fierce, blighting wind, which brought with it showers of stinging sleet. The wooden pavements were overspread with a thin layer of ice, so glassy that walking could only be attempted at extreme hazard; the houses were incrustated with the same cheerful coating; and, of all the beastly weather that I had ever seen, there had never been any equal to this. However, there was no escape from it; and so, wrapping myself up as well as I could, I took a stout stick with a sharp iron ferrule, and plunged forth into the storm.

On reaching the river, the view was any thing but satisfactory. The wind here was tremendous, and the sleet blew down in long, horizontal lines, every separate particle giving its separate sting, while the accumulated stings amounted to perfect torment. I paused for a while to get a little shelter, and take breath before venturing across.

There were other reasons for pausing. The season was well advanced, and the ice was not considered particularly safe. Many things conspired to give indications of a break-up. The ice on the surface was soft, honey-combed, and crumbling. Near the shore was a channel of open water. Farther out, where the current ran strongest, the ice was heaped up in hillocks and mounds, while in different directions appeared crevices of greater or less width. Looking over that broad surface as well as I could through the driving storm, where not long before I had seen crowds passing and repassing, not a soul was now visible.

This might have been owing to the insecurity of the ice; but it might also have been owing to the severity of the weather. Black enough, at any rate, the scene appeared; and I looked forth upon it from my temporary shelter with the certainty that this river before me was a particularly hard road to travel.

"Ye'll no be gangin' over the day, sew-erly?" said a voice near me.

I turned and saw a brawny figure in a reefing-jacket and "sou'-wester." He might have been a sailor, or a seaman, or a hibernating raftsmen.

"Why?" said I.

He said nothing, but shook his head with solemn emphases.

I looked for a few moments longer, and hesitated. Yet there was no remedy for it, had as it looked. After being ordered forward, I did not like to turn back with an excuse about the weather. Besides, the ice thus far had lasted well. Only the day before, sleds had crossed. There was no reason why I should not cross now. Why should I in particular be doomed to a catastrophe more than any other man? And, finally, was not McGoggin there? Was he not always ready with his warmest welcome? On a stormy day, did he not always keep his water up to the boiling-point, and did not the very best whiskey in Quebec diffuse about his chamber its aromatic odor?

I moved forward. The die was cast.

The channel near the shore was from six to twelve feet in width, filled with floating fragments. Over this I scrambled in safety. As I advanced, I could see that in one day a great change had taken place. The surface-ice was soft and disintegrated, crushing readily under the feet. All around me extended wide pools of water. From beneath these arose occasional groaning

sounds—dull, heavy to indicate a pressure of the season, had been gradually the shore its hold had been relaxed; and now blowing was a position which most resistlessly the ice sets all the imprudence every step new significance I encountered foot or two in width selves amount to nothing less served to show things.

My progress was The walking was in the ice itself and the had to wade. The gaps, which sometimes by a long distance was the furious sleet river, borne on by the and unrelaxing pertinacity equalled. However, ward, and at length the river. Here I serious obstacle. A divided; and in the there was a vast accumulation heaped up one above ridge, which extended could reach. There however, and to cross caution, and so much for a while, and, set wind, looked around tion.

Wild enough that one side was my destination through the storm the dark cliff of Cap

sounds—dull, heavy crunches, which seemed to indicate a speedy break-up. The progress of the season, with its thaws and rains, had been gradually weakening the ice; along the shore its hold had in some places at least been relaxed; and the gale of wind that was now blowing was precisely of that description which most frequently sweeps away resistlessly the icy fetters of the river, and sets all the imprisoned waters free. At every step new signs of this approaching break-up became visible. From time to time I encountered gaps in the lee, of a foot or two in width, which did not of themselves amount to much, but which nevertheless served to show plainly the state of things.

My progress was excessively difficult. The walking was laborious on account of the ice itself and the pools through which I had to wade. Then there were frequent gaps, which sometimes could only be traversed by a long detour. Above all, there was the furious sleet, which drove down the river, borne on by the tempest, with a fury and unrelaxing pertinacity that I never saw equalled. However, I managed to toil onward, and at length reached the centre of the river. Here I found a new and more serious obstacle. At this point the ice had divided; and in the channel thus formed there was a vast accumulation of ice-cakes, heaped up one above the other in a long ridge, which extended as far as the eye could reach. There were great gaps in it, however, and to cross it needed so much caution, and so much effort, that I paused for a while, and, setting my back to the wind, looked around to examine the situation.

Wild enough that scene appeared. On one side was my destination, but dimly visible through the storm; on the other rose the dark cliff of Caps Diamond, frowning

gloomily over the river, crowned with the citadel, where the flag of Old England was streaming straight out at the impulse of the blast, with a stiffness that made it seem as though it had been frozen in the air rigid in that situation. Up the river all was black and gloomy; and the storm which burst from that quarter obscured the view; down the river the prospect was as gloomy, but one thing was plainly visible—a wide, black surface, terminating the gray of the ice, and showing that there at least the break-up had begun, and the river had resumed its sway.

A brief survey showed me all this, and for a moment created a strong desire to go back. Another moment, however, showed that to go forward was quite as wise and as safe. I did not care to traverse again what I had gone over, and the natural reluctance to turn back from the half-way house, joined to the hope of better things for the rest of the way, decided me to go forward.

After some examination, I found a place on which to cross the central channel. It was a point where the heaps of ice seemed at once more easy to the foot, and more secure. At extreme risk, and by violent efforts, I succeeded in crossing, and, on reaching the other side, I found the ice more promising. Then, hoping that the chief danger had been successfully encountered, I gathered up my energies, and stepped out briskly toward the opposite shore.

It was not without the greatest difficulty and the utmost discomfort that I had come thus far. My clothes were coated with frozen sleet; my hair was a mass of ice; and my boots were filled with water. Wretched as all this was, there was no remedy for it, so I footed it as best I could, trying to console myself by thinking over the peaceful pleasures which were awaiting



me at the end of my journey in the chambers of the hospitable McGoggin.

Suddenly, as I walked along, peering with half-closed eyes through the stormy sleet before me, I saw at some distance a dark object approaching. After a time, the object drew nearer, and resolved itself into a sleigh. It came onward toward the centre of the river, which it reached at about a hundred yards below the point where I had crossed. There were two occupants in the sleigh, one crouching low and muffled in wraps; the other the driver, who looked like one of the common *habitans*. Knowing the nature of the river there, and wondering what might bring a sleigh out at such a time, I stopped, and watched them with a vague idea of shouting to them to go back. Their progress thus far from the opposite shore, so far at least as I could judge, made me conclude that the ice on this side must be comparatively good, while my own journey had proved that on the Quebec side it was utterly impossible for a horse to go.

As they reached the channel where the crumbled ice-blocks lay floating, heaped up as I have described, the sleigh stopped, and the driver looked anxiously around. At that very instant there came one of those low, dull, grinding sounds I have already mentioned, but very much louder than any that I had hitherto heard. Deep, angry thuds followed, and crunching sounds, while beneath all there arose a solemn murmur like the "voice of many waters." I felt the ice heave under my feet, and sway in long, slow undulations, and one thought, quick as lightning, flashed horribly into my mind. Instinctively I leaped forward toward my destination, while the ice rolled and heaved beneath me, and the dread sounds grew louder at every step.

Scarcely had I gone a dozen paces when

a piercing scream arrested me. I stopped and looked back. For a few moments only had I turned away, yet in that short interval a fearful change had taken place. The long ridge of ice which had been heaped up in the mid-channel had increased to thrice its former height, and the crunching and grinding of the vast masses arose above the roaring of the storm. Far up the river there came a deeper and fuller sound of the same kind, which, brought down by the wind, burst with increasing terrors upon the ear. The ridge of ice was in constant motion, being pressed and heaped up in ever-increasing masses, and, as it heaped itself up, toppling over and falling with a noise like thunder. There could be but one cause for all this, and the fear which had already flashed through my brain was now confirmed to my sight. The ice on which I stood was breaking up!

As all this burst upon my sight, I saw the sleigh. The horse had stopped in front of the ridge of ice in the mid-channel, and was rearing and plunging violently. The driver was lashing furiously and trying to turn the animal, which, frenzied by terror, and maddened by the stinging sleet, refused to obey, and would only rear and kick. Suddenly the ice under the sleigh sank down, and a flood of water rolled over it, followed by an avalanche of ice-blocks which had tumbled from the ridge. With a wild snort of terror, the horse turned, whirling round the sleigh, and with the speed of the wind dashed back toward the shore. As the sleigh came near, I saw the driver upright and trying to regain his command of the horse, and at that instant the other passenger started erect. The cloak fell back. I saw a face pale, overhung with dishevelled hair, and filled with an anguish of fear. But the pallor and the fear could

not conceal the expression of a woman's face, which was revealed in the momentary presence of the beautiful beyond all description, arose before me, and was from her that a few moments before I saw me, and another moment she

And now I forgot around me, and the interview with McGoggin to secure my own safety. And thus as I came aware of a darkly between me and a long, black channelf self up, and showing a dividing line between back seemed now forward was to meet the

Topic of this gulf at headlong speed. margin of the ice. him and headed him this, he swerved aside river. The driver p reins. The lady, who in her seat, was more horse, and, at every mad career, the sleigh one side and then there occurred a cut and reaching this time more to avoid it. I was swung toward broke. The harness. The off-runner of the ice—it tilted over; the reins and made a wild feet were entangled dragged him back. er, and far more fear

not conceal the exquisite loveliness of that woman-face, which was thus so suddenly revealed in the midst of the storm and in the presence of death; and which now, beautiful beyond all that I had ever dreamed of, arose before my astonished eyes. It was from her that the cry had come but a few moments before. As she passed she saw me, and another cry escaped her. In another moment she was far ahead.

And now I forgot all about the dangers around me, and the lessening chances of an interview with McGoggin. I hurried on, less to secure my own safety than to assist the lady. And thus as I rushed onward I became aware of a new danger which arose darkly between me and the horse. It was a long, black channel, gradually opening itself up, and showing in its gloomy surface a dividing line between me and life. To go back seemed now impossible—to go forward was to meet these black waters.

Through this gulf the frightened horse ran at headlong speed. Soon he reached the margin of the ice. The water was before him and headed him off. Terrified again at this, he swerved aside, and bounded up the river. The driver pulled frantically at the reins. The lady, who had fallen back again in her seat, was motionless. On went the horse, and, at every successive leap in his mad career, the sleigh swung wildly first to one side and then to the other. At last there occurred a curve in the line of ice, and reaching this the horse turned once more to avoid it. In doing so, the sleigh was swung toward the water. The shafts broke. The harness was torn asunder. The off-runner of the sleigh slid from the ice—it tilted over; the driver jerked at the reins and made a wild leap. In vain. His feet were entangled in the fur robes which dragged him back. A shriek, louder, wilder, and far more fearful than before, rang

out through the storm; and the next instant down went the sleigh with its occupants into the water, the driver falling out, while the horse, though free from the sleigh, was yet jerked aside by the reins, and before he could recover himself fell with the rest into the icy stream.

All this seemed to have taken place in an instant. I hurried on, with all my thoughts on this lady who was thus doomed to so sudden and so terrible a fate. I could see the sleigh floating for a time, and the head of the horse, that was swimming. I sprang to a place which seemed to give a chance of assisting them, and looked eagerly to see what had become of the lady. The sleigh drifted steadily along. It was one of that box-shaped kind called *pungs*, which are sometimes made so tight that they can resist the action of water, and float either in crossing a swollen stream, or in case of breaking through the ice. Such boat-like sleighs are not uncommon; and this one was quite buoyant. I could see nothing of the driver. He had probably sunk at once, or had been drawn under the ice. The horse, entangled in the shafts, had regained the ice, and had raised one foreleg to its surface, with which he was making furious struggles to emerge from the water, while snorts of terror escaped him. But where was the lady? I hurried farther up, and, as I approached, I could see something crouched in a heap at the bottom of the floating sleigh. Was it she—or was it only the heap of buffalo-robes? I could not tell.

The sleigh drifted on, and soon I came near enough to see that the bundle had life. I came close to where it floated. It was not more than six yards off, and was drifting steadily nearer. I walked on by the edge of the ice, and shouted. There was no answer. At length I saw a white hand

clutching the side of the sleigh. A thrill of exultant hope passed through me. I shouted again and again, but my voice was lost in the roar of the crashing ice and the howling gale. Yet, though my voice had not been heard, I was free from suspense, for I saw that the lady thus far was safe, and I could wait a little longer for the chance of affording her assistance. I walked on, then, in silence, watching the sleigh which continued to float. We travelled thus a long distance—I, and the woman who had thus been so strangely wrecked in so strange a bark. Looking back, I could no longer see any signs of the horse. All this time the sleigh was gradually drifted nearer the edge of the ice on which I walked, until at last it came so near that I reached out my stick, and, catching it with the crooked handle, drew it toward me. The shock, as the sleigh struck against the ice, roused its occupant. She started up, stood upright, stared for a moment at me, and then at the scene around. Then she sprang out, and, clasping her hands, fell upon her knees, and seemed to mutter words of prayer. Then she rose to her feet, and looked around with a face of horror. There was such an anguish of fear in her face, that I tried to comfort her. But my efforts were useless.

"Oh! there is no hope! The river is breaking up!" she moaned. "They told me it would. How mad I was to try to cross!"

Finding that I could do nothing to quell her fears, I began to think what was best to do. First of all, I determined to secure the sleigh. It might be the means of saving us, or, if not, it would at any rate do for a place of rest. It was better than the wet ice for the lady. So I proceeded to pull it on the ice. The lady tried to help me, and, after a desperate effort, the heavy

pung was dragged from the water upon the frozen surface. I then made her grasp it, and wrapped the furs around her as well as I could.

She submitted without a word. Her white face was turned toward mine; and once or twice she threw upon me, from her dark, expressive eyes, a look of speechless gratitude. I tried to promise safety, and encouraged her as well as I could, and she seemed to make an effort to regain her self-control.

In spite of my efforts at consolation, her despair affected me. I looked all around to see what the chances of escape might be. As I took that survey; I perceived that those chances were indeed small. The first thing that struck me was, that Cape Diamond was far behind the point where I at present stood. While the sleigh had drifted, and I had walked beside it, our progress had been down the river; and since then the ice, which itself had all this time been drifting, had borne us on without ceasing. We were still drifting at the very moment that I looked around. We had also moved farther away from the shore which I wished to reach, and nearer to the Quebec shore. When the sleigh had first gone over, it had not been more than twenty yards between the ice and the shore; but now that shore was full two hundred yards away. All this time the fury of the wind, and the torment of the blinding, stinging sleet, had not in the least abated; the grinding and roaring of the ice had increased; the long ridge had heaped itself up to a greater height, and opposite us it towered up in formidable masses.

I thought at one time of intrusting myself with my companion to the sleigh, in the hope of using it as a boat to gain the shore. But I could not believe that it would float with both of us, and, if it

would, there were no chance of my guiding it. Better than to attempt to do as a last resort this idea, I watched the chance of drifting soon saw that the element drew us far from a score of deaths all of them were as they suggested.

All this time she was deathly pale; her face bore the same anguish of mind from the first, like an inevitable doom. She pitilessly; occasionally through her; and affected me far more than agony, that pallid, ghastly white lips to prayers. She saw the long sheet of water shore on the one side the ever-increasing

At last I succeeded in reaching the shore, and bringing back a proposal was impracticable; but I led her to suggest as she heard it, she said, "Oh, sir!" she said, "a human heart, for God's sake, stay with me." "Leave you!" she said, "I have breath. I will live."

But this; instead of having the effect of calming her. She grew calmer.

"No," said she, "I am mad with fear. Never leave yourself."

"Never!" I re-

would, there were no means of moving or gulding it. Better to remain on the ice than to attempt that. Such a refuge would only do as a last resort. After giving up this idea, I watched to see if there was any chance of drifting back to the shore, but soon saw that there was none. Every moment drew us farther off. Then I thought of a score of desperate undertakings, but all of them were given up almost as soon as they suggested themselves.

All this time the lady had sat in silence—deathly pale, looking around with that same anguish of fear which I had noticed from the first, like one who awaits an inevitable doom. The storm beat about her pitilessly; occasional shudders passed through her; and the dread scene around affected me far less than those eyes of agony, that pallid face, and those tremulous white lips that seemed to murmur prayers. She saw, as well as I, the widening sheet of water between us and the shore on the one side, and on the other the ever-increasing masses of crumbling ice.

At last I suddenly offered to go to Quebec, and bring back help for her. So wild a proposal was in the highest degree impracticable; but I thought that it might lead her to suggest something. As soon as she heard it, she evinced fresh terror.

"Oh, sir!" she moaned, "if you have a human heart, do not leave me! For God's sake, stay a little longer."

"Leave you!" I cried; "never while I have breath. I will stay with you to the last."

But this, instead of reassuring her, merely had the effect of changing her feelings. She grew calmer.

"No," said she, "you must not. I was mad with fear. No—go. You at least can save yourself. Go—fly—leave me!"

"Never!" I repeated. "I only made

that proposal—not thinking to save you, but merely supposing that you would feel better at the simple suggestion of something."

"I implore you," she reiterated. "Go—there is yet time. You only risk your life by delay. Don't waste your time on me."

"I could not go if I would," I said, "and I swear I would not go if I could," I cried, impetuously. "I hope you do not take me for any thing else than a gentleman."

"Oh, sir, pardon me. Can you think that?—But you have already risked your life once by waiting to save mine—and, oh, do not risk it by waiting again."

"Madame," said I, "you must not only not say such a thing, but you must not even think it. I am here with you, and, being a gentleman, I am here by your side either for life or death. But come—rouse yourself. Don't give up. I'll save you, or die with you. At the same time, let me assure you that I haven't the remotest idea of dying."

She threw at me, from her eloquent eyes, a look of unutterable gratitude, and said not a word.

I looked at my watch. It was three o'clock. There was no time to lose. The day was passing swiftly, and at this rate evening would come on before one might be aware. The thought of standing idle any longer, while the precious hours were passing, was intolerable. Once more I made a hasty survey, and now, pressed and stimulated by the dire exigencies of the hour, I determined to make an effort toward the Quebec side. On that side, it seemed as though the ice which drifted from the other shore was being packed in an unbroken mass. If so, a way over it might be found to a resolute spirit.

I hastily told my companion my plan. She listened with a faint smile.

"I will do all that I can," said she, and I saw with delight that the mere prospect of doing something had aroused her.

My first act was to push the sleigh with its occupant toward the ice-ridge in the centre of the river. The lady strongly objected, and insisted on getting out and helping me. This I positively forbade. I assured her that my strength was quite sufficient for the undertaking, but that hers was not; and if she would save herself, and me, too, she must husband all her resources and obey implicitly. She submitted under protest, and, as I pushed her along, she murmured the most touching expressions of sympathy and of gratitude. But pushing a sleigh over the smooth ice is no very difficult work, and the load that it contained did not increase the labor in my estimation. Thus we soon approached that long ice-ridge which I have so frequently mentioned. Here I stopped, and began to seek a place which might afford a chance for crossing to the ice-field on the opposite side.

The huge ice-blocks gathered here, where the fields on either side were forced against one another, grinding and breaking up. Each piece was forced up, and, as the grinding process continued, the heap rose higher. At times, the loftiest parts of the ridge toppled over with a tremendous crash, while many other piles seemed about to do the same. To attempt to pass that ridge would be to encounter the greatest peril. In the first place, it would be to invite an avalanche; and then, again, wherever the piles fell, the force of that fall broke the field-ice below, and the water rushed up, making a passage through it quite as hazardous as the former. For a long time I examined without seeing any place which was at all

practicable. There was no time, however, to be discouraged; an effort had to be made, and that without delay; so I determined to try for myself, and (test one or more places. One place appeared less dangerous than others—a place where a pile of uncommon size had recently fallen. The blocks were of unusual size, and were raised up but a little above the level of the ice on which I stood. These blocks, though swaying slowly up and down, seemed yet to be strong enough for my purpose. I sprang toward the place, and found it practicable. Then I returned to the lady. She was eager to go. Here we had to give up the sleigh, since to transport that also was not to be thought of.

"Now," said I, "is the time for you to exert all your strength."

"I am ready," said she.

"Hurry, then."

At that moment there burst a thunder-shock. A huge pile farther down had fallen, and bore down the surface-ice. The water rushed boiling and seething upward, and spread far over. There was not a moment to lose. It was now or never; so, snatching her hand, I rushed forward. The water was up to my knees, and sweeping past and whirling back with a furious impetuosity. Through that flood I dragged her, and she followed bravely and quickly. I pulled her up to the first block, then onward to another. Leaping over a third, I had to relinquish her hand for a moment, and then, extending mine once more, I caught hers, and she sprang after me. All these blocks were firm, and our weight did not move their massive forms. One huge piece formed the last stage in our hazardous path. It overlapped the ice on the opposite side. I sprang down, and the next instant the lady was by my side. Thank Heaven! we were over.

Onward then seeking to get a dangerous channel, seething waters distance intervened my pace so as take a breath. A spoken a word, and an energy with her previous

I saw that t rougher than it Lumps were up This was a good close packing danger of open thing now to be ing the shore w That shore, I co distance below Q not tell. I coul the land, but Q perceptible thro slect.

For a long tim nobly, and sust which I was th length, she bega exhaustion. I s fearful every mo stance which mi from both of us. thing to have t were forced to her strength wo ment. The dista great that we see ttle. I insisted leaning on me cheer her by m see how far w smile; but the s weakness, she b the storm from

Onward then we hurried for our lives, seeking to get as far as possible from that dangerous channel of ice-avalanches and scorching waters; and it was not till a safe distance intervened, that I dared to slacken my pace so as to allow my companion to take breath. All this time she had not spoken a word, and had shown a calmness and an energy which contrasted strongly with her previous lethargy and terror.

I saw that the ice in this place was rougher than it had been on the other side. Lumps were upheaved in many places. This was a good sign, for it indicated a close packing in this direction, and less danger of open water, which was the only thing now to be feared. The hope of reaching the shore was now strong within me. That shore, I could perceive, must be some distance below Quebec; but how far I could not tell. I could see the dark outline of the land, but Quebec was now no longer perceptible through the thick storm of sleet.

For a long time, my companion held out nobly, and sustained the rapid progress which I was trying to keep up; but, at length, she began to show evident signs of exhaustion. I saw this with pain, for I was fearful every moment of some new circumstance which might call for fresh exertion from both of us. I would have given any thing to have had the sleigh which we were forced to relinquish. I feared that her strength would fail at the trying moment. The distance before us was yet so great that we seemed to have traversed but little. I insisted on her taking my arm and leaning on me for support, and tried to cheer her by making her look back and see how far we had gone. She tried to smile; but the smile was a failure. In her weakness, she began to feel more sensibly the storm from which she had been shol-

tered to some extent before she left the sleigh. She cowered under the fierce pelt of the pitiless sleet, and clung to me, trembling and shivering with cold.

On and on we walked. The distance seemed interminable. The lady kept up well, considering her increasing exhaustion, saying nothing whatever; but her quick, short breathing was audible, as she panted with fatigue. I felt every shudder that ran through her delicate frame. And yet I did not dare to stop and give her rest; for, aside from the imminent danger of losing our hope of reaching land, a delay, even to take breath, would only expose her the more surely to the effect of the cold. At last, I stopped for a moment, and drew off my overcoat. This, in spite of her protestations, I forced her to put on. She threatened, at one time, to sit down on the ice and die, rather than do it.

"Very well, madame," said I. "Then, out of a punctilio, you will destroy, not only yourself, but me. Do I deserve this?"

At this, tears started to her eyes. She submitted.

"Oh, sir," she murmured, "what can I say? It's for your sake that I refuse. I will submit. God bless you—who sent you to my help! God forever bless you!"

I said nothing.

On and on!

Then her steps grew feebler—then her weight rested on me more heavily.

On and on!

She staggered, and low moans succeeded to her heavy panting. At last, with a cry of despair, she fell forward.

I caught her in my arms, and held her up.

"Leave me!" she said, in a faint voice. "I cannot walk any farther."

"No; I will wait for a while."

"Oh, leave me! Save yourself! Or go ashore, and bring help!"

"No; I will go ashore with you, or not at all."

She sighed, and clung to me.

After a time, she revived a little, and insisted on going onward. This time she walked for some distance. She did this with a stolid, heavy step, and mechanically, like an automaton moved by machinery. Then she stopped again.

"I am dizzy," said she, faintly.

I made her sit down on the ice, and put myself between her and the wind. That rest did much for her. But I was afraid to let her sit more than five minutes. Her feet were saturated, and, in spite of my overcoat, she was still shivering.

"Come," said I; "if we stay any longer, you will die."

She staggered up. She clung to me, and I dragged her on. Then, again, she stopped.

I now tried a last resort, and gave her some brandy from my flask. I had thought, of it often, but did not wish to give this until other things were exhausted; for, though the stimulus is an immediate remedy for weakness, yet on the ice and in the snow the reaction is dangerous to the last degree. The draught revived her wonderfully.

Starting once more, with new life, she was able to traverse a very great distance; and at length, to my delight, the shore began to appear very near. But now the reaction from the stimulant appeared. She sank down without a word; and another draught, and yet another, was needed to infuse some false strength into her. At length, the shore seemed close by us. Here she gave out utterly.

"I can go no farther," she moaned, as she fell straight down heavily and suddenly on the ice.

"Only one more effort," I said, imploringly. "Take some more brandy."

"It is of no use. Leave me! Get help!"

"See—the shore is near. It is not more than a few rods away."

"I cannot."

I supported her in my arms, for she was leaning on her hand, and slowly sinking downward. Once more I pressed the brandy upon her lips, as her head lay on my shoulder. Her eyes were closed. Down on her marble face the wild storm beat savagely; her lips were bloodless, and her teeth were fixed convulsively. It was only by an effort that I could force the brandy into her mouth. Once more, and for the last time, the fiery liquid gave her a momentary strength. She roused herself from the stupor into which she was sinking, and, springing to her feet with a wild, spasmodic effort, she ran with outstretched hands toward the shore. For about twenty or thirty paces she ran, and, before I could overtake her, she fell once more.

I raised her up, and again supported her. She could move no farther. I sat by her side for a little while, and looked toward the shore. It was close by us now; but, as I looked, I saw a sight which made any further delay impossible.

Directly in front, and only a few feet away, was a dark chasm lying between us and that shore for which we had been striving so earnestly. It was a fathom wide; and there flowed the dark waters of the river, gloomily, warningly, menacingly! To me, that chasm was nothing; but how could she cross it? Besides, there was no doubt that it was widening every moment.

I started up.

"Wait here for a moment," said I, hurriedly

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I left her half reclining on the ice, and ran hastily up and down the chasm. I could see that my fears were true. The whole body of ice was beginning to break away, and drift from this shore also, as it had done from the other. I saw a place not more than five feet wide. Back I rushed to my companion. I seized her, and, lifting her in my arms, without a word, I carried her to that place where the channel was narrowest; and then, without stopping to consider, but impelled by the one fierce desire for safety, I leaped forward, and my feet touched the opposite side.

With a horrible crash, the ice broke beneath me, and I went down. That sound, and the awful sensation of sinking, I shall never forget. But the cake of ice which had given way beneath my feet, though it went down under me, still prevented my sinking rapidly. I flung myself forward, and held up my almost senseless burden as I best could with one arm, while with the other I dug my sharp-pointed stick into the ice and held on for a moment. Then, summoning up my strength, I passed my left arm under my companion, and raised her out of the water upon the ice. My feet seemed sucked by the water underneath the shelf of ice against which I rested; but the iron-pointed stick never slipped, and I succeeded. Then, with a spring, I raised myself up from the water, and clambered out.

My companion had struggled up to her knees, and grasped me feebly, as though to assist me. Then she started to her feet. The horror of sudden death had done this, and had given her a convulsive energy of recoil from a hideous fate. Thus she sprang forward, and ran for some distance. I hastened after her, and, seizing her arm, drew it in mine. But at that moment her short-lived strength failed her, and she sank

once more. I looked all around—the shore was only a few yards off. A short distance away was a high, cone-shaped mass of ice, whose white sheen was distinct amid the gloom. I recognized it at once.

"Courage, courage!" I cried. "We are at Montmorency. There is a house not far away. Only one more effort."

She raised her head feebly.

"Do you see it? Montmorency! the ice-  
cave of the Falls!" I cried, eagerly.

Her head sank back again.

"Look! look! We are saved! we are near houses!"

The only answer was a moan. She sank down lower. I grasped her so as to sustain her, and she lay senseless in my arms.

There was now no more hope of any further exertion from her. Strength and sense had deserted her. There was only one thing to be done.

I took her in my arms, and carried her toward the shore. How I clambered up that steep bank, I do not remember. At any rate, I succeeded in reaching the top, and sank exhausted there, holding my burden under the dark, sighing evergreens.

Rising once more, I raised her up, and made my way to a house. The inmates were kind, and full of sympathy. I committed the lady to their care, and fell exhausted on a settee in front of the huge fireplace.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I FLY BACK, AND SEND THE DOCTOR TO THE RESCUE.—RETURN TO THE SPOT.—FLIGHT OF THE BIRD.—PERPLEXITY, ASTONISHMENT, WONDER, AND DESPAIR.—"PAS UN MOT, MONSIEUR!"

A LONG time passed, and I waited in great anxiety. Meanwhile, I had changed



my clothes, and sat by the fire robed in the picturesque costume of a French *habitant*, while my own saturated garments were drying elsewhere. I tried to find out if there was a doctor anywhere in the neighborhood, but learned that there was none nearer than Quebec. The people were such dolts, that I determined to set out myself for the city, and either send a doctor or fetch one. After immense trouble, I succeeded in getting a horse; and, just before starting, I was encouraged by hearing that the lady had recovered from her swoon, and was much better, though somewhat feverish.

It was a wild journey.

The storm was still raging; the road was abominable, and was all one glare of frozen sleet, which had covered it with a slippery surface, except where there arose disintegrated ice-hummocks and heaps of slush—the *débris* of giant drifts. Moreover, it was as dark as Egypt. My progress, therefore, was slow. A boy went with me as far as the main road, and, after seeing me under way, he left me to my own devices. The horse was very aged, and, I fear, a little rheumatic. Besides, I have reason to believe that he was blind. That did not make any particular difference, though; for the darkness was so intense, that eyes were as useless as they would be to the eyeless fishes of the Mammoth Cave. I don't intend to prolong my description of this midnight ride. Suffice it to say that the horse walked all the way, and, although it was midnight when I started, it was near morning when I reached my quarters.

I hurried at once to the doctor, and, to his intense disgust, roused him and implored his services. I made it a personal matter, and put it in such an affecting light, that he consented to go; but he assured

me that it was the greatest sacrifice to friendship that he had ever made in his life. I gave him the most explicit directions, and did not leave him till I saw him on horseback, and trotting, half asleep, down the street.

Then I went to my room, completely used up after such unparalleled exertions. I got a roaring fire made, established myself on my sofa immediately in front of it, and sought to restore my exhausted frame by hot potatoes. My intention was to rest for a while, till I felt thoroughly warmed, and then start for Montmorency to see about the lady. With this in my mind, and a pipe in my mouth, and a tumbler of toddy at my elbow, I reclined on my deep, soft, old-fashioned, and luxurious sofa; and, thus situated, I fell off before I knew it into an exceedingly profound sleep.

When I awoke, it was broad day. I started up, looked at my watch, and, to my horror, found that it was half-past twelve. In a short time, I had flung off my *habitant* clothes, dressed myself, got my own horse, and galloped off as fast as possible.

I was deeply vexed at myself for sleeping so long; but I found comfort in the thought that the doctor had gone on before. The storm had gone down, and the sky was clear. The sun was shining brightly. The roads were abominable, but not so bad as they had been, and my progress was rapid. So I went on at a rattling pace, not sparing my horse, and occupying my mind with thoughts of the lady whom I had saved, when suddenly, about three miles from Quebec, I saw a familiar figure advancing toward me.

It was the doctor!

He moved along slowly, and, as I drew nearer, I saw that he looked very much worn out, very peevish, and very discontented.

"Well, old man, find her?"

"Find her?" didn't find her at he continued, "a this, that it's a d

"A hoax? W gasped.

"Find her? no such person. find the house."

"What—do yo derstand—" I fal

"Why," said deep distress and simply this: I've fernal country all er, called at fifty anybody that knew any lady whatever.

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"For God's sak estly, "don't go lady is there, and perious one. I saved her. I left night, in spite of all night to get y you would be there now nearly two i Heavens! doctor, in such a fix?"

"Macrorie," said dead with fatigue. and I wouldn't h

"Well, old man," said I, "how did you find her?"

"Find her?" growled the doctor—"I didn't find her at all. If this is a hoax," he continued, "all I can say, Macrorie, is this, that it's a devilish stupid one."

"A hoax? What—didn't find her?" I gasped.

"Find her? Of course not. There's no such a person. Why, I could not even find the house."

"What—do you mean? I—I don't understand—" I faltered.

"Why," said the doctor, who saw my deep distress and disappointment, "I mean simply this: I've been riding about this infernal country all day, been to Montmorency, called at fifty houses, and couldn't find anybody that knew any thing at all about any lady whatever."

At this, my consternation was so great that I couldn't say one single word. This news almost took my breath away. The doctor looked sternly at me for some time, and then was about to move on.

This roused me.

"What!" I cried; "you're not thinking of going back?"

"Back? Of course, I am. That's the very thing I'm going to do."

"For God's sake, doctor," I cried, earnestly, "don't go just yet! I tell you, the lady is there, and her condition is a most perilous one. I told you before how I saved her. I left there at midnight, last night, in spite of my fatigue, and travelled all night to get you. I promised her that you would be there early this morning. It's now nearly two in the afternoon. Good Heavens! doctor, you won't leave a fellow in such a fix?"

"Macrorie," said the doctor, "I'm half dead with fatigue. I did it for your sake, and I wouldn't have done it for another

soul—no, not even for Jack Randolph. So be considerate, my boy."

"Doctor," I cried, earnestly, "it's a case of life and death!"

A long altercation now followed; but the end of it was that the doctor yielded, and, in spite of his fatigue, turned back, grumbling and growling.

So we rode back together—the doctor, groaning and making peevish remarks; I, oblivious of all this, and careless of my friend's discomfort. My mind was full of visions of the lady—the fair unknown. I was exceedingly anxious and troubled at the thought that all this time she had been alone, without any medical assistance. I pictured her to myself as sinking rapidly into fever and delirium. Stimulated by all these thoughts, I hurried on, while the doctor with difficulty followed. At length, we arrived within half a mile of the Falls; but I could not see any signs of the house which I wished to find, or of the road that led to it. I looked into all the roads that led to the river; but none seemed like that one which I had traversed.

The doctor grew every moment more vexed.

"Look here now, Macrorie," said he, at last—"I'll go no farther—no, not a step. I'm used up. I'll go into the nearest house, and wait."

Saying this, he turned abruptly, and went to a house that was close by.

I then dismounted, went to the upper bank of the Montmorency, where it joins the St. Lawrence below the Falls, and looked down.

The ice was all out. The place which yesterday had been the scene of my struggle for life was now one vast sheet of dark-blue water. As I looked at it, an involuntary shudder passed through me; for now I saw the full peril of my situation.

Looking along the river, I saw the place where I must have landed, and on the top of the steep bank I saw a house which seemed to be the one where I had found refuge. Upon this, I went back, and, getting the doctor, we went across the fields to this house. I knocked eagerly at the door. It was opened, and in the person of the *habitant* before me I recognized my host of the evening before.

"How is madame?" I asked, hurriedly and anxiously.

"Madame?"

"Yes, madame—the lady, you know."

"Madame? She is not here."

"Not here!" I cried.

"Non, monsieur."

"Not here? What! Not here?" I cried again. "But she must be here. Didn't I bring her here last night?"

"Certainly, monsieur; but she's gone home."

At this, there burst from the doctor a peal of laughter—so loud, so long, so savage, and so brutal, that I forgot in a moment all that he had been doing for my sake, and felt an almost irresistible inclination to punch his head. Only I didn't; and, perhaps, it was just as well. The sudden inclination passed, and there remained nothing but an overwhelming sense of disappointment, by which I was crushed for a few minutes, while still the doctor's mocking laughter sounded in my ears.

"How was it?" I asked, at length—"how did she get off? When I left, she was in a fever, and wanted a doctor."

"After you left, monsieur, she slept, and awoke, toward morning, very much better. She dressed, and then wanted us to get a conveyance to take her to Quebec. We told her that you had gone for a doctor, and that she had better wait. But this, she said, was impossible. She would not

think of it. She had to go to Quebec as soon as possible, and entreated us to find some conveyance. So we found a wagon at a neighbor's, threw some straw in it and some skins over it, and she went away."

"She went!" I repeated, in an imbecile way.

"Oui, monsieur."

"And didn't she leave any word?"

"Monsieur?"

"Didn't she leave any message for—for me?"

"Non, monsieur."

"Not a word?" I asked, mournfully and despairingly.

The reply of the *habitant* was a crushing one:

"*Pas un mot, monsieur!*"

The doctor burst into a shriek of sardonic laughter.

#### CHAPTER IX.

BY ONE'S OWN FIRESIDE.—THE COMFORTS OF A BACHELOR.—CHEWING THE CUD OF SWEET AND BITTER FANCY.—A DISCOVERY FULL OF MORTIFICATION AND EMBARRASSMENT.—JACK RANDOLPH AGAIN.—NEWS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

By six o'clock in the evening I was back in my room again. The doctor had chafed me so villainously all the way back that my disappointment and mortification had vanished, and had given place to a feeling of resentment. I felt that I had been ill-treated. After saving a girl's life, to be dropped so quietly and so completely, was more than flesh and blood could stand. And then there was that confounded doctor. He fairly revelled in my situation, and forgot all about his fatigue. However, before I left him, I extorted from him a promise to say nothing about it, swearing

if he didn't I'd sell vice. This promise mark that he would his own special use.

Once within my self comfortable in viz.:

1. A roaring, red
2. Curtains close
3. Sofa pulled up
4. Table beside
5. Hot water.
6. Whiskey.
7. Tobacco.
8. Pipes.
9. Fragrant aroma
10. Sugar.
11. Tumblers.
12. Various other

to mention, all of w throw over my pertu divine calm.

Under such circum moment brought forw of rest and tranquillity back in a kind of h events of the past two

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if he didn't I'd sell out and quit the service. This promise he gave, with the remark that he would reserve the subject for his own special use.

Once within my own room, I made myself comfortable in my own quiet way, viz.:

1. A roaring, red-hot fire.
2. Curtains close drawn.
3. Sofa pulled up beside said fire.
4. Table beside sofa.
5. Hot water.
6. Whiskey.
7. Tobacco.
8. Pipes.
9. Fragrant aromatic steam.
10. Sugar.
11. Tumblers.
12. Various other things not necessary to mention, all of which contributed to throw over my perturbed spirit a certain divine calm.

Under such circumstances, while every moment brought forward some new sense of rest and tranquillity, my mind wandered back in a kind of lazy reverie over the events of the past two days.

Once more I wandered over the crumbling ice; once more I floundered through the deep pools of water; once more I halted in front of that perilous ice-ridge, with my back to the driving storm and my eyes searching anxiously for a way of progress. The frowning cliff, with its flag floating out stiff in the tempest, the dim shore opposite, the dark horizon, the low moan of the river as it struggled against its icy burden, all these came back again. Then, through all this, I rushed forward, scrambling over the ice-ridge, reaching the opposite plain to hurry forward to the shore. Then came the rushing sleigh, the recoiling horse, the swift retreat, the mad race along the brink of the icy edge, the

terrible plunge into the deep, dark water. Then came the wild, half-human shriek of the drowning horse, and the sleigh with its despairing freight drifting down toward me. Through all this there broke forth amid the clouds of that reverie, the vision of that pale, agonized face, with its white lips and imploring eyes—the face of her whom I had saved.

So I had saved her, had I? Yes, there was no doubt of that. Never would I lose the memory of that unparalleled journey to Montmorency Fall, as I toiled on, dragging with me that frail, fainting, despairing companion. I had sustained her; I had cheered her; I had stimulated her; and, finally, at that supreme moment, when she fell down in sight of the goal, I had put forth the last vestige of my own strength in bearing her to a place of safety.

And so she had left me.

Left me—without a word—without a hint—without the remotest sign of any thing like recognition, not to speak of gratitude!

*Pas un mot!*

Should I ever see her again?

This question, which was very natural under the circumstances, caused me to make an effort to recall the features of my late companion. Strange to say, my effort was not particularly successful. A white, agonized face was all that I remembered, and afterward a white, sonless face, belonging to a prostrate figure, which I was trying to raise. This was all. What that face might look like in repose, I found it impossible to conjecture.

And now here was a ridiculous and mortifying fact. I found myself haunted by this white face and these despairing eyes, yet for the life of me I could not reduce that face to a natural expression so as to learn what it might look like in common

life. Should I know her again if I met her? I could not say. Would she know me? I could not answer that. Should I ever be able to find her? How could I tell?

Baffled and utterly at a loss what to do toward getting the identity of the subject of my thoughts, I wandered off into various moods. First I became cynical, but, as I was altogether too comfortable to be morose, my cynicism was of a good-natured character. Then I made merry over my own mishaps and misadventures. Then I reflected, in a lofty, philosophic frame of mind, upon the faithlessness of woman, and, passing from this into metaphysics, I soon boozed off into a gentle, a peaceful, and a very consoling doze. When I awoke, it was morning, and I concluded to go to bed.

On the morrow, at no matter what o'clock, I had just finished breakfast, when I heard a well-known footstep, and Jack Randolph burst in upon me in his usual style.

"Well, old chap," he cried, "where the mischief have you been for the last two days, and what have you been doing with yourself? I heard that you got back from Point Levi—though how the deuce you did it I can't imagine—and that you'd gone off on horseback nobody knew where. I've been here fifty times since I saw you last. Tell you what, Macrorie, it wasn't fair to me to give me the slip this way, when you knew my delicate position, and all that. I can't spare you for a single day. I need your advice. Look here, old fellow, I've got a letter."

And saying this, Jack drew a letter from his pocket, with a grave face, and opened it.

So taken up was Jack with his own affairs, that he did not think of inquiring into the reasons of my prolonged absence. For my part, I listened to him in a dreamy

way, and, when he drew out the letter, it was only with a strong effort that I was able to conjecture what it might be. So much had passed since I had seen him, that our last conversation had become very dim and indistinct in my memory.

"Oh," said I, at last, as I began to recall the past, "the letter—h'm—ah—the—the widow. Oh, yes, I understand."

Jack looked at me in surprise.

"The widow?" said he. "Pooh, man! what are you talking about? Are you crazy? This is from *her*—from Miss—that is—from the other one, you know."

"Oh, yes," said I, confusedly. "True—I remember. Oh, yes—Miss Phillips."

"Miss Phillips!" cried Jack. "Hang it, man, what's the matter with you to-day? Haven't I told you all about it? Didn't I tell you what I wouldn't breathe to another soul—that is, excepting two or three?—and now, when I come to you at the crisis of my fate, you forget all about it!"

"Nonsense!" said I. "The fact is, I went to bed very late, and am scarcely awake yet. Go on, old boy, I'm all right. Well, what does she say?"

"I'll be hanged if you know what you're talking about," said Jack, pettishly.

"Nonsense! I'm all right now; go on."

"You don't know who this letter is from."

"Yes, I do."

"Who is it?" said Jack, watching me with jealous scrutiny.

"Why," said I, "it's that other one—the—hang it! I don't know her name, so I'll call her Number Three, or Number Four, whichever you like."

"You're a cool hand, any way," said Jack, sulkily. "Is this the way you take a matter of life and death?"

"Life and death?" I repeated.

"Life and death!" said Jack. "Yes,

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"What!" I cried.

life and death. Why, see here, Macrorie, I'll be hanged if I don't believe that you've forgotten every word I told you about my escape. If that's the case, all I can say is, that I'm not the man to force my confidences where they are so very unimportant."

And Jack made a move toward the door.

"Stop, Jack," said I. "The fact is, I've been queer for a couple of days. I had a beastly time on the river. Talk about life and death! Why, man, it was the narrowest scratch with me you ever saw. I didn't go to Point Levi at all."

"The deuce you didn't!"

"No; I pulled up at Montmorency."

"The deuce you did! How's that?"

"Oh, never mind; I'll tell you some other time. At any rate, if I seem dazed or confused, don't notice it. I'm coming round. I'll only say this, that I've lost a little of my memory, and am glad I didn't lose my life. But go on. I'm up to it now, Jack. You wrote to Number Three, proposing to elope, and were staking your existence on her answer. You wished me to order a head-stone for you at Anderson's, four feet by eighteen inches, with nothing on it but the name and date, and not a word about the virtues, et cetera. There, you see, my memory is all right at last. And now, old boy, what does she say? When did you get it?"

"I got it this morning," said Jack. "It was a long delay. She is always prompt. Something must have happened to delay her. I was getting quite wild, and would have put an end to myself if it hadn't been for Louie. And then, you know, the widow's getting to be a bit of a bore. Look here—what do you think of my selling out, buying a farm in Minnesota, and taking little Louie there?"

"What!" I cried. "Look here, Jack,

whatever you do, don't, for Heaven's sake, get poor little Louie entangled in your affairs."

"Oh, don't you fret," said Jack, dolefully. "No fear about her. She's all right, so far.—But, see here, there's the letter."

And saying this, he tossed over to me the letter from "Number Three," and, filling a pipe, began smoking vigorously.

The letter was a singular one. It was highly romantic, and full of devotion. The writer, however, declined to accept of Jack's proposition. She pleaded her father; she couldn't leave him. She implored Jack to wait, and finally subscribed herself his till death. But the name which she signed was "Stella," and nothing more; and this being evidently a pet name or a *nom de plume*, threw no light whatever upon her real personality.

"Well," said Jack, after I had read it over about nine times, "what do you think of that?"

"It gives you some reprieve, at any rate," said I.

"Reprieve?" said Jack. "I don't think it's the sort of letter that a girl should write to a man who told her that he was going to blow his brains out on her doorstep. It doesn't seem to be altogether the right sort of thing under the circumstances."

"Why, confound it, man, isn't this the very letter that you wanted to get? You didn't really want to run away with her? You said so yourself."

"Oh, that's all right; but a fellow likes to be appreciated."

"So, after all, you wanted her to elope with you?"

"Well, not that, exactly. At the same time, I didn't want a point-blank refusal."

"You ought to be glad she showed so much sense. It's all the better for you.

It is an additional help to you in your difficulties."

"I don't see how it helps me," said Jack, in a kind of growl. "I don't see why she refused to run off with a fellow."

Now such was the perversity of Jack that he actually felt ill-natured about this letter, although it was the very thing that he knew was best for him. He was certainly relieved from one of his many difficulties, but at the same time he was vexed and mortified at this rejection of his proposal. And he dwelt upon his disappointment until at length he brought himself to believe that "Number Three's" letter was something like a personal slight, if not an insult.

He dropped in again toward evening.

"Maorie," said he, "there's one place where I always find sympathy. What do you say, old fellow, to going this evening to—

#### CHAPTER X.

"BERTON'S?—BEST PLACE IN THE TOWN.—GIRLS ALWAYS GLAD TO SEE A FELLOW.—PLENTY OF CHAT, AND LOTS OF FUN.—NO END OF LARKS, YOU KNOW, AND ALL THAT SORT OF THING."

In order to get rid of my vexation, mortification, humiliation, and general aggravation, I allowed Jack to persuade me to go that evening to Colonel Berton's. Not that it needed much persuasion. On the contrary, it was a favorite resort of mine. Both of us were greatly addicted to dropping in upon that hospitable and fascinating household. The girls were among the most lively and genial good fellows that girls could ever be. Old Berton had retired from the army with enough fortune of his own to live in good style, and his girls had it all their own way. They were essentially

of the military order. They had all been brought up, so to speak, in the army, and their world did not extend beyond it. There were three of them—Laura, the eldest, beautiful, intelligent, and accomplished, with a strong leaning toward Ritualism; Nina, innocent, childish, and kitten-like; and Louie, the universal favorite, absurd, whimsical, fantastic, a desperate tease, and as pretty and graceful as it is possible for any girl to be. An aunt did the maternal for them, kept house, chaperoned, duennaed, and generally overlooked them. The colonel himself was a fine specimen of the *vieux militaire*. He loved to talk of the life which he had left behind, and fight his battles over again, and all his thoughts were in the army. But the girls were, of course, the one attraction in his hospitable house. The best of it was, they were all so accustomed to homage, that even the most desperate attentions left them heart-whole, in maiden meditation, fancy free. No danger of overflowed sentiment with them. No danger of blighted affections or broken hearts. No nonsense there, my boy. All fair, and pleasant, and open, and above-board, you know. Clear, honest eyes, that looked frankly into yours; fresh, youthful faces; lithe, elastic figures; merry laughs; sweet smiles; soft, kindly voices, and all that sort of thing. In short, three as kind, gentle, honest, sound, pure, and healthy hearts as ever beat.

The very atmosphere of this delightful house was soothing, and the presence of these congenial spirits brought a balm to each of us, which healed our wounded hearts. In five minutes Jack was far away out of sight of all his troubles—and in five minutes more I had forgotten all about my late adventure, and the sorrows that had resulted from it.

After a time, Jack gravitated toward



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Louie, leaving me with Laura, talking medievalism. Louie was evidently taking Jack to task, and very energetically too. Fragments of their conversation reached my ears from time to time! She had heard something about Mrs. Finimore, but what it was, and whether she believed it or not, could not be perceived from what she said. Jack fought her off skilfully, and, at last, she made an attack from another quarter.

"Oh, Captain Randolph," said she, "what a delightful addition we're going to have to our Quebec society!"

"Ah!" said Jack, "what is that?"

"How very innocent! Just as if you are not the one who is most concerned."

"I?"

"Of course. You. Next to me."

"I don't understand."

"Come, now, Captain Randolph, how very ridiculous to pretend to be so ignorant!"

"Ignorant?" said Jack; "ignorant is not the word. I am in Egyptian darkness, I assure you."

"Egyptian darkness—Egyptian nonsense! Will it help you any if I tell you her name?"

"Her name! Whose name? What her?"

Louie laughed long and merrily.

"Well," said she, at length, "for pure, perfect, utter, childlike innocence, commend me to Captain Randolph! And now, sir," she resumed, "will you answer me one question?"

"Certainly—or one hundred thousand."

"Well, what do you think of Miss Phillips?"

"I think she is a very delightful person," said Jack, fluently—"the most delightful I have ever met with, present company excepted."

"That is to be understood, of course;

but what do you think of her coming to live here?"

"Coming to live here!"

"Yes, coming to live here," repeated Louie, playfully imitating the tone of evident consternation with which Jack spoke.

"What! Miss Phillips?"

"Yes, Miss Phillips."

"Here?"

"Certainly."

"Not here in Quebec?"

"Yes, here in Quebec—but I *must* say that you have missed your calling in life. Why do you not go to New York and make your fortune as an actor? You must take part in our private theatricals the next time we have any."

"I assure you," said Jack, "I never was so astonished in my life."

"How well you counterfeit!" said Louie; "never mind. Allow me to congratulate you. We'll overlook the little piece of acting, and regard rather the delightful fact. Joined once more—ne'er to part—hand to hand—heart to heart—memories sweet—ne'er to fade—all my own—fairest maid! And then your delicious remembrances of Sissiboo."

"Sissiboo?" gasped Jack.

"Sissiboo," repeated Louie, with admirable gravity. "Her birth-place, and hence a sacred spot. She used to be called 'the maid of Sissiboo.' But, in choosing a place to live in, let me warn you against Sissiboo. Take some other place. You've been all over New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Take Petitodiac, or Washe Aemoak, or Shubenacadie, or Memramcook, or Rectebucto, or Chibutnecticook, or the Kennebecasis Valley. At the same time, I have my preferences for Pisierino, or Quaeo."

At all this, Jack seemed for a time completely overwhelmed, and sat listening to Louie with a sort of imbecile smile. Her

allusion to Miss Phillips evidently troubled him, and, as to her coming to Quebec, he did not know what to say. Louie twitted him for some time longer, but at length he got her away into a corner, where he began a conversation in a low but very earnest tone, which, however, was sufficiently audible to make his remarks understood by all in the room.

And what was he saying?

He was disclaiming all intentions with regard to Miss Phillips.

And Louie was listening quietly!

Perhaps believing him!

The scamp!!!

And now I noticed that Jack's unhappy tendency to—well, to *conciliate* ladies—was in full swing.

Didn't I see him, then and there, slyly try to take poor little Louie's hand, utterly forgetful of the disastrous result of a former attempt on what he believed to be that same hand? Didn't I see Louie civilly draw it away, and move her chair farther off from his? Didn't I see him flush up and begin to utter apologies? Didn't I hear Louie begin to talk of operas, and things in general; and soon after, didn't I see her rise and come over to Laura, and Nina, and me, as we were playing dummy? Methinks I did. Oh, Louie! Oh, Jack! Is she destined to be Number Four! or, good Heavens! Number Forty? Why, the man's mad! He engages himself to every girl he sees! Home again.

Jack was full of Louie.

"Such fun! such life! Did you ever see any thing like her?"

"But the widow, Jack?"

"Hang the widow!"

"Miss Phillips?"

"Bother Miss Phillips!"

"And Number Three?"

Jack's face grew sombre, and he was

silent for a time. At length a sudden thought seized him.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I got a letter to-day, which I haven't opened. Excuse me a moment, old chap."

So saying, he pulled a letter from his pocket, opened it, and read it.

He told me the contents.

It was from Miss Phillips, and she told her dearest Jack that her father was about moving to Quebec to live.

## CHAPTER XI.

"MACRORIE, MY BOY, HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANDERSON'S YET?" — "NO." — "WELL, THEN, I WANT YOU TO ATTEND TO THAT BUSINESS OF THE STONE TO-MORROW. DON'T FORGET THE SIZE—FOUR FEET BY EIGHTEEN INCHES; AND NOTHING BUT THE NAME AND DATE. THE TIME'S COME AT LAST. THERE'S NO PLACE FOR ME BUT THE COLD GRAVE, WHERE THE PENSIVE PASSER-BY MAY DROP A TEAR OVER THE MOURNFUL FATE OF JACK RANDOLPH. AMEN. R. I. P."

SUCH was the remarkable manner in which Jack Randolph accosted me, as he entered my room on the following day at about midnight. His face was more rueful than ever, and, what was more striking, his clothea and hair seemed neglected. This convinced me more than any thing that he had received some new blow, and that it had struck home.

"You seem hard hit, old man," said I.

"Where is it? Who is it?"

Jack groaned.

"Has Miss Phillips come?"

"No."

"Is it the widow?"

"No."

"Number Three?"

Jack shook his head.

"MACRORIE

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"No."

"Then I give up.

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"Randolph!" said

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"Not duns?"

"No."

"Then I give up."

"It's Louie," said Jack, with an expression of face that was as near an approximation to what is called sheepishness as any thing I ever saw."

"Louie?" I repeated.

"Yes—"

"What of her? What has she been doing? How is it possible? Good Heavens! you haven't—" I stopped at the fearful suspicion that came to me.

"Yes, I have!" said Jack, sulkily. "I know what you mean. I've proposed to her."

I started up from the sofa on which I was leunging—my pipe dropped to the ground—a tumbler followed. I struck my elinched fist on the table.

"Randolph!" said I, "this is too much. Confound it, man! are you mad, or are you a villain? What the devil do you mean by trifling with the affections of that little girl? By Heavens! Jack Randolph, if you carry on this game with her, there's not a man in the regiment that won't join to crush you."

"Pitch in," said Jack quietly, looking at me at the same time with something like approval. "That's the right sort of thing. That's just what I've been saying to myself. I've been swearing like a trooper at myself all the way here. If there's any one on earth that every fellow ought to stand up for, it's little Louie. And now you see the reason why I want you to attend to that little affair of the gravestone."

At Jack's quiet tone, my excitement subsided. I picked up my pipe again, and thought it over.

"The fact is, Jack," said I, after about ten minutes of profound smoking, "I think

you'll have to carry out that little plan of yours. Sell out as soon as you can, and take Louie with you to a farm in Minnesota."

"Easier said than done," said Jack, sentimentally.

"Done? why, man, it's easy enough. You can drop the other three, and retire from the scene. That'll save Louie from coming to grief."

"Yes; but it won't make her come to Minnesota."

"Why not? She's just the girl to go anywhere with a fellow."

"But not with Jack Randolph."

"What humbug are you up to now? I don't understand you."

"So I see," said Jack, dryly. "You take it for granted that because I proposed, Louie accepted. Whereas, that didn't happen to be the case. I proposed, but Louie disposed of me pretty effectually."

"Mittened?" cried I.

"Mittened!" said Jack, solemnly.

"Hence the gravestone."

"But how, in the name of wonder, did that happen?"

"Easily enough. Louie happens to have brains. That's the shortest way to account for her refusal of my very valuable devotions. But I'll tell you all about it, and, after that, we'll decide about the headstone."

"You see, I went up there this evening, and the other girls were off somewhere, and so Louie and I were alone. The aunt was in the room, but she soon dozed off. Well, we had great larks, no end of fun—she chaffing and twitting me about no end of things, and especially the widow; so, do you know, I told her I had a great mind to tell her how it happened; and excited her curiosity by saying it all originated in a

mistake. This, of course, made her wild to know all about it, and so I at last told her the whole thing—the mistake, you know, about the hand, and all that—and my horror. Well, hang me, if I didn't think she'd go into fits. I never saw her laugh so much before. As soon as she could speak, she began to remind me of the approaching advent of Miss Phillips, and asked me what I was going to do. She didn't appear to be at all struck by the fact that lay at the bottom of my disclosures; that it was her own hand that had caused the mischief, but went on at a wild rate about my approaching 'sentimental acc-saw,' as she called it, when my whole time would have to be divided between my two *fiancées*. She remarked that the old proverb called man a pendulum between a smile and a tear, but that I was the first true case of a human pendulum which she had ever seen.

"Now the little scamp was so perfectly fascinating while she was teasing me, that I felt myself overcome with a desperate fondness for her; so, seeing that the old aunt was sound asleep, I blurted out all my feelings. I swore that she was the only—"

"Oh, omit all that. I know—but what bosh to say to a sensible girl!"

"Well, you know, Louie held her handkerchief to her face, while I was speaking, and I—ass, dolt, and idiot that I was—felt convinced that she was crying. Her frame shook with convulsive shivers, that I took for repressed sobs. I saw the little hand that held the little white handkerchief to her face—the same slender little hand that was the cause of my scrape with Mrs. Finimore—and, still continuing the confession of my love, I thought I would soothe her grief. I couldn't help it. I was fairly carried away. I reached forward my hand,

and tried to take hers, all the time saying no end of spooney things.

"But the moment I touched her hand, she rolled her chair back, and snatched it away—

"And then she threw back her head—

"And then there came such a peal of musical laughter, that I swear it's ringing in my ears yet.

"What made it worse was, not merely what she considered the fun of my proposal, but the additional thought that suddenly flashed upon her, that I had just now so absurdly mistaken her emotion. For, confound it all! as I reached out my hand, I said a lot of rubbish, and, among other things, implored her to let me wipe her tears. This was altogether too much. Wipe her tears! And, Heavens and earth, she was shaking to pieces all the time with nothing but laughter. Wipe her tears! Oh, Macrorie! Did you ever hear of such an ass?"

"Well, you know she couldn't get over it for ever so long, but laughed no end, while I sat utterly amazed at the extent to which I had made an ass of myself. However, she got over it at last.

"Well," said I, "I hope you feel better."

"Thanks, yes; but don't get into a temper. Will you promise to answer me one question?"

"Certainly; most happy. If you think it worth while to do any thing else but laugh at me, I ought to feel flattered."

"Now, that's what I call temper, and you must be above such a thing. After all, I'm only a simple little girl, and you—that is, it was so awfully absurd."

"And here she seemed about to burst forth afresh. But she didn't."

"What I was going to ask," she began, in a very grave way, "what I was going to ask is this, if it is a fair question,

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fifty?"

"Nonsense!"

"Twenty, then?"

"How absurd!"

"Ten?"

"Of course not."

how many of these little entanglements do you happen to have just now?"

"Oh, Louie!" I began, in mournful and reproachful tones.

"Oh don't, don't," she cried, covering her face, "don't begin; I can't stand it. If you only knew how absurd you look when you are sentimental. You are always so funny, you know; and, when you try to be solemn, it looks so awfully ridiculous! Now, don't—I really cannot stand it. Please—ple-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e don't, like a good Captain Randolph."

"At this she clasped her hands and looked at me with such a grotesque expression of mock entreaty, that I knocked under, and burst out laughing.

"She at once settled herself comfortably in her easy-chair.

"Now that's what I call," said she, placidly, "a nice, good, sensible, old-fashioned Captain Randolph, that everybody loves, and in whose affairs all his innumerable friends take a deep interest. And now let me ask my question again: How many?"

"How many what?" said I.

"Oh, you know very well."

"How can I know, when you won't say what you mean?"

"How many entanglements?"

"Entanglements?"

"Yes. Engagements, if you wish me to be so very explicit."

"What nonsense! Why you know all about it, and the cause—"

"Ah, now, that is not frank; it isn't friendly or honest," said the little witch.

"Come, now. Are there as many as—ah—fifty?"

"Nonsense!"

"Twenty, then?"

"How absurd!"

"Ten?"

"Of course not."

"Five?"

"No."

"Four?"

"Why, haven't I told you all?"

"Four," she persisted.

"No—"

"Three, then—"

"It isn't fair," said I, "to press a fellow this way."

"Three?" she repeated.

"I was silent. I'm not very quick, and was trying, in a dazed way, to turn it off."

"Three!" she cried. "Three! I knew it. Oh, tell me all about it. Oh, do tell me! Oh, do—please tell me all. Oh, do, ple-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e tell me."

"And then she began, and she teased and she coaxed, and coaxed and teased, until at last—"

Jack hesitated.

"Well," said I.

"Well," said he.

"You didn't really tell her," said I.

"Yes, but I did," said he.

"You didn't—you couldn't."

"I'll be hanged if I didn't!"

"Not about Number Three?"

"Yes, Number Three," said Jack, looking at me with a fixed and slightly stony stare.

Words were useless, and I sought expression for my feelings in the more emphatic whistle, which now was largely protracted.

"And how did she take it?" I asked, at length, as soon as I found voice to speak.

"As usual. Teased me, no end. Alluded to my recent proposal. Asked me if I had intended her to be Number Four, and declared her belief that I had thirty rather than three. Finally, the aunt waked up, and wanted to know what we were laughing at. Whereupon Louie said that she was laughing at a ridiculous story of mine, about an

Indian juggler who could keep three oranges in the air at the same time.

"'Captain Randolph,' said she 'you know all about Frederick the Great, of course?'

"'Of course,' I said, 'and Alexander the Great also, and Julius Cæsar, and Nebuchadnezzar, as the poet says.'

"'Perhaps you remember,' said Louie, in a grave tone, for her aunt was wide awake now, 'that the peculiar excellence of the genius of that great monarch consisted in his successful efforts to encounter the coalition raised against him. Though subject to the attacks of the three united powers of France, Austria, and Russia, he was still able to repel them, and finally rescued himself from destruction. Three assailants could not overpower him, and surely others may take courage from his example.'

"And after that little speech I came away, and here I am."

For some time we sat in silence. Jack did not seem to expect any remarks from me, but appeared to be rapt in his own thoughts. For my part, I had nothing whatever to say, and soon became equally rapt in my meditations.

And what were they about?

What? Why, the usual subject which had filled my mind for the past few days—my adventure on the river, and my mysterious companion. Mysterious though she was, she was evidently a lady, and, though I could not be sure about her face, I yet could feel sure that she was beautiful. So very romantic an adventure had an unusual charm, and this charm was heightened to a wonderful degree by the mystery of her sudden and utter disappearance.

And now, since Jack had been so very confidential with me, I determined to return that confidence, and impart my secret to him. Perhaps he could help me. At any

rate, he was the only person to whom I could think of telling it.

So you see—

## CHAPTER XII.

MY ADVENTURES REHEARSED TO JACK RANDOLPH.—"MY DEAR FELLOW, YOU DON'T SAY 'SO!'—'PON MY LIFE, YES."—"BY JOVE! OLD CHAP, HOW CLOSE YOU'VE BEEN! YOU MUST HAVE NO END OF SECRETS. AND WHAT'S BECOME OF THE LADY? WHO IS SHE?"

Who is she? Ay. Who, indeed? Hadn't I been torturing my brain for seventy-nine hours, sleeping as well as waking, with that one unanswered and apparently unanswerable question?

"Who is she?" repeated Jack.

"Well," said I, "that's the very thing that I wish to find out, and I want you to help me in it. I told you that she didn't leave any message—"

"But, didn't you find out her name?"

"No."

"By Jove! You're a queer lot. Why, I'd have found out her name the first thing."

"But I didn't—and now I want your help to find out not only her name, but herself."

At this Jack rose, loaded his pipe solemnly, and, with the air of one who is making preparations for a work of no common kind, lighted it, flung himself back in the easy-chair, and sent forth vast volumes of smoke, which might have been considered as admirably symbolical of the state of our minds.

"Well, Macrorie," said he, at last, "I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go round to all the hotels, and examine the lists."

"Pooh!"

"Well, then, to ap all the names.

"Nonsense!"

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"Well, then, take the directory and hunt up all the names."

"Nonsense!"

"Why 'nonsense'?"

"Because I don't know her name. Didn't I impress that upon your mind?"

"By Jove!" cried Jack Randolph, after which he again relapsed into silence.

"See here, Macrorie," said he, at length.

"I have it."

"What?"

"Go round next Sunday to all the churches."

"What's the use of that?"

"Go round to the churches," repeated Jack, "scan every bonnet—and then, if you don't see her, why then, why—go to the photographic saloons. You'll be sure to find her picture there. By Jove! Why, Macrorie, the game's all in your own hands. These photographic saloons are better than a whole force of detective police. There's your chance, old man. You'll find her. Do that, and you're all right. Oh, yes—you'll find her, as sure as my name's Jack Randolph."

"No go, Jack," said I. "You see I couldn't recognize her even if I were to see her."

"Couldn't what?"

"Couldn't recognize her."

"You surely would know her if you saw her."

"I don't think I should."

"Well, of all the confounded fixes that ever I met with, this is the greatest!"

"That's the peculiarity of my present situation."

Jack relapsed into smoky silence.

"The fact is," said Jack, after a brief pause, "we've got to go to work systematically. Now, first of all, I want to know what she looks like."

"Well, that's the very thing I don't know."

"Nonsense! You must know something about it. Is she a blonde or a brunette? You can answer that, at least."

"I'm not sure that I can."

"What! don't you know even the color of her complexion?"

"When I saw her, she was as white as a sheet. Even her lips were bloodless. You see, she was frightened out of her wits."

"Well, then, her hair—her hair, man! Was that dark or light?"

"I didn't see it."

"Didn't see it?"

"No. You see it was covered by her hood. Think of that driving sleet. She had to cover herself up as much as she could from the terrible pelting of the storm."

"Well, then, I'll ask only one question more," said Jack, dryly. "I hope you'll be able to answer it. A great deal depends upon it. In fact, upon a true answer to this question the whole thing rests. Gather up all your faculties now, old chap, and try to answer me correctly. No shirking now—no humbug, for I won't stand it. On your life, Macrorie, and, by all your future hopes, answer me this—was your friend—a woman or a man?"

At the beginning of this solemn question, I had roused myself and sat upright, but at its close I flung myself down in disgust.

"Well," said Jack, "why don't you answer?"

"Jack," said I, severely, "I'm not in the humor for chaff."

"Chaff! my dear fellow, I only want to get a basis of action—a base of operations. Are you sure your friend was a woman? I'm in earnest—really."

"That's all rubbish—of course she was a woman—a lady—young—beautiful—but the anguish which she felt made her face



seem like that of Niobe, or—or—well like some marble statue representing woe or despair, and all that sort of thing. What's the use of humbugging a fellow? Why not talk sense, or at least hold your tongue?"

"Don't row, old boy. You were so utterly in the dark about your friend that I wanted to see how far your knowledge extended. I consider now that a great point is settled, and we have something to start from. Very well. She was really a woman!"

"A lady," said I.

"And a lady," repeated Jack.

"Young?"

"Young."

"And beautiful as an angel," I interposed, enthusiastically.

"And beautiful as an angel," chimed in Jack. "By-the-by, Macrorie, do you think you would know her by her voice?"

"Well, n—no, I don't think I would. You see, she didn't say much, and what she did say was wrung out of her by terror or despair. The tones of that voice might be very different if she were talking about—well, the weather, for instance. The voice of a woman in a storm, and in the face of death, is not exactly the same in tone or modulation as it is when she is quietly speaking the commonplaces of the drawing-room."

"There's an immense amount of truth in that," said Jack, "and I begin to understand and appreciate your position."

"Never, while I live," said I, earnestly, "will I forget the face of that woman as I held her fainting form in my arms, and cheered her, and dragged her back to life; never will I forget the thrilling tones of her voice, as she implored me to leave her and save myself; but yet, as I live, I don't think that I could recognize her face or her

voice if I were to encounter her now, under ordinary circumstances, in any drawing-room. Do you understand?"

"Dimly," said Jack; "yes, in fact, I may say thoroughly. You have an uncommonly forcible way of putting it too. I say, Macrorie, you talk just like our chaplain."

"Oh, bother the chaplain!"

"That's the very thing I intend to do before long."

"Well, it'll be the best thing for you. Married and done for, you know."

"Nonsense! I don't mean that. It's something else—the opposite of matrimony."

"What is it?"

"Oh, never mind, I'll let you know when the time comes. It's a little idea of my own to countermine the widow. But come—don't let a wander off. Your business is the thing to be considered now—not mine. Now listen to me."

"Well."

"Let's put your case in a plain, simple, matter-of-fact way. You want to find a person whose name you don't know, whose face you can't recognize, and whose voice even is equally unknown. You can't give any clew to her at all. You don't know whether she lives in Quebec or in New York. You only know she is a woman?"

"A lady," said I.

"Oh, of course—a lady."

"And an English lady," I added. "I could tell that by the tone of her voice."

"She may have been Canadian."

"Yes. Many of the Canadian ladies have the English tone."

"Well, that may be all very true," said Jack, after some moments' thought; "but at the same time it isn't any guide at all. Macrorie, my boy, it's evident that in this instance all the ordinary modes of investigation are no good. Streets, churches,

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"Advertising!"—page 49.

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it."

"Well," said I, after

drawing-rooms, photographic saloons, hotel registers, directories, and all that sort of thing are utterly useless. We must try some other plan."

"That's a fact," said I, "but what other plan can be thought of?"

Jack said nothing for some time.

He sat blowing and puffing, and puffing and blowing, apparently bringing all the resources of his intellect to bear upon this great problem. At last he seemed to hit upon an idea.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "I have it. It's the only thing left."

"What's that?"

"Macrorie, my boy," said Jack, with an indescribable solemnity, "I'll tell you what we must do. Let's try—

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### "ADVERTISING!!!"

"ADVERTISING?" said I, dubiously.

"Yes, advertising," repeated Jack. "Try it. Put a notice in all the papers. Begin with the Quebec papers, and then send to Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, London, and all the other towns. After that, send notices to the leading papers of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, St. Louis, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Portland, Chicago, Boston, and all the other towns of the United States."

"And while I'm about it," I added, "I may as well insert them in the English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, and Indian journals."

"Oh, bosh!" said Jack, "I'm in earnest. What's the use of nonsense? Really, my dear fellow, why not advertise in the Quebec papers? She'll be sure to see it."

"Well," said I, after some thought, "on

the whole it isn't a bad idea. It can't do any harm at any rate."

"Harm? Why, my dear boy, it's your only chance."

"All right, then; let's try advertising."

And saying this, I brought out my entire writing-apparatus and displayed it on the table.

"Will you try your flat at it, Jack?" I asked.

"I? Nonsense! I'm no good at writing. It's as much as I can do to write an 'I. O. U.,' though I've had no end of practice. And then, as to my letters—you ought to see them! No, go ahead, old boy. You write, and I'll be critic. That's about the style of thing, I fancy."

At this I sat down and commenced the laborious task of composing an advertisement. In a short time I had written out the following:

*"A gentleman who accompanied a lady across the ice on the 3d of April, was separated from her, and since then has been anxious to find out what became of her. Any information will console a distracted breast. The gentleman implores the lady to communicate with him. Address Box 3,333."*

I wrote this out, and was so very well satisfied with it, that I read it to Jack. To my surprise and disgust, he burst out into roars of laughter.

"Why, man alive!" he cried, "that will never do. You must never put out that sort of thing, you know. You'll have the whole city in a state of frantic excitement. It's too rubbishy sentimental. No go. Try again, old man, but don't write any more of that sort of thing."

I said nothing. I felt wounded; but I had a dim idea that Jack's criticism was just. It was rather sentimental. So I tried again, and this time I wrote out something very different.

With the following result:

"If the party who crossed the ice on the 3d of April with A. Z. will give her address, she will confer an unspeakable favor. Write to Box No. 3,333."

"Oh, that'll never do at all!" cried Jack, as I read it to him. "In the first place, your 'A. Z.' is too mysterious; and, in the second place, you are still too sentimental with your 'unspeakable favor.' Try again."

I tried again, and wrote the following:

"A gentleman is anxious to learn the address of a party who accompanied him over the ice on the 3d of April. Address Box No. 3,333."

"Oh, that'll never do!" said Jack.

"Why not?"

"Why, man, it's too cold and formal."

"Hang it all! What will suit you? One is too warm; another is too cold."

Saying this, I tried once more, and wrote the following:

"A. B. has been trying in vain to find the address of the party who accompanied him over the ice on the 3d of April. Will she have the kindness to communicate with him to Box No. 3,333?"

"No go," said Jack.

"Why not?"

"Well, you see, you call her a 'party,' and then announce that this 'party' is a woman. It won't do. I wouldn't like to call any lady a 'party.' You'll have to drop that word, old boy."

At this I flung down the pen in despair.

"Well, hang it!" said I. What will do? You try it, Jack."

"Nonsense!" said he. "I can't write; I can only criticize. Both faculties are very good in their way. You'll have to start from another direction. I'll tell you what to do—try a roundabout way."

"A roundabout way?" I repeated, doubtfully.

"Yes."

"What's that?"

"Why, advertise for—let me see—oh, yes—advertise for the French driver. He was drowned—wasn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you advertise for him, she will respond, and thus you will come into contact with her, without making a fool of yourself."

"By Jove, Jack," said I, "that's not a bad idea! I think I get your meaning. Of course, if she has any soul, she'll sympathize with the lost driver. But what name shall I put?"

"Was he a common driver? I gathered this from your story."

"Oh, yes. It was a sleigh from the country—hired, you know, not a private sleigh."

"She couldn't have known his name, then?"

"I suppose not. It looked like a sleigh picked up hap-hazard to take her across."

"Well, risk it, and put in an assumed name. Make up something. Any name will do. The lady, I dare say, hasn't the smallest idea of the driver's name. Trot out something—Napoleon Bonaparte Gris, or any thing else you like."

"How would Lavoisier do?"

"Too long."

"Well, Noir, then."

"I don't altogether like that."

"Rollin."

"Literary associations," objected Jack.

"Well, then, Le Verrier," said I, after a moment's thought.

"Le Verrier—" repeated Jack. "Well, leave out the article, and make it plain Verrier. That'll do. It sounds natural."

"Verrier," said I. "And for the Christian name what?"

"Paul," suggest-

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very good name. I  
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And I wrote ou

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"Paul," suggested Jack.

"Paul—very well. Paul Verrier—a very good name for a Canadian. All right. I'll insert an advertisement from his distracted parent."

And I wrote out this:

"NOTICE.—Paul Verrier, of Chaudière, left his home on the 3d of April last, to convey a lady to Queber across the ice. He has not since been heard of. As the river broke up on that day, his friends are anxious to know his fate. Any one who can give any information about those who crossed on that date will confer a great favor on his afflicted father. Address Pierre Verrier, Box 3,333."

"That's about the thing," said Jack, after I had read it to him. "That'll fetch her down. Of course, she don't know the name of the *habitant* that drove her; and, of course, she'll think that this is a notice published by the afflicted father. What then? Why, down she comes to the rescue. Afflicted father suddenly reveals himself in the person of the gallant Maeroric. Grand excitement—mutual explanations—tableau—and the curtain falls to the sound of light and joyous music."

"Bravo, Jack! But I don't like to settle my affairs this way, and leave yours in disorder."

"Oh, I'm all right," said Jack. "There's no immediate danger. I'm settling down into a state of stolid despair, you know. If it wasn't for that last business with Louie, I could be quite calm. That's the only thing that bothers me now."

"I should think the widow would bother you more."

"Well, to tell the truth, she's getting to be a bit of a bore. She's too affectionate and *exigeante*, and all that, you know. But, then, I always leave early. I dine with her at seven, and get away before nine. Then

I go to Louie's—or, at least, that's the way I intend to do."

"You're going to Louie's again, then?"

"Going to Louie's again? Why, man alive, what do you take me for? Going again? I should think I was. Why, Louie's the only comfort I have left on earth."

"But Number Three?"

Jack sighed.

"Poor little thing!" said he. "She seems to be rather down just now. I think she's regretting that she didn't take my offer. But I wrote her a note to-day, telling her to cheer up, and all that."

"But Miss Phillips? What'll you do when she comes? When will she be here?"

"She's expected daily."

"That will rather complicate matters—won't it?"

"Sufficient for the day," said Jack.

"I tell you what it is, my boy. I feel very much struck by Louie's iden about the three oranges. You'll find it precious hard to keep your three affairs in motion. You must drop one or two."

"Come, now, Maeroric—no croaking. You've got me into a placid state of mind by telling me of your little affair. It gave me something to think of besides my own scrapes. So don't you go to work and destroy the good effect that you've produced. For that matter, I won't let you. I'm off, old chap. It's fifteen minutes to three. You'd better beck your balmy couch. No—don't stop me. You'll croak me into despair again. Good-night, old man!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

A CONCERT.—A SINGULAR CHARACTER.—“GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.”—A FENIAN.—A GENERAL ROW.—MACROBIE TO THE RESCUE!—MACROBIE'S MAIDEN SPEECH, AND ITS SINGULAR EFFECTIVENESS.—O'HALLORAN.—A STRANGE COMPANION.—INVITED TO PARTAKE OF HOSPITALITY.

On the following day I sent my notice to the papers.

On the evening of that day there was to be a concert. Everybody was going. It was under the patronage of the military, and of course everybody had to go. For you must know that, in a garrison-town like Quebec, we of the military order have it all our own way. If we smile on an undertaking, it succeeds. If we don't, it languishes. If we frown, the only result is ruin. But, as we are generally a good-natured lot, we smile approvingly on almost every thing. It gets to be an awful bore; but what can we do? Societies wish our countenance at their public gatherings, and we have to give it. Benevolent associations ask our subscriptions; joint-stock companies wish our names; missionaries and musicians, lawyers and lecturers, printers and preachers, tailors and teachers, operas and oratorios, balls and Bible-meetings, funerals and festivities, churches and concerts—in short, every thing that lives and moves and has its being awaits the military smile. And the smile is smiled. And so, I tell you what it is, my dear fellow, it amounts to this, that the life of an officer isn't by any means the butterfly existence that you imagine it to be. What with patronizing Tom, Dick, and Harry, inspecting militia, spouting at volunteers, subscribing to charities, buying at bazaars, assisting at concerts, presiding

at public dinners, and all that sort of thing no end, it gets to be a pretty difficult matter to keep body and soul together.

The concert under consideration happened to be a popular one. The best of the regimental bands had been kindly lent to assist, and there were songs by amateurs who belonged to the first circles in Quebec, both civil and military. It was quite a medley, and the proceeds were intended for some charitable purpose or other. The house was crowded, and I could not get a seat without extreme difficulty.

The concert went on. They sang “Annie Laurie,” of course. Then followed “La ci darem;” then “D'un Pescator Ignobile;” then “Come gentil;” then “Auld Lang-syne;” then “Ah, mon Fils!” then “Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch;” then “The Last Rose of Summer;” then “Allister MacAllister;” then “The Harp that once through Tara's Halls.”

As this last song was being sung, I became aware of an old gentleman near me who seemed to be profoundly affected. “The Last Rose of Summer,” had evidently touched him, but Tara had an overpowering effect on him: It was sung confoundedly well, too. The band came in with a wild, wailing strain, that was positively heart-breaking. The party just mentioned was, as I said, old, and a gentleman, but he was tall, robust, broad-shouldered, with eagle-like beak, and keen gray eyes that were fitting accompaniments to so distinguished a feature. His dress was rather careless, but his air and the expression of his face evinced a mixture of eccentricity and a sense of superiority. At least, it had evinced this until the singing of Tara. Then he broke down. First he bowed his head down, resting his forehead upon his hands, which were supported by his cane, and several deep-drawn sighs escaped him

Then he raised his head up at the ceiling, as if to assume a careless and carefree air, and the melancholy moment continued, and the man ceased to struggle up to the influence of the music. He sat erect and rigid, his eyes fixed on the ceiling, at him I saw big tears on his cheeks.

At length the music patiently dashed his head furtively and suspiciously trying to see if any weakness, I, of course, that he had not the posing that I had seen.

After this the concert a varied collection of time I wondered with the eagle face might be. And in continued until the

At last came the —“God save the Queen.”

Of course, as ever national anthem is all over the British audience to rise, announced is guilty of a majesty of that empire as a matter of course but I was surprised the gentleman remained seated clinched tightly about this. I was not the only

The fact is, I had a hall which was not to my taste. I had got and found that all the

Then he raised his head again, and looked up at the ceiling with an evident effort to assume a careless expression. Then he again hid his face. But the song went on, and the melancholy wail of the accompaniment continued, and at last the old gentleman ceased to struggle, and gave himself up to the influence of that wonderful music. He sat erect and rigid; his hands in front of him clasped tightly round his stick; and his eyes fixed on vacancy; and as I looked at him I saw big tears slowly coursing down his cheeks.

At length the song ceased, and he impatiently dashed his tears away, and looked furtively and suspiciously around, as though trying to see if any one had detected his weakness. I, of course, looked away, so that he had not the smallest reason for supposing that I had seen him.

After this the concert went on through a varied collection of pieces, and all the time I wondered who the old gentleman with the eagle face and tender sensibilities might be. And in this state of wonder I continued until the close.

At last came the usual concluding piece—"God save the Queen."

Of course, as everybody knows, when the national anthem is sung, it is the fashion all over the British empire for the whole audience to rise, and any one who remains seated is guilty of a deliberate insult to the majesty of that empire. On this occasion, as a matter of course, everybody got up, but I was surprised to see that the old gentleman remained seated, with his hands clinched tightly about his cane.

I was not the only one who had noticed this.

The fact is, I had got into a part of the hall which was not altogether congenial to my taste. I had got my ticket at the door, and found that all the reserved seats were

taken up. Consequently I had to take my chance among the general public. Now this general public happened to be an awfully loyal public, and the moment they found that a man was among them who deliberately kept his seat while the national anthem was being sung, they began to get into a furious state of excitement.

Let me say also that there was very sufficient reason for this excitement. All Canada was agog about the Fenians. Blood had been shed. An invasion had taken place. There was no joke about it. The Fenians were not an imaginary danger, but a real one. All the newspapers were full of the subject. By the Fenians every Canadian understood an indefinite number of the disbanded veteran soldiers of the late American war, who, having their hand in, were not willing to go back to the monotony of a peaceful life, but preferred rather a career of excitement. Whether this suspicion were well founded or not doesn't make the slightest difference. The effect on the Canadian mind was the same as if it were true. Now, since the Canadian mind was thus roused up to this pitch of universal excitement, there existed a very general watch for Fenian emissaries, and any of that brotherhood who showed himself too openly in certain quarters ran a very serious risk. It was not at all safe to defy popular opinion. And popular opinion ran strongly toward the sentiment of loyalty. And anybody who defied that sentiment of loyalty did it at his peril. A serious peril, too, mind you. A mob won't stand nonsense. It won't listen to reason. It has a weakness for summary vengeance and broken bones.

Now, some such sort of a mob as this began to gather quickly and menacingly round my elderly friend, who had thus so rashly shocked their common senti-



ment. In a few moments a wild uproar began.

"Put him out!"  
 "Knock him down!"  
 "Hustle him!"  
 "He's a Fenian!"  
 "Down with him!"  
 "Punch his head!"  
 "Hold him up, and make him stand up!"  
 "Stand up, you fool!"  
 "Get up!"  
 "Up with him! Let's pass him out over our heads!"  
 "A Fenian!"  
 "We'll show him he's in bad company!"  
 "He's a spy!"  
 "A Fenian spy!"  
 "Up with him!" "Down with him!"  
 "Pitch into him!" "Out with him!"  
 "Toss him!" "Hustle him!" "Punch his head!" "Throttle him!" "Level him!" "Give it to him!" "Turn him inside out!" "Hold up his boots!"  
 "Walk him off!"

All these, and about fifty thousand more shouts of a similar character, burst forth from the maddened mob around. All mobs are alike. Any one who has ever seen a mob in a row can understand the action of this particular one. They gathered thick and fast around him. They yelled. They howled. The music of the national anthem was drowned in that wild uproar. They pressed close to him, and the savage eyes that glared on him menaced him with something little less than death itself.

And what did he do?

He?

Why he bore himself splendidly.

As the row began, he rose slowly, holding his stick, which I now saw to be a knotted staff of formidable proportions,

and at length reared his figure to its full height. It was a tall and majestic figure which he revealed—thin, yet sinewy, and towering over the heads of the roaring mob around him.

He confronted them all with a dark frown on his brow, and blazing eyes.

"Ye beggars!" he cried. "Come on—the whole pack of ye! A Fenian, ye say? That's thrue for you. Ye've got one, an' ye'll find him a tough customer! Come on—the whole thousand of ye!"

And saying this, he swung his big, formidable knotted stick about his head.

Those nearest him started back, but the crowd behind rushed forward. The row increased. The people in the reserved seats in front looked around with anxious eyes, not knowing what was going on.

The crowd yelled and booted. It surged nearer. A moment more and the tall figure would go down.

Now, I'm a loyal man. None more so. I'm an officer and a gentleman. I'm ready at any moment to lay down my life for the queen and the rest of the royal family. I'm ready to pitch into the Fenians on any proper occasion, and all that.

But somehow this didn't seem to me to be the proper occasion. It was not a Fenian that I saw. It was an elderly gentleman; so sensitive, that but a few minutes before he had been struggling with his tears; so lion-hearted, that now he drew himself up and faced a roaring, howling mob of enemies—calmly, unflinchingly—hurling desperate defiance at them. And was that the sort of thing that I could stand? What! to see one man attacked by hundreds—a man like that, too—an old man, alone, with nothing to sustain him but his own invincible pluck? Pooh! what's the use of talking? I am an officer and a gentleman, and as such it would have been

a foul disgrace to of standing there old man at the me But, as it happened kind.

On the contrary, stood by the side of "Now, look here —" this is all very damn it! don't it a fernally cowardly t man in this style? and he may be Old never done you fe the devil do you n a row as this? dare, that's all! Y you know what I an man is my friend. and I'd like to see us."

That's the first sp life, and all that I wonderfully success Cleero, and the Earl and Mirabeau, all ro have been more succe back. They looked word of sense spok And that I take it is tory.

The mob rolled t friend my arm. He not far away. We st people fell back, an After all, they were a had only yielded to a mobs, I suppose, ar fact of a mob involv insanity. But these their senses, and so making my way thro my companion. W street without any

a foul disgrace to me if I had been capable of standing there quietly and looking at the old man at the mercies of the mob.

But, as it happened, I did nothing of the kind.

On the contrary, I sprang forward and stood by the side of the old man.

"Now, look here—you fellows!" I roared—"this is all very fine, and very loyal, but, damn it! don't it strike you that it's an infernally cowardly thing to pitch into an old man in this style? He may be a Fenian, and he may be Old Nick himself, but he's never done you fellows any harm. What the devil do you mean by kicking up such a row as this? You touch him, if you dare, that's all! You see my uniform, and you know what I am. I'm a Bobtail. This man is my friend. He's going out with me, and I'd like to see the fellow that will stop us."

That's the first speech I ever made in my life, and all that I can say is, that it was wonderfully successful. Demosthenes, and Cleero, and the Earl of Chatham, and Burke, and Mirabeau, all rolled into one, couldn't have been more successful. The mob rolled back. They looked ashamed. It was a word of sense spoken in a forcible manner. And that I take it is the essence of true oratory.

The mob rolled back. I gave my new friend my arm. He took it. The door was not far away. We started to go out. The people fell back, and made way for us. After all, they were a good-enough lot, and had only yielded to a kind of panic. All mobs, I suppose, are insane. The very fact of a mob involves a kind of temporary insanity. But these fellows had come to their senses, and so I had no difficulty in making my way through them along with my companion. We got out into the street without any difficulty. My new

friend held my arm, and involuntarily made a turn to the right on leaving the door of the hall. Thus we walked along, and for some time we walked in silence.

At length the silence was broken by my companion.

"Well—well—well!" he ejaculated—"to think of me, walking with a British officer—arrum-in-arrum!"

"Why not?" said I.

"Why not?" said he, "why there's iviry reason in loife. I'm a Fenian."

"Pooh!" said I, "what's the use of bothering about politics? You're a man, and a confoundedly plucky fellow too. Do you think that I could stand there and see those asses pitching into you? Don't bother about politics."

"An' I won't" said he. "But at any rate, I fceced them. An Oirishman niver sirrinders to an inimy. I fceced them, I did—an' I exprressed meself in shootable sintimints."

The rich Leinster accent of my companion showed his nationality more plainly than even his own explicit statement. But this did not at all lessen the interest that I took in him. His sensitiveness which had been so conspicuous, his courage which had shone so brightly, and his impressive features, all combined to create a feeling of mingled regard and respect for my new acquaintance.

"By Jove!" I cried, "I never saw a pluckier fellow in my life. There you were, alone, with a mad mob howling at you."

"It's meself," said he, "that'll nivir be intimidected. Don't I know what a mob is? An' if I didn't, wouldn't I fcece thim all the seeme? An' after all I don't moind tellin' you that it wasn't disrisplet. It was only a kind of abethraction, an' I wasn't conscious that it was the national anthim, so I wasn't. I'd have stood up, if I'd

knowed it. But whin those divils began reelin' at me, I had to trait thim with scarrun and contiempt. An' for me—I haven't much toime to live, but what I have ye've sceved for me."

"Oh, nonsense, don't talk about that," said I, modestly.

"Sorr," said he, "I'm very well aware that I'm under deep obleegections, an' I owe ye a debt of grateehood. Consequently, I insist on bein' greetful. I hold iviry British officer as me personal inimy; but, in you, sorr, I'm sinsible of a ginrous frind. Ye've sceved me knife, so ye have, an' there's no doubt about it. We'll weeve politics. I won't spake of the Finians. Phaylm O'Halloran isn't the man tha'll minton unseasonable politics, or dwell upon unconginal thames, so he isn't."

"Well," said I, "Mr. O'Halloran, since you've introduced yourself, I must give you my humble address. I'm Lieutenant Macrorie."

"Macrorie?" said he.

"Macrorie," said I, "of the Bobtails, and I assure you I'm very happy to make your acquaintance."

We walked along arm-in-arm in the most friendly manner, chatting about things in general. I found my companion to be very intelligent and very well informed. He had travelled much. He expressed himself fluently on every subject, and though his brogue was conspicuous, he was evidently a gentleman, and very well educated too. I gathered from his conversation that he had studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and that he had been leading a deaultory sort of life in the United States for twenty years or so. He had been in Canada for something less than a year, and was anxious to get back to a more southern climate.

Chatting thus, and arm-in-arm, we walked along. I had nothing to do, and so I went

with my new-found friend, with a vague idea of seeing him safe home. Of course such an idea was preposterous, for he could have got home just as well without me, but I had taken a fancy to my new acquaintance, and found a strange charm in his conversation. He talked incessantly and on many subjects. He discoursed on theology, literature, science, the weather, the army, the navy, music, painting, sculpture, photography, engraving, geology, chemistry, and on a thousand other arts and sciences, in all of which he showed himself deeply versed, and far beyond my depth. He had a brogue, and I had none, but as for intellectual attainments I was only a child in comparison with him.

At length we reached a house where he stopped.

"I'm infeenetely obloiged to ye," said he. "And now, won't ye kindly condiscend to step in and parteeek of me hospitallitee? It'll give me shuprame delight."

After such an invitation what could I say? I had nothing to do. Accordingly, I accepted it in a proper spirit, and, thanking him for his kind invitation, I went in along with him.

O'Halloran led the way in. It was a comfortable house. The parlor which we entered was large, and a huge grate filled with blazing coals diffused a cheerful glow. Magazines and periodicals lay on the table. Pictures illustrative of classical scenes hung round the walls, done in the old-fashioned style of line engraving, and representing such subjects as Mutius Scævola before Porsenna; Belisarius begging for an obolus; Æneas carrying his father from Troy; Leonidas at Thermopylæ; Coriolanus quitting Rome; Hamilcar making the boy Hannibal swear his oath of hate against Rome; and others of a similar character. O'Halloran made me sit in a "sleepy-hollow"

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"'Ladies,' said O'Halloran, 'allow me to introjuice to ye Captain Macrorie.'"—page 51.

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easy-chair by the fire. Beside me were two huge book-shelves crammed with books. A glance at them showed me that they were largely of a classical order. Longinus, Æschylus, Demosthenes, Dindorf, Plato, Stallbaum—such were the names that I saw in gilt letters on the backs of the volumes.

About the room there was that air of mingled comfort and refinement that is always suggestive of the presence of ladies. A work-basket stood beside the table. And on a little Chinese table fit a corner lay some crochet-work. I took in all these things at a glance and while my host was talking to me. After a time he excused himself and said that he would call the "leedies." He retired, leaving me alone, and striving to picture to myself—

## CHAPTER XV.

THE O'HALLORAN LADIES.—THEIR APPEARANCE.—THEIR AGES.—THEIR DRESS.—THEIR DEMEANOR.—THEIR CULTURE, POLISH, EDUCATION, RANK, STYLE, ATTAINMENTS, AND ALL ABOUT THEM.

"LEEDIES," said O'Halloran, "allow me to introjuice to ye Captain Macrorie, an officer an' a gentlem'n, an' when I stect that he seved me life about a half an hour ago, yo'll see what sintimints of gratechod aro his jew."

With these words O'Halloran eutored the room, followed by two ladies whom he thus introduced, giving my name to them, but in the abstraction of the moment not mentioning their names to me.

The ladies greeted me with smiles, which at once threw a new charm over this very comfortable room, and seated themselves opposite on the other side of the fire, so that I had the best view of them possible.

And now the very first glance that I obtained of these ladies showed me that I had hit upon a wonderful piece of good luck when I went to that concert and met my new friend O'Halloran. For in beauty of face, grace of figure, refinement of manner; in every thing that affects an impressive man—and what man is not impressive?—these ladies were so far beyond all others in Quebec, that no comparison could be made. The Burton girls were nowhere.

The elder of the two might have been—no matter—not over twenty-three or four at any rate; while the younger was certainly not over eighteen or nineteen. There was a good deal of similarity in their styles; both were brunettes; both had abundance of dark, lustrous hair; both had those dark, hazel eyes which can send such a thrill to the soul of the impressive. For my part I thrilled, I glowed, I exulted, I rejoiced and triumphed in the adventure which had led to such a discovery as this. Were there any other women in Canada, in America, or in the world, equal to them? I did not believe there were. And then their voices—low—sweet—musical—voices which spoke of the exquisite refinement of perfect-breeding; those voices would have been enough to make a man do or dare any thing.

Between them, however, there were some differences. The elder had an expression of good-natured content, and there was in her a vein of fun which was manifest, while the younger seemed to have a nature which was more intense and more earnest, and there was around her a certain indefinable reserve and *hauteur*.

Which did I admire most?

I declare it's simply impossible to say. I was overwhelmed. I was crushed with equal admiration. My whole soul became indistinct with the immortal sentiment—

"How happy could I be with either;" while the cordiality of my reception, which made me at once a friend of this jewel of a family, caused my situation to assume so delicious an aspect that it was positively bewildering.

O'Halloran hadn't mentioned their names, but the names soon came out. They were evidently his daughters. The name of the eldest I found was Nora, and the name of the younger was Marion. The old gentleman was lively, and gave a highly-dramatic account of the affair at the concert, in which he represented my conduct in the most glowing light. The ladies listened to all this with undisguised agitation, interrupting him frequently with anxious questions, and regarding my humble self as a sort of a hero. All this was in the highest degree encouraging to a susceptible mind; and I soon found myself sliding off into an easy, a frank, an eloquent, and a very delightful conversation. Of the two ladies, the elder Miss O'Halloran took the chief share in that lively yet intellectual intercourse. Marion only put in a word occasionally; and, though very amiable, still did not show so much cordiality as her sister. But Miss O'Halloran! what wit! what sparkle! what mirth! what fun! what repartee! what culture! what refinement! what an acquaintance with the world! what a knowledge of men and things! what a faultless accent! what indescribable grace of manner! what a generous and yet lady-like humor! what a merry, musical laugh! what quickness of apprehension! what acuteness of perception! what—words fail. Imagine every thing that is delightful in a first-rate conversationalist, and every thing that is fascinating in a lady, and even then you will fail to have a correct idea of Miss O'Halloran. To have such an idea it would be necessary to see her.

Marion on the other hand was quiet, as I have said. Perhaps this arose from a reticence of disposition; or perhaps it was merely the result of her position as a younger sister. Her beautiful face, with its calm, self-poised expression, was turned toward us, and she listened to all that was said, and at times a smile like a sunbeam would flash over her lovely features; but it was only at times, when a direct appeal was made to her, that she would speak, and then her words were few, though quite to the point. I had not, therefore, a fair chance of comparing her with Miss O'Halloran.

In their accent there was not the slightest sign of that rich Leinster brogue which was so apparent in their father. This, however, may have arisen from an English mother, or an English education. Suffice it to say that in no respect could they be distinguished from English ladies, except in a certain vivacity of manner, which in the latter is not common. O'Halloran was evidently a gentleman, and his house showed that he was at least in comfortable circumstances. What his business now might be I could not tell. What his past had been was equally uncertain. Was he an exiled Young Irishman? Had he been driven from his home, or had he left it voluntarily? Whatever he was, his surroundings and his belongings showed unmistakable signs of culture and refinement; and as to his daughters, why, hang it! a peer of the realm couldn't have shown more glorious specimens of perfect womanhood than these which smiled on me in that pleasant parlor.

Meanwhile, as I flung myself headlong into a lively conversation with Miss O'Halloran, the old gentleman listened for a time and made occasional remarks, but at length relapsed into himself, and after some min-

utes of thought and drew from an on the table—

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"By the power of the deep voice of upon our lively and

At which we all had been shot.

"By the pipers! after some hesitation body thyrin' to ere Why, that was the

At these words I ment, and for a m in the world to ma ladies, they didn't notice them, in fact looking at O'Halloran

"See here," said bear the loikes of the Chaudière lift his head last, to convey a lesson oice;" and he read very advertisement was inserted in that very

What my emotion it is difficult to describe, then I experienced at this striking prospect my advertisement had I had occasion to feel very different from returned as O'Halloran familiar words, and I mechanically settled my position, partly of the thing, and partly impartial hearers listened to this compo

ates of thought he reached out his hand and drew from among the periodicals lying on the table—

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE DAILY PAPER.

"By the powers!" suddenly interrupted the deep voice of O'Halloran, breaking in upon our lively and delightful conversation.

At which we all started as though we had been shot.

"By the pipers!" continued O'Halloran, after some hesitation. "To think of anybody thyrin' to cross the river on the 3d! Why, that was the dee of the breck-up."

At these words I started in new astonishment, and for a moment didn't know what in the world to make of it all. As for the ladies, they didn't say a word. I didn't notice them, in fact; I had turned and was looking at O'Halloran.

"See here," said he. "Did you ever hear the loikes of this? '*Paul Verrier of Chaudière lift his home on the 3d of Eepril last, to convee a leedy to Quebec across the oice*,'" and he read straight through the very advertisement which I had written and inserted in that very paper.

What my emotions were at that moment it is difficult to describe. At first I felt surprise, then I experienced a sense of triumph at this striking proof of the success which my advertisement had met with, but finally I had occasion to feel emotions which were very different from either of these. I had turned as O'Halloran began to read those familiar words, and after he had finished I mechanically settled myself into my former position, partly because of the comfort of the thing, and partly to see how perfectly impartial hearers like these ladies would listen to this composition of mine. My

chief feeling was precisely the same as animates the artist who stands *incognito* beside his picture, to listen to the remarks of spectators; or the author who hunts through papers to read the criticism on his first book. This, it is true, was neither a picture nor a book, nor was I either an artist or an author; yet, after all, this advertisement was a literary effort of mine, and, what is more, it was the first one that had appeared in print. Was it any wonder, then, that for these reasons I felt curious to see the effect of that advertisement?

Now, as I turned, I was in expectation of some sign of feeling on the part of the ladies—call it surprise; call it sympathy; call it what you will—but I certainly was not prepared for that very peculiar and very marked effect which my humble effort at composition produced on them.

For there they sat—Marion erect and rigid, with her eyes fixed on her sister, and her hand raised in an attitude of warning; and Miss O'Halloran, in the same fixed attitude, looked eagerly at Marion, her eyes wide open, her lips parted, and one of her hands also half raised in the involuntary expression of amazement, or the mechanical suggestion of secrecy. Miss O'Halloran's emotion was not so strong as that of Marion, but then her nature was more placid, and the attitude of each was in full accordance with their respective characters.

They sat there in that attitude, altogether unconscious of me and of my gaze, with deep emotion visible on their faces, and unmistakable, yet why that emotion should be caused by that advertisement I could not for the life of me imagine.

"Well," said O'Halloran, "what do you think of that now? Isn't that a specimen of thrue Canajin grade? The man threw his loife away for a fow pince."

As O'Halloran spoke, the ladies recovered



their presence of mind. They started. Miss O'Halloran saw my eyes fixed on her, flushed up a little, and looked away. As for Marion, she too saw my look, but, instead of turning her eyes away, she fixed them on me for an instant with a strange and most intense gaze, which seemed to spring from her dark, solemn, lustrous eyes, and pierce me through and through. But it was only for an instant. Then her eyes fell, and there remained not a trace of their past excitement in either of them.

I confess I was utterly confounded at this. These two ladies perceived in that advertisement of mine a certain meaning which showed that they must have some idea of the cause of the fate of the imaginary Verrier. And what was this that they knew; and how much did they know? Was it possible that they could know the lady herself? It seemed probable.

The idea filled me with intense excitement, and made me determine here on the spot, and at once, to pursue my search after the unknown lady. But how? (One way alone seemed possible, and that was by telling a simple, unvarnished tale of my own actual adventure.

This decision I reached in little more than a minute, and, before either of the ladies had made a reply to O'Halloran's last remark, I answered him in as easy a tone as I could assume.

"Oh," I said, "I can tell you all about that."

"You!" cried O'Halloran.

"You!" cried Miss O'Halloran.

"You!" cried Marion, and she and her sister fixed their eyes upon me with unmistakable excitement, and seemed to anticipate all that I might be going to say.

This, of course, was all the more favor-

able to my design, and, seeing such immediate success, I went on headlong.

"You see," said I, "I put that notice in myself."

"You!" cried  
 { O'Halloran,  
 Miss O'Halloran,  
 Marion,

this time in greater surprise than before.

"Yes," said I. "I did it because I was very anxious to trace some one, and this appeared to be the way that was at once the most certain, and at the same time the least likely to excite suspicion."

"Suspicion?"

"Yes—for the one whom I wished to trace was a lady."

"A lady!" said O'Halloran. "Aha! you rogue, so that's what ye'er up to, is it? An' there isn't a word of truth in this about Verrier?"

"Yes, there is," said I. "He was really drowned, but I don't know his name, and Paul Verrier, and the disconsolate father, and Pierre, are altogether imaginary names. But I'll tell you all about it."

"Be dad, an' I'd be glad if ye would, for this exorjium strikes me as the most schu-pindous bit of sehamin that I've encountered for a month of Sundays."

While I was saying this, the ladies did not utter a single syllable. But if they were silent, it was not from want of interest. Their eyes were fixed on mine as though they were bound to me by some powerful spell; their lips parted, and, in their intense eagerness to hear what it was that I had to say, they did not pretend to conceal their feelings. Miss O'Halloran was seated in an arm-chair. Her left arm leaned upon it, and her hand mechanically pressed her forehead as she devoured me with her gaze. Marion was seated on a common chair, and sat with one elbow on the table, her hands clasped tight, her body

thrown slightly forward on mine with an intensely really embarrassing

And now all this must know all about me to go on. Now press my search—

So I went on—

"Conticure omnes, Indetoro Sandy Ma Infandum, Regina, J

That's about it. quotation, of course, isn't supposed to keep and it is uncommon to tell you what it is, Dido on that memory, lows have had such which gathered round hospitable parlor, at sure on the ice.

Such an audience late any man. I f not generally considered, and I'm but all that I ever lessons I made amen I began at the begi was ordered off. Th audience over the sleigh came. Then ing description of the lost driver. Th floating in a sleigh, Of course, for manife gentleman will app myself forward more could help. Then over the ice, the pe the long, interminat lady, the broad ch the white gleam of morency, my wild

thrown slightly forward, and her eyes fixed on mine with an intensity of gaze that was really embarrassing.

And now all this convinced me that they must know all about it, and emboldened me to go on. Now was the time, I felt, to press my search—now or never.

So I went on—

"Contingere omnes, intentique ora tenebant  
Inde toro Sandy Macrorie sic orans ab alto:  
Infandum, Regina, Juba renouare dolorem."

That's about it. Rather a hackneyed quotation, of course, but a fellow like me isn't supposed to know much about Latin, and it is uncommonly appropriate. And, I tell you what it is, since Æneas entertained Dido on that memorable occasion, few fellows have had such an audience as that which gathered round me, as I sat in that hospitable parlor, and told about my adventure on the ice.

Such an audience was enough to stimulate any man. I felt the stimulus. I'm not generally considered fluent, or good at description, and I'm not much of a talker; but all that I ever lacked on ordinary occasions I made amends for on that evening. I began at the beginning, from the time I was ordered off. Then I led my spellbound audience over the crumbling ice, till the sleigh came. Then I indulged in a thrilling description of the runaway horse and the lost driver. Then I portrayed the lady floating in a sleigh, and my rescue of her. Of course, for manifest reasons, which every gentleman will appreciate, I didn't bring myself forward more prominently than I could help. Then followed that journey over the ice, the passage of the ice-ridge, the long, interminable march, the fainting lady, the broad channel near the shore, the white gleam of the ice-cone at Montmorency, my wild leap, and my mad

dash up the bank to the Frenchman's house.

Up to this moment my audience sat, as I have before remarked, I think, simply spell-bound. O'Halloran was on one side of me, with his chin on his breast, and his eyes glaring at me from beneath his bushy eyebrows. Marion sat rigid and motionless, with her hands clasped; and her eyes fixed on the floor. Miss O'Halloran never took her eyes off my face, but kept them on mine as though they were riveted there. At times she started nervously, and shifted her position, and fidgeted in her chair, but never did she remove her eyes. Once, when I came to the time when I led my companion over the ice-ridge, I saw a shudder pass through her. Once again, when I came to that moment when my companion fainted, Marion gave a kind of gasp, and I saw Miss O'Halloran reach out her hand, and clasp the clinched hands of her sister; but with these exceptions there was no variation in their attitude or manner.

And now I tuned my harp to a lighter strain, which means that I proceeded to give an account of my journey after the doctor, his start, my slumbers, my own start, our meeting, the doctor's wrath, my persuasions, our journey, our troubles, our arrival at the house, our final crushing disappointment, the doctor's brutal raillery, my own meekness, and our final return home. Then, without mentioning Jack Randolph, I explained the object of the advertisement—

"Sic Sandy Macrorie, intentis omnibus, unus  
Fata renarrabat Divum, cursusque docebat,  
Contulit tandem—"

[Hack Latin, of course, but then, you know, if one does quote Latin, that is the only sort that can be understood by the general reader.]

The conclusion of my story produced a marked effect. O'Halloran roused himself, and sat erect with a smile on his face and a good-natured twinkle in his eyes. Miss O'Halloran lowered her eyes and held down her head, and once, when I reached that point in my story where the bird was flown, she absolutely laughed out. Marion's solemn and beautiful face also underwent a change. A softer expression came over it; she raised her eyes and fixed them with burning intensity on mine, her hands relaxed the rigid clasp with which they had held one another, and she settled herself into an easier position in her chair.

"Well, be jakers!" exclaimed old Halloran when I had concluded, "it bates the wurru. What a lucky dog ye are! Adventuress come tumblin' upon ye dee afther dee. But will ye ivir foind the leedee?"

I shook my head.

"I'm afraid not," said I, disconsolately. "I put out that advertisement with a faint hope that the lady's sympathy with the unfortunate driver might lead her to make herself known."

At this point the ladies rose. It was getting late, and they bade adieu and retired. Marion went out rather abruptly, Miss O'Halloran rather slowly, and not without a final smile of bewitching sweetness. I was going too, but O'Halloran would not think of it. He declared that the evening was just begun. Now that the ladies were gone we would have the field to ourselves. He assured me that I had nothing in particular to do, and might easily wait and join him in "somethin' warrum."

#### CHAPTER XVII.

##### "SOMETHIN' WARRUM."

I MUST say I was grievously disappointed at the departure of the ladies. It was late

enough in all conscience for such a move, but the time had passed quickly, and I was not aware how late it was. Besides, I had hoped that something would fall from them which would throw light on the great mystery. But nothing of the kind occurred. They retired without saying any thing more than the commonplaces of social life. What made it worse was, the fact that my story had produced a tremendous effect on both of them. That could not be concealed. They evidently knew something about the lady whom I had rescued; and, if they chose, they could put me in the way of discovery. Then, in Heaven's name, why didn't they? Why did they go off in this style, without a word, leaving me a prey to suspense of the worst kind? It was cruel. It was unkind. It was ungenerous. It was unjust. It was unfair.

One thing alone remained to comfort and encourage me, and that was the recollection of Miss O'Halloran's bewitching smile. The sweetness of that smile lingered in my memory, and seemed to give me hope. I would see her again. I would ask her directly, and she would not have the heart to refuse. Marion's graver face did not inspire that confident hope which was caused by the more genial and sympathetic manner of her sprightly elder sister.

Such were my thoughts after the ladies had taken their departure. But these thoughts were soon interrupted and diverted to another channel. O'Halloran rang for a servant, and ordered up what he called "somethin' warrum." That something soon appeared in the shape of two decanters, a kettle of hot water, a sugar-bowl, tumblers, wine-glasses, spoons, and several other things, the list of which was closed by pipes and tobacco.

O'Halloran was beyond a doubt an Irishman, and a patriotic one at that, but for

"somethin' warrum Scotch whiskey to on the Emerald So influences of this d confidential, and I sat. We quaffed the inhaled the cheerful came friendly, comm

O'Halloran, however than I, and consequ If I'm not a good excellent listener, a new friend wanted. talking, quite indiffer of mine; and, as I of listening to the d were both well satisfied.

First of all, O'Halloran. He talked much criticised it from variously rallied me about

From a consideration, he wandered greatly. He lamented his present which place he found

"I'd love it at w weren't detected here jewelry. But I found prison. Me only o about the attributes and stitchood of a shupar getting overwarrum longing for the toime the country with its

"I don't see what yourself with," said I

"Oh," said he, "I shoots, I've got me employmint an' amuse

And now he began theme of his books, this way till he became stastic, and glorious.

"somethin' warrum" he evidently preferred Scotch whiskey to that which is produced on the Emerald Sod. Beneath the benign influences of this draught he became more confidential, and I grow more serene. We sat. We quaffed the fragrant draught. We inhaled the cheerful nicotinic fumes. We became friendly, communicative, sympathetic.

O'Halloran, however, was more talkative than I, and consequently had more to say. If I'm not a good talker, I'm at least an excellent listener, and that was all that my new friend wanted. And so he went on talking, quite indifferent as to any answers of mine; and, as I always prefer the ease of listening to the drudgery of talking, we were both well satisfied and mutually delighted.

First of all, O'Halloran was simply festive. He talked much about my adventure, criticised it from various points of view, and gayly rallied me about the lost "gyerrul."

From a consideration of my circumstances, he wandered gradually away to his own. He lamented his present position in Quebec, which place he found insufferably dull.

"I'd lave it at wanst," he said, "if I weren't deteened here by the cleems of jewty. But I find it dull beyond all expression. Me only occupation is to walk about the straits and throy to preserve the stitchood of a shuparior baying. But I'm getting overwarran an' toired out, an' I'm longing for the toime whin I can bid ajoo to the counthry with its Injlns an' Canajians."

"I don't see what you can find to amuse yourself with," said I, sympathetically.

"Oh," said he, "I have veerious purshoots. I've got me books, an' I foind employmint an' amusemint with thim."

And now he began to enlarge on the theme of his books, and he went on in this way till he became eloquent, enthusiastic, and glorious. He quaffed the limpid

and transparent liquid, and its insinuating influence inspired him every moment to nobler flights of fancy, of rhetoric, and of eloquence. He began to grow learned. He discoursed about the Attic drama; the campaigns of Hannibal; the manners and customs of the Parthians; the doctrines of Zoroaster; the wars of Heraclius and Chosroes; the Omniades, the Abbasides, and the Fatimites; the Conneni; the Paleolog; the writings of Snorro Sturlesson; the round towers of Ireland; the Phoenician origin of the Irish people proved by illustrations from Plautus, and a hundred other things of a similar character.

"And what are you engaged upon now?" I asked, at length, as I found myself fairly lost amid the multiplicity of subjects which he brought forward.

"Engeeged upon?" he exclaimed, "well—a little of iviry thing, but this dee I've been busy with a rayeconstruction of the scholastic theories rilitiv' to the jurection of the diluge of Juccelion. Havo ye ivir perused the thraitises of the Chubingen school about the Noachic diluge?"

"No."

"Well, ye'll find it moighty foine an' instructive raidin'. But in addition to this, I've been investigatin' the subject of maydayvill jools."

"Jools?" I repeated, in an imbecille way.

"Yis, jools," said O'Halloran, "the orjil, ye know, the weeger of battle."

"Oh, yes," said I, as a light burst in upon me; "duels—I understand."

"But the chafe subject that I'm engeeged upon is a very different one," he resumed, taking another swallow of the oft-replenished draught. "It's a thraitise of moine by which I lxploit to upsit the theories of the miserable Saxon schaymers that desthort the pleen facts of antiquetee to shoot their

own narrow an' disthordit comprayhlusions. An' I till ye what—whin my thraitise is published, it'll make a chumult among thin' that'll convulse the lithery wurruid."

"What is your treatise about?" I asked, dreamily, for I only half comprehended him, or rather, I didn't comprehend him at all.

"Oh," said he, "its a foine subject intirely. It's a thraitise rilitiv' to the Aydi-podayan Ipopaya."

"What's that?" I asked. "The what?"

"The Aydipodayan Ipopaya," said O'Halloran.

"The Aydipodayan Ipopaya?" I repeated, in a misty, foggy, and utterly woe-begone manner.

"Yis," said he, "an' I'd like to have your opinion about that same," saying which, he once more filled his oft-replenished tumbler.

It was too much. The conversation was getting beyond my depth. I had followed him in a vague and misty way thus far, but this Aydipodayan Ipopaya was an obstacle which I could not in any way surmount. I halted short, full in front of that insurmountable obstacle. So far from surmounting it, I couldn't even pretend to have the smallest idea what it was. I could not get over it, and therefore began to think of a general retreat.

I rose to my feet.

"Ye're not going yit?" he said.

"Yes, but I am," said I.

"Why, sure it's airly enough," said he.

"Yes," said I, "it's early enough, but it's early the wrong way. It's now," said I, taking out my watch, "just twenty minutes of four. I must be off—really."

"Well," said O'Halloran, "I'm sorry ye're going, but you know best what you must do."

"And I'm sorrier," said I, "for I've spent a most delightful evening."

"Sure an' I'm glad to hear ye say that. And ye'll come again, won't ye?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"Como to-morrow night thin'," said he.

"I shall be only too happy," said I; and with these words I took my departure.

I went home, and went to bed at once. But I lay awake, a prey to many thoughts. Those thoughts did not refer to O'Halloran, or to his Aydipodayan Ipopaya. On the contrary, they referred altogether to the ladies, and to the manner in which they had heard my narrative.

What was the meaning of that?

And my speculations on this passed on even into my dreams, and thus carried me away into

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING.—APPEARANCE OF JACK RANDOLPH.—A NEW COMPLICATION.—THE THREE ORANGES.—DESPERATE EFFORTS OF THE JUGGLER.—HOW TO MAKE FULL, AMPLE, COMPLETE, AND MOST SATISFACTORY EXPLANATIONS.—MISS PHILLIPS!—THE WIDOW!—NUMBER THREE!!!—LOUIE RAPIDLY RISING INTO GREATER PROMINENCE ON THE MENTAL AND SENTIMENTAL HORIZON OF JACK RANDOLPH.

"WELL, old chap," cried Jack, as he burst into my room on the following morning, "what the mischief were you doing with yourself all last night? Come, out with it. No humbug. I was here at twelve, lighted up, and smoked till—yes—I'll be hanged if it wasn't half-past two. And you didn't come. What do you mean, my good fellow, by that sort of thlog?"

"Oh," said I, meekly, "I was out evening with a friend."

"The evening! I

"Well, it was rather fact is, we got talking him about my adventures had been at the corner went with him to the way, why weren't you

In this dexterous question, for I did not to return his confidence as the reader must know uncommonly reticent wasn't going to pour feelings to Jack, who and tell it everywhere the day.

"The concert!" I only—"the concert you mad? What's in a concert? A concert what kind of an idea me, if you think that is crushed under such den of fuss and bother

"What, are you began to see y woods?"

"See my way?" I getting worse and worse

"Worse? I thought the worst when you worse thing e Weren't all your throu Didn't you repeat y stone?"

"True, old boy; I was just beginning and all that, when do er, and, if I weren't s in resource, this day end of Jack Randolph

"Oh," said I, meekly, "I was passing the evening with a friend."

"The evening! The night you mean."

"Well, it was rather late," said I. "The fact is, we got talking, and I was telling him about my adventures. We had been at the concert first, then I went with him to his rooms. By-the-way, why weren't you there?"

In this dexterous way I evaded Jack's question, for I did not feel inclined just yet to return his confidence. I am by nature, as the reader must by this time have seen, uncommonly reticent and reserved, and I wasn't going to pour out my story and my feelings to Jack, who would probably go and tell it everywhere before the close of the day.

"The concert!" cried Jack, contemptuously—"the concert! My dear boy, are you mad? What's a concert to me or I to a concert? A concert? My dear fellow, what kind of an idea have you formed of me, if you think that I am capable of taking part in any festive scene when my soul is crushed under such an accumulated burden of fuss and bother?"

"What, are you bothered still? Haven't you begun to see your way through the woods?"

"See my way?" cried Jack. "Why, it's getting worse and worse—"

"Worse? I thought you had reached the worst when you were repulsed by Louie. What worse thing can happen than that? Weren't all your thoughts on death intent? Didn't you repeat your order for a gravestone?"

"True, old boy; very correct; but then I was just beginning to rally, you know, and all that, when down comes a new bother, and, if I weren't so uncommonly fruitful in resources, this day would have seen an end of Jack Randolph. I see you're rather

inclined to chaff me about the gravestone, but I tell you what it is, Macrorie, if this sort of thing continues you'll be in for it. I've pulled through this day, but whether I can pull through to-morrow or not is a very hard thing to say."

At this Jack struck a match, and solemnly lighted his pipe, which all this time he had been filling.

"'Pon my word, old chap," said I, you seem bothered again, and cornered, and all that. What's up? Any thing new? Out with it, and pour it into this sympathetic ear."

Jack gave about a dozen solemn puffs. Then he removed his pipe with his left hand. Then with his right hand he stroked his brow. Then he said, slowly and impressively:

"*She's here!*"

"She!" I repeated. "What she? Which? When? How?"

"Miss Phillips!" said Jack.

"Miss Phillips!" I cried. "Miss Phillips! Why, haven't you been expecting her? Don't she write, and tell you that she was coming, and all that?"

"Yes; but then you know I had half an idea that something or other would turn up to prevent her actual arrival. There's many a slip, you know, 'tween cup and lip. How did I know that she was really coming? It didn't seem at all probable that any thing so abominably embarrassing should be added to all my other embarrassments."

"Probable? Why, my dear fellow, it seems to me the most probable thing in the world. It's always so. Misfortunes never come single. Don't you know that they always come in clusters? But come, tell me all about it. In the first place, you've seen her, of course?"

"Oh, of course. I heard of her arrival

yesterday morn, and went off at once to call on her. Her reception of me was not very flattering. She was, in fact, most confoundedly cool. But you know my way. I felt awfully cut up, and insisted on knowing the reason of all this. Then it all came out."

Jack paused.

"Well, what was it?"

"Why, confound it, it seems that she had been here two days, and had been expecting me to come every moment. Now, I ask you, Macrorie, as a friend, wasn't that rather hard on a fellow when he's trying to do the very best he can, and is over head and ears in all kinds of difficulties? You know," he continued, more earnestly, "the awful bothers I've had the last few days. Why, man alive, I had only just got her letter, and hadn't recovered from the shock of that. And now, while I was still in a state of bewilderment at such unexpected news, here she comes herself! And then she begins to pitch into me for not calling on her before."

"It was rather hard, I must confess," said I, with my never-failing sympathy; "and how did it all end?"

Jack heaved a heavy—a very heavy—sigh.

"Well," said he, "it ended all right—for the time. I declared that I had not expected her until the following week; and, when she referred to certain passages in her letter, I told her that I had misunderstood her altogether, which was the solemn fact, for I swear, Macrorie, I really didn't think, even if she did come, that she'd be here two or three days after her letter came. Two or three days—why, hang it all, she must have arrived here the very day I got her letter. The letter must have come through by land, and she came by the way of Portland. Confound those

abominable mails, I say! What business have those wretched postmasters to send their letters through the woods and snow? Well, never mind. I made it up all right."

"All right?"

"Oh, yes. I explained it all, you know. I cleared up every thing in the completest way. In fact, I made a full, ample, intelligible, and perfectly satisfactory explanation of the whole thing. I showed that it was all a mistake, you know—that I was humbugged by the mails, and all that sort of thing, you know. So she relented, and we made it all up, and I took her out driving, and we had a glorious time, though the roads were awful—perfect lakes, slush no end, universal thaw, and all that. But we didn't drive, and I promised to go there again to-day."

"And did you call on the widow?"

"Oh, yes; but before I went there I had to write a letter to Number Three."

"Number Three! You must have had your hands full?"

"Hands full? I should think I had, my boy. You know what agony writing a letter is to me. It took me two hours to get through it. You see I had written her before, reproaching her for not running off with me, and she had answered me. I got her answer yesterday morning. She wrote back a repetition of her reason for not going, and pleaded her father, who she said would go mad if she did such a thing. Between you and me, Macrorie, that's all bosh. The man's as mad as a March hare now. But this wasn't all. What do you think? She actually undertook to haul me over the coals about the widow."

"What! has she heard about it?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't I tell you before that she kept the run of me 'pretty closely'? Well, she's evidently heard all about me and the widow, and accordingly, after a

brief explanation about the matter, she succeeded to walk into my room. Now that was another fact is, I pitched into her for no reason, and thought, if she'd have to take up her own attitude. But she was not to be so easily done. No go, my boy. Three. She dodged me, and sprang at me herself, and thrown on my defence, and I had to write to her at once. Jack sighed herewith.

Bass.

"But how the mischief can you manage such a subject? Two think so. For my part, you managed it at all."

"Oh, I got through, explained it all, you know, every thing in the completest way, in fact, I made a full, ample, and satisfactory explanation of the whole thing."

"Oh, that's all down to you," I interrupted. "plain it? It can't be so."

"But I did though, don't remember how. I was struck by the letter, and it dropped it into the pocket of the widow's."

"The widow's?"

"Yes, as soon as I heard of it to the widow. 'By Jove!' I cried, the style of thing, is man, will you allow me to mention in the mildest manner in the world, consider yourself able of thing?"

"Allow you? Certainly, old chap. I don't mind, and I'll be hanged if I'm among the break-

brief explanation about her father, she proceeded to walk into me about the widow. Now that was another shock. You see, the fact is, I pitched into her first for this very reason, and thought, if I began the attack, she'd have to take up a strictly defensive attitude. But she was too many guns for me. No go, my boy. Not with Number Three. She dodged my blow, and then sprang at me herself, and I found myself thrown on my defence. So you see I had to write to her at once."

Jack sighed heavily, and quaffed some Bass.

"But how the mischief could you handle such a subject? Two hours! I should think so. For my part, I don't see how you managed it at all."

"Oh, I got through," said Jack. "I explained it all, you know. I cleared up every thing in the completest way. In fact, I made a full, perfect, intelligible, ample, and satisfactory explanation—"

"Oh, that's all downright bosh now, old boy," I interrupted. "How could you explain it? It can't be explained."

"But I did though," said Jack. "I don't remember how. I only know the letter struck me as just the thing, and I dropped it into the post-office when on my way to the widow's."

"The widow's?"

"Yes, as soon as I finished the letter, I hurried off to the widow's."

"By Jove!" I cried, aghast. "So that's the style of thing, is it? Look here, old man, will you allow me to ask you, in the mildest manner in the world, how long you consider yourself able to keep up this sort of thing?"

"Allow you? Certainly not. No questions, old chap. I don't question myself, and I'll be hanged if I'll let anybody else. I'm among the breakers. I'm whirling

down-stream. I have a strong sense of the aptness of Louie's idea about the juggler and the oranges. But the worst of it is, I'm beginning to lose confidence in myself."

And Jack leaned his head back, and sent out a long beam of smoke that flew straight up and hit the ceiling. After which he stared at me in unutterable solemnity.

"Well," said I, "go on. What about the widow?"

"The widow—oh—when I got there I found another row."

"Another?"

"Yes, another—the worst of all. But by this time I had grown used to it, and I was as serene as a mountain-lake."

"But—the row—what was it about?"

"Oh, she had heard about my engagement to Miss Phillips, and her arrival; so she at once began to talk to me like a father. The way she questioned me—why the Grand Inquisitor is nothing to it. But she didn't make any thing by it. You see I took up the Fabian tactics and avoided a direct engagement."

"How's that?"

"Why, I wouldn't answer her."

"How could you avoid it?"

"Pooh!—easy enough—I sat and chaffed her, and laughed at her, and called her jealous, and twitted her, no end. Well, you know, at last she got laughing herself, and we made it all up, and all that sort of thing, you know; still, she's very pertinacious, and even after we made up she teased and teased, till she got an explanation out of me."

"An explanation! What, another?"

"Oh, yes—easy enough—I explained it all, you know. I cleared up every thing perfectly. I made an ample, intelligible, full, frank, and thoroughly satisfactory explanation of the whole thing, and—"



"What, again? Hang it, Jack, don't repeat yourself. This is the third time that you've repeated those words *verbatim*."

"Is it? Did I? Odd, too. Fact is, I believe I made up that sentence for my letter to Number Three, and I suppose I've got it by heart. At any rate, it's all right. You see I had three explanations to make, and they all had to be full, frank, ample, satisfactory, and all the rest of those words, you know. But it's awfully hard work. It's wearing on the constitution. It destroys the nervous system. I tell you what it is, old chap—I'm serious—if this sort of thing is to go on, hang it, I'll die of exhaustion."

"So that was the end of your troubles for that day?"

"Well—yes—but not the end of my day. I got away from the widow by eight o'clock, and then trotted over to Louie."

"Louie?"

"Yes, Louie. Why, man—why not?"

"What, after the late mitten?"

"Mitten? of course. What do you suppose I care for that? Isn't Louie the best friend I have? Isn't she my only comfort? Doesn't she give magnificent advice to a fellow, and all that? Louie? Why, man alive, it's the only thing I have to look forward to! Of course. Well, you see, Louie was luckily disengaged. The other girls were at whist with their father and the aunt. So I had Louie to myself."

"I hope you didn't do the sentimental again."

"Sentimental? Good Lord I hadn't I been overwhelmed and choked with sentiment all day long? Sentiment? Of all the bosh—but never mind. Louie at least didn't bother me in that way. Yes, it's a fact, Macrorie, she's got an awful knack of giving comfort to a fellow."

"Comfort?"

"Well, I can't exactly explain it."

"I suppose she was very sad, and sympathetic, and all that. At any rate, she didn't know the real trouble that you'd been having?"

"Didn't she, though?"

"No, of course not; how could she?"

"Why, she began questioning me, you know."

"Questioning you?"

"Yes—about—the three oranges, you know."

"Well, and how did you manage to fight her off?"

"Fight her off?"

"Yes."

"Why, I couldn't."

"Couldn't?"

"No."

"Nonsense! A fellow that could baffle the widow, wouldn't have any trouble in baffling Louie."

"Oh, that's all very well; but you don't know the peculiar way she goes to work. She's such an awful tease. And she keeps at it too, like a good fellow."

"Still you were safe from her by reason of the very fact that your daily adventures were things that you *could* not tell her."

"Couldn't I, though?"

"Of course not."

"I don't see why not."

"Impossible."

"But I *did*."

"You did?"

"I did."

"To Louie?"

"Yes, to Louie."

Again my thoughts and feelings found expression in a whistle.

"You see," resumed Jack, "she badgered and questioned, and teased and teased, till at last she got it all out of me. And the way she took it! Laughing all the

time, the provoking little witch, her eyes

dancing with fun, and ecstasy over my sorrow first, but at length she cared for a fellow

instead of laughing at

"But she doesn't p—  
—and lucky for her t

"That's true," said

"But what did she

"Say? Oh, she te

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A 'full, frank, free, free

that sort of thing, I supp

"Oh, bother, chaff!

merely explained that

offence from her laughter

that if she cared for a

laugh at him.

"But, I never said I

she.

dancing with fun, and her soul in a perfect ecstasy over my sorrows. I was quiet at first, but at length got huffy. You see if she cared for a fellow she ought to pity him instead of laughing at him."

"But she doesn't pretend to care for you—and lucky for her too."

"That's true," said Jack, dolefully.

"But what did she say about it?"

"Say? Oh, she teased and teased, and then when she had pumped me dry she burst out into one of her fits—and then I got huffy—and she at once pretended to be very demure, the little sinner, though I saw her eyes twinkling with fun all the time. And at last she burst out:

"Oh, Captain Randolph! You're so awfully absurd. I can't help it, I must laugh. Now ain't you awfully funny? Confess. Please confess, Captain Randolph. Pie-e-e-case do, like a good Captain Randolph. Pie-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!"

"So my grim features relaxed, and I looked benignly at her, whereupon she burst out laughing again in my face.

"Well, I can't help it, I'm sure," she said. "You do look so droll. You try to make me laugh, and I laugh, and can't help it, and then you blame me for doing the very thing you make me do, and I think it's a shame—there, now."

"Whereupon she began to pout, and look hurt, and so, you know, I had to go to work and explain to her."

"What! not another explanation, I hope. A full, frank, free, fresh, ample, and all that sort of thing, I suppose."

"Oh, bother, chaff! I'm in earnest. I merely explained that I didn't take any offence from her laughter, but that I thought that if she cared for a fellow she wouldn't laugh at him.

"But, I never said I cared for you," said she.

"Oh, well—you know what I mean—you're my friend, you know, and my only comfort," said I.

"At this she went off again.

"Well, then," said I, "what are you?"

"She sat and thought.

"Well," said she, "I won't be your friend, for that's too cold; I won't be your sister, for that's too familiar. Let me see—what ought I to be? I can't be your guardian, for I'm too volatilo—what, then, can I be? Oh, I see! I'll tell you, Captain Randolph, what I'll be. I'll pretend that I'm your aunt. There, sir."

"Well, then," said I, "my own dear aunt."

"No. That won't do—you are always absurd when you grow affectionate or sentimental. You may call me aunt—but no sentiment."

"Well, Aunt Louie."

"She demurred a little, but finally, I gained my point. After this she gave me some good advice, and I left and came straight to you, to find your room empty."

"Advice? You said she gave you advice? What was it?"

"Well, she advised me to get immediate leave of absence, and go home for a time. I could then have a breathing-space to decide on my future."

"Capital! Why, what a perfect little trump Louie is! Jack, my boy, that's the very thing you'll have to do."

Jack shook his head.

"Why not?"

He shook his head again.

"Well, what did you say to Louie?"

"Why, I told her that it was impossible. She insisted that it was the very thing I ought to do, and wanted to know why I wouldn't. I refused to tell, whereupon she began to coax and tease, and tease and coax, and so the end of it was, I told her."

"What was it?"

"Why, I told her I couldn't think of going away where I couldn't see her; that I would have blown my brains out by this time if it weren't for her; and that I'd blow my brains out when I went home, if it weren't for the hope of seeing her to-morrow."

"The devil you did!" said I, dryly. "What! after being mitted?"

"Yes," said Jack. "It was on my mind to say it, and I said it."

"And how did Louie take it?"

"Not well. She looked coolly at me, and said:

"Captain Randolph, I happened to be speaking sensibly. You seemed to be in earnest when you asked for my opinion, and I gave it."

"And I was in earnest," I said.

"How very absurd!" said she. "The fable of the shepherd-boy who cried wolf, is nothing to you. It seems to be a fixed habit of yours to go about to all the young ladies of your acquaintance threatening to blow your brains out. Now, in getting up a sentiment for my benefit, you ought at least to have been original, and not give to me the same second-hand one which you had already sent to Number Three."

"She looked so cold, that I felt frightened."

"You're—you're—not offended?" said I. "I'm sure."

"Oh; no," said she, interrupting me. "I'm not offended. I'm only disappointed in you. Don't apologize, for you'll only make it worse."

"Well," said I, "I'm very much obliged to you for your advice—but circumstances over which I have no control prevent me from taking it. There—is that satisfactory?"

"Quite," said Louie, and her old smile returned.

"Do you wish me to tell you what the circumstances are?"

"Oh, no—oh, don't—" she cried, with an absurd affectation of consternation. "Oh, Captain Randolph—please. Ple-e-e-ase, Captain Randolph—don't."

"So I didn't."

"Well, Jack," said I, "how in the world did you manage to carry on such conversations when the rest of the family were there? Wouldn't they overhear you?"

"Oh, no. You see they were in one room at their whist, and we were in the other. Besides, we didn't speak loud enough for them to hear—except occasionally."

"So Louie didn't take offence."

"Oh, no, we made it up again at once. She gave me a beaming smile as I left. I'll see her again this evening."

"And the others through the day?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, with a sigh.

"Miss Phillips?"

"Of course—and then I get a note from Number Three, requiring an immediate answer—and then off I go to the widow, who will have a new grievance; and then, after being used up by all these, I fly to Louie for comfort and consolation."

I shook my head.

"You're in for it, old chap," I said, solemnly, "and all that I can say is this: Take Louie's advice, and fit."

"Not just yet, at any rate," said Jack, rising; and with these words he took his departure.

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... Do you know what you've done? said he, abruptly, without greeting or salutation by any kind."—page 66.

CHAPT

O'HALLORAN'S AGAIN.  
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## CHAPTER XIX.

O'HALLORAN'S AGAIN.—A STARTLING REVELATION.—THE LADY OF THE ICE.—FOUND AT LAST.—CONFUSION, EMBARRASSMENT, RETICENCE, AND SHYNESS, SUCCEEDED BY WIT, FASCINATION, LAUGHTER, AND WITCHING SMILES.

AFTER waiting impatiently all day, and beguiling the time in various ways, the hour at length came when I could go to O'Halloran's. I confess, my feelings were of rather a tumultuous description. I would see the ladies again. I would renew my endeavors to find out the great mystery of the ice. Such were my intentions, and I had firmly resolved to make direct questions to Nora and Marion, and see if I couldn't force them, or coax them, or argue them, into an explanation of their strange agitation. Such an explanation, I felt, would be a discovery of the object of my search.

Full of these thoughts, intentions, and determinations, I knocked at O'Halloran's door, and was ushered by the servant into the comfortable parlor. O'Halloran stood there in the middle of the room. Nora was standing not far from him. Marion was not there; but O'Halloran and Nora were both looking at me, as I entered, with strange expressions.

O'Halloran advanced quickly, and caught me by the hand.

"D'ye know what ye've done?" said he, abruptly, without greeting or salutation of any kind. "Ye know what ye've done? Ye seerved moy loife at the concert. But are you aweer what ye've done besides?"

He looked at me earnestly, and with so strange an expression that for a moment I thought he must be mad.

"Well, really," said I, somewhat confusedly, "Mr. O'Halloran, I must confess I'm not aware of any thing in particular."

"He doesn't know!" cried O'Halloran. "He doesn't know. 'Tisn't the sloyttest conception that he has! Will, thin, me boy," said he—and all this time he held my hand, and kept wringing it hard—"will, thin—I've another dibt of gratichood, and, what's more, one that I nivir, can raypay. D'ye know what ye've done? D'ye know what ye are? No? Will, thin, I'll tell ye. Ye're the sceevior of me Nora, me darlin', me proide, me own. She was the one that ye seerved on the oice, and rescued from destruction. There she stands. Look at her. But for you, she'd be now lost forivir to the poor owld man whose light an' loiffe an' treasure she always was. Nora, jewel, there he is, as sure as a gun, though why he didn't recognize ye last noight passes moy faible compryhinsion, so it does."

Saying this, he let go my hand and looked toward Nora.

At this astounding announcement I stood simply paralyzed. I stared at each in succession. To give an idea of my feelings is simply impossible. I must refer every thing to the imagination of the reader; and, by way of comparison to assist his imagination, I beg leave to call his attention to our old friend, the thunder-bolt. "Had a thunder-bolt burst," and all that sort of thing. Fact, sir. Dumbfounded. By Jove! that word even does not begin to express the idea.

Now for about twenty hours, in dreams as well as in waking moments, I had been brooding over the identity of the lady of the ice, and had become convinced that the O'Halloran ladies knew something about it; yet so obtuse was I that I had not suspected that the lady herself might be found in this house. In fact, such an event was at once

so romantic and so improbable that it did not even suggest itself. But now here was the lady herself. Here she stood. Now I could understand the emotion, the agitation, and all that, of the previous evening. This would at once account for it all. And here she stood—the lady herself—and that lady was no other than Miss O'Halloran.

By Jove!

Miss O'Halloran looked very much confused, and very much embarrassed. Her eyes lowered and sought the floor, and in this way she advanced and took my proffered hand. 'Pon my life, I don't think I ever saw any thing more beautiful than she was as this confusion covered her lovely face; and the eyes which thus avoided mine seemed to my imagination still more lovely than they had been before.

And this was the one—I thought, as I took her hand—this was the one—the companion of my perilous trip—the life that I had saved. Yet this discovery filled me with wonder. This one, so gay, so genial, so laughter-loving—this one, so glowing with the bloom of health, and the light of life, and the sparkle of wit—this one! It seemed impossible. There swept before me on that instant the vision of the ice, that quivering form clinging to me, that pallid face, those despairing eyes, that expression of piteous and agonizing entreaty, those wild words of horror and of anguish. There came before me the phantom of that form which I had upraised from the ice when it had sunk down in lifelessness, whose white face rested on my shoulder as I bore it away from the grasp of death; and that vision, with all its solemn, tragic awfulness seemed out of keeping with this. Miss O'Halloran? Impossible! But yet it must be so, since she thus confessed it. My own memory had been at fault. The face on the ice which haunted me was not

the face that I saw before me; but, then, Miss O'Halloran in despair must have a different face from Miss O'Halloran in her happy and peaceful home. All these thoughts passed through me as I took her hand; but they left me with the impression that my vision was a mistake, and that this lady was in very deed the companion of that fearful journey.

I pressed her hand in silence. I could not speak. Under the pressure of thoughts and recollections that came sweeping in upon me, I was dumb; and so I wandered away, and fell into a seat. Yet, in my stupefaction, I could see that Miss O'Halloran showed an emotion equal to mine. She had not spoken a word. She sat down, with her eyes on the floor, and much agitation in her manner.

"Nora, me pet," said O'Halloran, "haven't ye any exprission of grateehood?"

Miss O'Halloran raised her face, and looked at me with earnest eyes.

"Indeed—indeed," she said—"it is not from want of gratitude that I am silent. My gratitude is too strong for words. Lieutenant Macrurie needs no assurance of mine, I know, to convince him how I admire his noble conduct—"

The sound of her voice roused me from my own abstraction.

"Oh, of course," said I, "a fellow knows all that sort of thlag, you know; and I feel so glad about the service I was able to render you, that I'm positively grateful to you, for being there. Odd, though—isn't it?—that I didn't recognize you. But then, you see, the fact is, you looked so different then from what you do now. Really, you seem like another person—you do, by Jove!"

At this Miss O'Halloran looked down, and seemed embarrassed.

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from the Frenchman's?" said I, suddenly. "You've no idea how it bothered me. By Jove! it didn't seem altogether fair to me, you know. And then you didn't even leave your address."

Miss O'Halloran's confusion seemed to increase. She murmured something about having to hurry home—pressed for time—fear of her friends being anxious—and all that.

Then I asked her anxiously if she had been any the worse for it.

"Oh, no," she said; "no ill consequences had resulted."

By this time I had sense enough to perceive that the subject was an extremely unpleasant one. A moment's further thought showed me that it couldn't be anything else. Unpleasant! I should think so. Was it not suggestive of sorrow and of despair? Had she not witnessed things which were never to be forgotten? Had she not seen her hapless driver go down beneath the icy waters? Had she not herself stood face to face with an awful doom? Had she not twice—yes, and thrice—tasted of the bitterness of death?

"I beg pardon," said I, as these thoughts came to me—"it's a painful subject. I spoke thoughtlessly; but I won't allude to it again. It was bad enough for me; but it must have been infinitely worse for you. The fact is, my curiosity got the better of my consideration for your feelings."

"That's true," said O'Halloran; "it's a painful subject."

Then this Miss O'Halloran looked immensely moved. She raised her head, and involuntarily cast upon me a touching look of gratitude. Yes; it must, indeed, have been a painful subject. The consciousness of this made me eager to make amends for my fault, and so I began to rattle on in a lively strain about a thousand things; and Miss

O'Halloran, seizing the opportunity thus held out of casting dull care away, at once rose superior to her embarrassment and confusion, and responded to my advances with the utmost liveliness and gaiety. The change was instantaneous and marked. A moment ago she had been constrained and stiff and shy; now she was gay and lively and spirited. This change, which thus took place before my eyes, served in some measure to explain that difference which I saw between the Lady of the Ice and Miss O'Halloran in her own home.

O'Halloran himself joined in. He was gay, and genial, and jocose. At about nine o'clock Marion came in. She seemed dull and drait. She gave me a cold hand, and then sat down in silence. She did not say anything whatever. She did not seem to listen, but sat, with her head leaning on her hand, like one whose thoughts are far away. Yet there was a glory about her sad and melancholy beauty which could not but arrest my gaze, and often after I found my eyes wandering to that face of loveliness. Twice—yes, three times—as my gaze thus wandered, I found her eyes fixed upon me with a kind of eager scrutiny—a fixed intensity which actually seemed to encounter. And strange, vague, wild, unformed memories arose, and odd ideas, and fantastic suspicions. Her face became thus like one of those which one sees in a crowd hastily, and then loses, only to rack his brain in vain endeavors to discover who the owner of the face might be. So it was with me as I saw the dark face and the lustrous eyes of Marion.

And now, upon my life, I cannot say which one of these two excited the most of my admiration. There was Nora, with her good-nature, her wit, her friendliness, her witchery, her grace, the sparkle of her eye, the music of her laugh. But there, too,



was Marion, whose eyes seemed to pierce to my soul, and whose face I caught her gaze, and whose face seemed to have some weird influence over me, puzzling and bewildering me by suggestions of another face, which I had seen before. I was fascinated by Nora; I was in love with her; but by Marion I was thrown under a spell.

On the whole, Nora seemed to me more sympathetic. With all her brightness and joyousness, there was also a strange timidity, at times, and shyness, and furtive glances. An occasional flush, also, gave her a sweet confusion of manner, which heightened her charms. All these were signs which I very naturally interpreted in my own favor. What else should I do?

I have been calling her indiscriminately Miss O'Halloran and Nora. But to her face I did not call her by any name. Nora, of course, was not to be thought of. On the other hand, Miss O'Halloran seemed too distant. For the memory of our past experience made me feel very near to her, and intimate. Had we not been together on a journey where hours create the familiarities of years? Was not her life mine? In fact, I felt to her as a man feels when he meets the old flame of his boyhood. She is married, and has passed beyond him. But her new name is so cold, and her old name may not be used. So he calls her nothing. He meets her as a friend, but does not know now to name her.

As we talked, O'Halloran sat there, and sometimes listened, and sometimes chimed in. An uncommonly fine-looking old fellow he was, too. Although about sixty, his form was as erect as that of a young man, and his sinewy limbs gave signs of great strength. He sat in an easy-chair—his iron-gray hair clustering over his broad brow; his eyes keen, penetrating, but full of fun; his nose slightly curved, and his

lips quivering into smiles; small whiskers of a vanished fashion on either cheek; and small hands—a right royal, good fellow—witty, intellectual, and awfully eccentric—at once learned and boyish, but for all that perhaps all the better adapted for social enjoyment, and perhaps I may add conviviality. There was a glorious flow of animal spirits in the man, which could not be repressed, but came rolling forth, expressed in his rich Leinster brogue. He was evidently proud of his unparalleled girls; but of those all his tenderness seemed to go forth toward Nora. To her, and apparently to her alone, he listened, with a proud affection in his face and in his eyes; while any little sally of hers was always sure to be received with an outburst of chuckling laughter, which was itself contagious, and served to increase the general hilarity.

But the general hilarity did not extend to Marion. She was like a star, and sat apart, listening to every thing, but saying nothing. I caught sometimes, as I have said, the lustrous gleam of her eyes, as they pierced me with their earnest gaze; and when I was looking at Nora, and talking with her, I was conscious, at times, of Marion's eyes. O'Halloran did not look at her, or speak to her. Was she under a cloud? Was this her usual character? Or was she sad and serious with the pressure of some secret purpose? Such were my thoughts; but then I suddenly decided that by such thoughts I was only making an ass of myself, and concluded that it was nothing more than her way. If so, it was an uncommonly impressive way.

The ladies retired early that evening. Marion, on leaving, gave me a last searching glance; while Nora took leave with her most bewildering smile. The glance and the smile both struck home; but, which affected me most, it is impossible to say.

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CHAPTER XX.

OUR SYMPOSIUM," AS O'HALLORAN CALLED IT.—HIGH AND MIGHTY DISCOURSE.—GENERAL INSPECTION OF ANTIQUITY BY A LEARNED EYE.—A DISCOURSE UPON THE "OJONESOIZIN" OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.—HOMERIC TRANSLATIONS.—O'HALLORAN AND BURNS.—A NEW EPOCH FOR THE BROOUE.—THE DINNER OF ACHILLES AND THE PALACE OF ANTINOUS.

THE servants brought us the generous preparations for the evening—sugar, spoons, hot water, tumblers, and several other things.

O'Halloran began by expressing his gratitude, and saying that Nora could not speak on the subject. He hoped I would see, by that, why it was that she had not answered my questions. Whereupon I hastened to apologize for asking questions which so harshly reminded her of a terrible tragedy. Our mutual explanations were soon exhausted, and we turned to subjects in general.

As our symposium proceeded, O'Halloran grew more and more eloquent, more discursive, more learned, more enthusiastic. He didn't expect me to take any part in the conversation. He was only anxious that I should "take it hot," and keep my pipe and my tumbler well in hand. He was like Coleridge, and Johnson, and other great men who abhor dialogues, and know nothing but monologues.

On this occasion he monologued on the following subjects: The Darwinian hypothesis, the positive philosophy, Protestant missions, temperance societies, Fichte, Lessing, Hegel, Carlyle, mummies, the Apocalypse, Malmonides, John Scotus Erigena, the steam-engine of Hero, the Scrapelum, the Dorian Emigration, and the Trojan

War. This at last brought him on the subject of Homer.

He paused for a moment here.

"D'ye want to know," said he, "the thrue business of me loife, an' me sowl occupation?"

I bowed and gave a feeble smile. I thought of Fenian agencies and a dozen other things, and fancied that in this hour of confidence he would tell all. I had several times wondered why he lived in a place which he hated so, and had a vague idea that he was some kind of a secret emissary, though there was certainly not a single thing in his character which might warrant such a supposition.

"Me object," said O'Halloran, looking solemnly at me, "and the whole eem of me loife is the Ojoneesoizin of the language of the Saxon. He's thrust his language on us, an' my eem is to meek it our oon, to illivate it—an' by one sehtoopindous, illusthrection to give lf a pleece among the letherary doialicts of the wurruid."

"Ojoneesoizin?" said I, slowly.

"Yis, Ojoneesoizin," said O'Halloran. "An' I'm going to do this by mnins of a thranslection of Homer. For consider. Since Chapman's translation has been made. Pope and Dryden are contimplible. Darby is onraydable. Gladstone's attempt on the fust buk, an' Mat Arnold's on the seem, an' Worsley's Spinsayrians are all feclures. Ye see, they think only of maythers, an' don't consider doialicts. Homer wrote in the Oionic doialict, an' shud be thranslated into the modern nyquivalint of that same."

"Oh, I see," said I, "but is there such an equivalent?"

"Yis," said he, solemnly. "Ye see, the Scotch doialict has been illivatid into a Doric by the janius of a Burrans; and so loikewise shall the Oirish be illivatid into

an Olonean doialict by the janius of O'Halloran.

"For OIrish is the natural an' eonjayneal ripriescntivve of the ancient Oloocean. It's vowel-sounds, its diphthongs, its shuperabundnee of leginds, all show this most pleenly. So, too, if we apply this modern Olonean to a thranslection of Homer, we see it has schootopindous advantages. The Homeric neems, the ipithets, and the woild alternection of dacthyls an' spondees, may all be riprintised boy a neetive and conjayneal mayther. Take for a spicimin *Barny O'Brallaghan*. 'Twas on a windy night about two o'clock in the mornin.' That is the neetive misure of the OIrish bards, an' is iminiotly adapted to rendher the Homeric swinge. It consists of an Oiambic pinthimtir followed by a dacthylic thripody; an' in rhythm projuices the effects of the dacthylic hixamitir. Compeer wid this the ballad mayther, an' the hayroic mayther, and the Spinsorian stanzas, of Worsley, an' Gladstone's Saxon throchaics, and Darby's dull blank verse, an' the litheral prose, an' Mat Arnold's attempst at hixameters, an' Dain somebody's hidicasyllabics. They're one an' all ayqually contimplible. But in this neetive OIrish loine we have not only doialictic advantages, but also an ameezing number of others. It's the doiriet ripri-sintetive of the Homeric loine, fust, in the number of fate; secindly, in the saysural pause; thirdly, in the capacetee for a dacthylic an' spondaic inding, an' fowerthly, in the shuperabundnee of sonorous ipithits and 'rowling syllahcefecections. An' all this I can prove to ye by spicimins of me oin thranslection."

With this he went to a Davenport at one end of the room, and brought out a pile of manuscript closely written. Then he seated himself again.

"I'll raid ye passages here an' there,"

said he. "The fust one is the reception of the imbassy by Achilles." Saying this, he took the manuscript and began to read the following in a very rich, broad brogue, which made me think that he cultivated this brogue of his purposely, and out of patriotic motives, from a desire to elevate his loved Irish dialect to an equality with the literary standard English:

"He spake. Put Roklea heard, an' didn't da cloine for till do it,  
But tuk the mate-thray down, an' into the foyre he threw it:  
A shape's choine an' a goat'a be throwed on top of the platter,  
An' wau from a lovely plg, than which there wor nivr a fatter;  
Thase O'Tomedon tk, O'Kelly, devoted thim natly,  
He meed mince-mate av thim all, an' thlu he spitted thim awately;  
To sich entolcin' fud they all extinded their arrume,  
Till fud and dhriuk loikewas had lost their jaynil charrums;  
Thin Ajax winked at Phaynix, O'Dishes tuka note of it gayly,  
An' powerin' out some woine, he dhruuk till the health ov O'Kelly."

After this he read the description of the palace of Antinous in the "Odyssey":

"For benchus hohgts ov brass sich wae woe frrumlee bulldid,  
From the front dure till the back, an' a nste bine corrinla filled it;  
An' there was gowldin' dures, that taste dome secrin',  
An' silver posts loikewas that alid the breezin' dure in;  
An' lovely gowldin' dogs the luthrance wae stud fast in,  
Thim same, H. Phacetus meed, which had a terran for castin'.  
Widont that speelons hall there grew a gyardin, be Jakers!  
A fince purtlets that seeme of fower (I think it is) acres."

I have but an indrest of the evening asleep, I must have retaining just sufficient to preserve the air of had nothing but an of visions, which a shape of Nora and length I rose to go, to stay longer. But watch, I found it was suggested in a general I'd better be informed me that he on the following evening come the evening after very happy. But such engagement. "Well on the next evening I would be, and so I of returning on the time.

I got home and dreams I renewed the ing. Not the latter part. There, before of Nora and of Marion the other all gloom-laughter, the other soft, innocent, laughing at me from glances that pierced the possible man: I was so made. And so, 'pon my honor I couldn't toll which these two fascinating bewitching, yet total "Oh, Nora!" I cry after, "Oh, Marion!"

I have but an indistinct recollection of the rest of the evening. If I was not sound asleep, I must have been in a semi-doze, retaining just sufficient consciousness to preserve the air of an absorbed listener. I had nothing but an innumerable multitude of visions, which assumed alternately the shape of Nora and of Marion. When at length I rose to go, O'Halloran begged me to stay longer. But, on looking at my watch, I found it was half-past three, and so suggested in a general way that perhaps I'd better be in bed. Whereupon he informed me that he would not be at home on the following evening, but wouldn't I come the evening after. I told him I'd be very happy. But suddenly I recollected an engagement. "Well, will you be at leisure on the next evening?" said he. I told him I would be, and so I left, with the intention of returning on the third evening from that time.

I got home and went to bed; and in my dreams I renewed the events of that evening. Not the latter part of it, but the former part. There, before me, floated the forms of Nora and of Marion, the one all smiles, the other all gloom—the one all jest and laughter, the other silent and sombre—the one casting at me the glowing light of her soft, innocent, laughing eyes; the other flinging at me from her dark, lustrous orbs glances that pierced my soul. I'm an impressive man. I own it. I can't help it. I was so made. I'm awfully susceptible. And so, 'pon my honor, for the life of me I couldn't tell which I admired most of these two fascinating, bewildering, lovely, bewitching, yet totally different beings. "Oh, Nora!" I cried—and immediately after, "Oh, Marion!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

JACK ONCE MORE.—THE WOES OF A LOVER.—NOT WISELY BUT TOO MANY.—WHILE JACK IS TELLING HIS LITTLE STORY, THE ONES WHOM HE THUS ENTERTAINS HAVE A SEPARATE MEETING.—THE BURSTING OF THE STORM.—THE LETTER OF "NUMBER THREE."—THE WIDOW AND MISS PHILLIPS.—JACK HAS TO AVAIL HIMSELF OF THE AID OF A CHAPLAIN OF HER MAJESTY'S FORCES.—JACK AN INJURED MAN.

It was late on the following morning when I rose. I expected to see Jack bounding in, but there were no signs of him. I went about on my usual round, but he didn't turn up. I asked some of the other fellows, but none of them had seen him. I began to be anxious. Duns were abroad. Jack was in peril. The sheriff was near. There was no joke in it. Perhaps he was nabbed, or perhaps he was in hiding. The fact that no one had seen him was a very solemn and a very portentous one. I said nothing about my feelings, but, as the day wore on without bringing any sign of him, I began to be more anxious; and as the evening came I retired to my den, and there thoughts of Jack intermingled themselves with visions of Nora and Marion.

The hours of that evening passed very slowly. If I could have gone to O'Halloran's, I might have forgotten my anxiety; but, as I couldn't go to O'Halloran's, I could not get rid of my anxiety. What had become of him? Was he in limbo? Had he taken Louie's advice and fitted? Was he now gnashing his splendid set of teeth in drear confinement; or was he making a fool of himself, and an ass, by persisting in indulging in sentiment with Louie?

In the midst of these cogitations, eleven

o'clock came, and a few moments after in bled Jack himself.

I met him as the prodigal son was met by his father.

He was gloomy. There was a cloud on his broad, Jovian, hilarious, Olympian brow, with its clustering ambrosial locks.

"Jack, old fellow! You come like sunshine through a fog. I've been bothering about you all day. Have you been nabbed? Are the duns abroad? Has the sheriff invited you to a friendly and very confidential conversation? You haven't been here for two days."

"Yes, I have," said Jack, "I was here last night, and waited till three, and then walked off to sleep on it. You're up to something yourself, old man, but look out. Take warning by me. Don't plunge in too deep. For my part, I haven't the heart to pursue the subject. I've got beyond the head-stone even. The river's the place for me. But, Maerorie, promise me one thing."

"Oh, of course—all right—go ahead."

"Well, if I jump into the river, don't let them drag for me. Let me calmly drift away, and be borne off into the Atlantic Ocean. I want oblivion. Hang head-stones! Let Anderson slide."

Saying this, Jack crammed some tobacco into his pipe, lighted it, flung himself into a chair, and began smoking most vigorously. I watched him for some time in silence. There was a dark cloud on his sunny brow; he looked woe-begone and dismal, and, though such expressions were altogether out of harmony with the style of his face, yet to a friendly eye they were sufficiently visible. I saw that something new had occurred. So I waited for a time, thinking that he would volunteer his confidence; but, as he did not, I thought I would ask for it.

"By Jove!" said I, at last. "Hang it, Jack, do you know, old man; you seem to be awfully cut up about something—hit hard—and all that sort of thing. What's up? Any thing new? Out with it—clean breast, and all that. 'Pon my life, I never saw you so cut up before. What is it?"

Jack took his pipe from his mouth, rubbed his forehead violently, stared at me for a few moments, and then slowly ejaculated:

"There's a beastly row—tremendous—no end—that's what there is."

"A row?"

"Yes—no end of a row."

"Who? What? Which of them?"

"All of them. Yesterday, and to-day, and to be continued to-morrow. Such is life. Sic transit, et cetera. Good Lord! Maerorie, what's a fellow to do but drown himself? Yes, my boy—oblivion! that's what I want. And I'll have it. This life isn't the thing for me. I was made to be badgered. The chief end of life is for other things than getting snubbed by a woman. And I'm not going to stand it here, close by, in a convenient river. I'll seek an acquaintance with its ley tide, rather than have another day like this."

"But I'm all in the dark. Tell what it is that has happened."

Jack inhaled a few more whiffs of the smoke that cheers but not inebriates, and then found voice to speak:

"You see it began yesterday. I started off at peace with the world, and went most dutifully to call on Miss Phillips. Well, I went in and found her as cool as an icicle. I didn't know what was up, and proceeded to do the injured innocent. Whereupon she turned upon me, and gave it to me then and there, hot and heavy. I didn't think it was in her. I really didn't—by Jove! The way

she gave it to me, wonder.

"What about?"

"The widow!"

"The widow?"

"Yes—the widow."

"But how did it soon?"

"Oh, easy enough now, you know. I it, and some were were indignant. A rushed with delight her, so you may in I found her in.

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"Do you think

she gave it to me," and Jack paused in wonder.

"What about?" said I.

"The widow!" groaned Jack.

"The widow?" I repeated.

"Yes—the widow."

"But how did she hear about it so soon?"

"Oh, easy enough. It's all over town now, you know. Her friends here heard of it, and some were incredulous, and others were ludignant. At any rate, both classes rushed with delightful unanimity to inform her, so you may imagine the state of mind I found her in.

"You can easily imagine what she said. I don't think much of your imagination, Macrorie, but in this case it don't require a very vivid one. The worst of it is, she was quite right to feel indignat. The only thing about it all that gave me the smallest relief, was the fact that she didn't do the pathetic. She didn't shed a tear. She simply questiond me. She was as stiff as a ramrod, and as cold as a stone. There was no mercy in her, and no consideration for a fellow's feelings. She succeeded in making out that I was the most contemptible fellow living."

"And what did you say?"

"Say? What could I say? She forced me to own up about the widow. Hang it, you know I can't lie. So, after trying to dodge her questions, I answered them. She wouldn't let me dodge them. But there was one thing left. I swore to her, by all that was true, that I didn't care a fig for the widow, that my engagement with her arose altogether through a mistake. She pressed me hard on this, and I had to tell the

truth.

"What? Look here, Jack—you didn't drag in Louie into your confounded scrape?"

"Do you think I'm such a villain as

that?" said Jack, indignantly. "No—of course I didn't. Louie—I'd die first. No. I told her some story about my mistaking her for a friend, whose name I didn't mention. I told her that I took the widow's hand by mistake—just in fun, you know—thinking it was my friend, and all that; and before I knew it the widow had nabbed me."

"Well?"

"Well, she didn't condescend to ask the name of my friend. She thought the widow was enough at a time, I suppose, and so she asked me about the state of my feelings toward her. And here I expressed myself frankly. I told her that my only desire was to get out of her clutches—that it was all a mistake, and that I was in an infernal scrape, and didn't know how to get out of it."

"Such strong language as this mollified her a little, and she began to believe me. Yet she did not soften altogether. At last, I pitched into the widow hot and heavy. This restored her to her usual self. She forgave me altogether. She even said that she was sorry for me. She hinted, too, that if she ever saw the widow, she'd have it out with her."

"Heaven forbid!" said I. "Keep them apart, Jack, if you can."

Jack groaned.

"So it's all right, is it? I congratulate you—as far as it's worth congratulation, you know. So you got out of it, did you? A full, fresh, frank, free, formal, ample, exhaustive, and perfectly satisfactory explanation, hey? That's the style of thing, is it?"

Jack gnashed his teeth.

"Come, now, old boy—no chaff. I'm beyond that. Can't stand it. Fact is, you haven't heard the whole story yet, and I don't feel like telling the rest—unless you

interrupt a fellow with your confounded humbug."

"Go ahead—don't fear, Jack—I won't chaff"

Jack drew a long breath.

"Well, then—I took her out for a drive. We had a very good time, though both of us were a little preoccupied, and I thought she had altered awfully from what she used to be; and then, you know, after leaving her, I went to see the widow."

"You didn't tell her where you were going, of course?"

"No," said Jack, with a sigh. "Well, you see, I went to the widow, and I found that she had heard about my calling on Miss Phillips, and driving out with her for a couple of hours, and I don't know what else. She was calm, and quiet, and cool, and simply wanted to know what it all meant. Well, do you know that sort of coolness is the very thing that I can't stand. If she'd raved at me, or scolded, or been passionate, or gone on in any kind of a way, I could have dealt with her; but with a person like that, who is so calm, and cool, and quiet, I haven't the faintest idea how to act.

"I mumbled something or other about 'old friendship'—'stranger in a strange land'—horrid rot—what an ass she must have thought me!—but that's the way it was. She didn't say any thing. She began to talk about something else in a conventional way—the weather, I think. I couldn't do any thing. I made a vague attempt at friendly remembrance with her about her coolness; but she didn't notice it. She went on talking about the weather. She was convinced that it would snow. I, for my part, was convinced that there was going to be a storm—a hurricane—a tornado—any thing. But she only smiled at my vehemence, and finally I left, with a general idea that there was thunder in the air.

"Well, you know, I then went off to see Louie. But I didn't get any satisfaction there. The other girls were present, and the aunt. There wasn't any whist, and so I had to do the agreeable to the whole party. I waited until late, in the hope that some chance might turn up of a private chat with Louie, but none came. So at last I came home, feeling a general disgust with the world and the things of the world."

"Rather hard, that," said I, as Jack relapsed into moody silence.

"Hard?" said he; "that was yesterday, but it was nothing to what I met with to-day."

"To-day?—why, what's up worse than that?"

"Every thing. But I'll go on and make a clean breast of it. Only don't laugh at me, Macrorie, or I'll cut."

"Laugh? Do I ever laugh?"

Jack took a few more puffs, and relieved his arrow-laden breast by several preliminary and preparatory sighs, after which he proceeded:

"To-day," he began, "I got up late. I felt heavy. I anticipated a general row. I dressed. I breakfasted, and, just as I was finishing, the row began. A letter was brought in from the post-office. It was from Number Three."

"Number Three?" I cried.

"Number Three," repeated Jack. "As if it wasn't bad enough already, she must come forward to add herself to those who were already crushing me to the earth, and driving me mad. It seemed hard, by Jove! I tell you what it is, old chap, nobody's so remorseless as a woman. Even my aunt have been more merciful to me than these friends whom I love. It's too bad, by Jove, it is!"

"Well, Number Three's letter was simply tremendous. She had heard every

thing. I've already keeps the run of how she manages now it seems she of my engagement arrival of Miss Phillips engaged. This new wild with indignation facts to me, and at once. She declares for any gentlemanly, and said that ter of her informant me to deny such for

"That's the way style of thing she already on my back for you! And she know what to say what it is now, Mac tough beginning for I left my room with my mind, and the brooding thunder-strienced the evening

"Then I went to this was my frame calm, cold, and stiff single kind word.

fellow at all. I in what was the matter me; she didn't rapped in the same cruel fashion, to tell me And I tell you, old short of it was, the chief to pay, and that I ought to have regular place. But Besides, I wanted to

"What was it?" he stammered.

"What! Why, what been there? The w

thing. I've already told you that she keeps the run of me pretty well, though how she manages it I can't imagine—and now it seems she heard, on the same day, of my engagement to the widow, and of the arrival of Miss Phillips, to whom I was also engaged. This news seemed to drive her wild with indignation. She mentioned these facts to me, and ordered me to deny them at once. She declared that it was impossible for any gentleman to act so dishonorably, and said that nothing but the character of her informant could lead her to ask me to deny such foul slanders.

"That's the way she put it. That's the style of thing she flung at me when I was already on my back. That's Number Three for you! And the worst of it is, I don't know what to say in reply. I tell you what it is now, Macrorie, that was a pretty tough beginning for the day. I felt it, and I left my room with a dark presentiment in my mind, and the same general idea of a brooding thunder-storm, which I had experienced the evening before.

"Then I went to see Miss Phillips, and this was my frame of mind. I found her calm, cold, and stiff as an iceberg. Not a single kind word. No consideration for a fellow at all. I implored her to tell me what was the matter. She didn't rail at me; she didn't reproach me; but proceeded in the same cruel, inconsiderate, iceberg fashion, to tell me what the matter was. And I tell you, old boy, the long and the short of it was, there was the very mischief to pay, and the last place in Quebec that I ought to have entered was that particular place. But then, how did I know? Besides, I wanted to see her."

"What was it?" I asked, seeing Jack hesitate.

"What! Why, who do you think had been there? The widow herself! She had

come to call on Miss Phillips, and came with a fixed design on me. In a few moments she managed to introduce my name. Trotting me out in that fashion doesn't strike me as being altogether fair, but she did it. Mrs. Llewclopen, who is Miss Phillips's aunt, took her up rather warmly, and informed her that I was engaged to Miss Phillips. The widow smiled, and said I was a sad man, for I had told her, when I engaged myself to her, that my affair with Miss Phillips was all broken off, and had repeated the same thing two evenings before. She also informed them that I visited her every day, and was most devoted. To all this Miss Phillips had to listen, and could not say one word. She had sense enough, however, to decline any altercation with the widow, and reserve her remarks for me. And now, old boy, you see what I caught on entering the presence of Miss Phillips. She did not weep; she did not sigh; she did not reproach; she did not cry—she simply questioned me, standing before me cold and icy, and flinging her bitter questions at me. The widow had said this and that. The widow had repeated such and such words of mine. The widow had also subjected her to bitter shame and mortification. And what had I to say? She was too much of a lady to denounce or to scold, and too high-hearted even to taunt me; too proud, too lofty, to deign to show that she felt the cut; she only questioned me; she only asked me to explain such and such things. Well, I tried to explain, and gave a full and frank account of every thing, and, as far as the widow was concerned, I was perfectly truthful. I declared again that it was all a mistake, and that I'd give any thing to get rid of her. This was all perfectly true, but it wasn't by any means satisfactory to Miss Phillips. She's awfully high-strung, you know. She



couldn't overlook the fact that I had given the widow to understand that it was all broken off with us. I had never said so, but I had let the widow think so, and that was enough.

"Well, you know, I got huffy at last, and said she didn't make allowances for a fellow, and all that. I told her that I was awfully careless, and was always getting into confounded scrapes, but that it would all turn out right in the end, and some day she'd understand it all. Finally, I felt so confoundedly mean, and so exactly like some infernal whipped cur, that I then and there asked her to take me, on the spot, as I was, and fulfil her vow to me. I swore that the widow was nothing to me, and wished she was in Jericho. At this she smiled slightly, and said that I didn't know what I was saying, and, in fact, declined my self-sacrificing offer. So there I was—and I'll be hanged, Macrorie; isn't it odd?—there's the third person that's refused to marry me off-hand! I vow I did what I could. I offered to marry her at once, and she declined just as the others did. With that I turned the tables on her, reproached her for her coldness, told her that I had given her the highest possible mark of my regard, and bade her adieu. We shook hands. Hers was very languid, and she looked at me quite indifferently. I told her that she'd feel differently to-morrow, and she said perhaps she might. And so I left her.

"Well, then, I had the widow to visit, but the letter and the affair with Miss Phillips had worn out my resources. In any ordinary case, the widow was too many guns for me, but, in a case like this, she was formidable beyond all description. So I hunted up the chaplain, and made him go with me. He's a good fellow, and is acquainted with her a little, and I knew that

she liked him. So we went off there together. Well, do you know, Macrorie, I believe that woman saw through the whole thing, and knew why the chaplain had come as well as I did. She greeted me civilly, but rather shortly; and there was a half-smile on her mouth, confound it! She's an awfully pretty woman, too! We were there for a couple of hours. She made us dine—that is to say, I expected to dine as a matter of course, and she invited the chaplain. So we stayed, and I think for two hours I did not exchange a dozen words with her. She directed her conversation almost exclusively to the chaplain. I began to feel jealous at last, and tried to get her attention, but it was no go. I'm rather dull, you know—good-natured, and all that, but not clever—while the chaplain is one of the cleverest men going; and the widow's awfully clever, too. They got beyond me in no time. They were talking all sorts of stuff about Gregorian chants, ecclesiastic symbolism, mediæval hymns, the lion of St. Mark, chasuble, alb, and all that sort of thing, you know, no end, and I sat like a log listening, just the same as though they spoke Chinese, while the widow took no more notice of me than if I'd been a Chinaman. And she kept up that till we left. And that was her way of paying me off. And the chaplain thought she was an awfully clever woman, and admired her—no end. And I felt as jealous as Othello!

"Then I hurried off to Louie. But luck was against me. There was a lot of fellows there, and I didn't get a chance. I only got a pleasant greeting and a bright look, that was all. I was longing to get her into a corner, and have a little comfort, and a little good advice. But I couldn't. Misfortunes never come singly. To-day every thing has been blacker than midnight: Number Three, Miss Phillips, and

the widow, are all I think it's infernal Phillips's treatment business to come home she was safe in I say I could have w came and precipitate the saying is. Th take me when I of that matter, why d me that other tim asked her to fly w if I don't think I've time of it! And and you must see of the river. If I mourn, and even I me, I know; wher pitch into me, an Look here, old boy ever."

"What! And I  
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the widow, are all turning against a fellow. I think it's infernally hard. I feel Miss Phillips's treatment worst. She had no business to come here, at all when I thought she was safe in New Brunswick. I dare say I could have wriggled through, but she came and precipitated the catastrophe, as the saying is. Then, again, why didn't she take me when I offered myself? And, for that matter, why didn't Number Three take me that other time when I was ready, and asked her to fly with me? I'll be hanged if I don't think I've had an abominably hard time of it! And now I'm fairly cornered, and you must see plainly why I'm thinking of the river. If I take to it, they'll all mourn, and even Louie'll shed a tear over me, I know; whereas, if I don't, they'll all pitch into me, and Louie'll only laugh. Look here, old boy, I'll give up women forever."

"What! And Louie, too?"

"Oh, that's a different thing altogether," said Jack; and he subsided into a deep fit of melancholy musing.

## CHAPTER XXII.

I REVEAL MY SECRET,—TREMENDOUS EFFECTS OF THE REVELATION.—MUTUAL EXPLANATIONS, WHICH ARE BY NO MEANS SATISFACTORY.—JACK STANDS UP FOR WHAT HE CALLS HIS RIGHTS.—REMONSTRANCES AND REASONINGS, ENDING IN A GENERAL ROW.—JACK MAKES A DECLARATION OF WAR, AND TAKES HIS DEPARTURE IN A STATE OF UNPARALLELED HUFFINESS.

I COULD hold out no longer. I had preserved my secret jealously for two entire days, and my greater secret had been seething in my brain, and all that for a day. Jack had given me his entire confidence. Why shouldn't I give him mine? I longed

to tell him all. I had told him of my adventure, and why should I not tell of its happy termination? Jack, too, was fairly and thoroughly in the dumps, and it would be a positive boon to him if I could lead his thoughts away from his own sorrows to my very peculiar adventures.

"Jack," said I, at last, "I've something to tell you."

"Go ahead," cried Jack, from the further end of his pipe.

"It's about the Lady of the Ice," said I.

"Is it?" said Jack, dolefully.

"Yes; would you like to hear about it?"

"Oh, yes, of course," said Jack, in the same tone.

Whereupon I began with the evening of the concert, and told him all about the old man, and my rush to the rescue. I gave a very animated description of the scene, but, finding that Jack did not evince any particular interest, I cut it all short.

"Well," said I, "I won't bore you. I'll merely state the leading facts. I got the old fellow out. He took my arm, and insisted on my going home with him. I went home, and found there the Lady of the Ice."

"Odd, too," said Jack, languidly, puffing out a long stream of smoke; "don't see how you recognized her—thought you didn't remember, and all that. So you've found her at last, have you? Well, my dear fellow, love me to congratulate you. Deuced queer, too. By-the-way, what did you say her name was?"

"I didn't mention her name," said I.

"Ah, I see; a secret?"

"Oh, no. I didn't suppose you'd care about knowing."

"Bosh! Course I'd care. What was it, old boy? Tell a fellow. I'll keep dark—you know me."

"Her name," said I, "is Miss O'Halloran."

No sooner had I uttered that name, than an instantaneous and most astonishing change came over the whole face, the whole air, the whole manner, the whole expression, and the whole attitude, of Jack Randolph. He sprang up to his feet, as though he had been shot, and the pipe fell from his hands on the floor, where it lay smashed.

"WHAT!!!" he cried, in a loud voice.

"Look here," said I—"what may be the meaning of all that? What's the row now?"

"What name did you say?" he repeated.

"Miss O'Halloran," said I.

"O'Halloran?" said he—"are you sure?"

"Of course, I'm sure. How can I be mistaken?"

"And her father—what sort of a man is he?"

"A fine old fellow," said I—"full of fun, well informed, convivial, age about sixty, well preserved, splendid face—"

"Is—is he an Irishman?" asked Jack, with deep emotion.

"Yes."

"Does—does he live in—in Queen Street?" asked Jack, with a gasp.

"The very street," said I.

"Number seven hundred and ninety-nine?"

"The very number. But see here, old chap, how the mischief do you happen to know so exactly all about that house? It strikes me as being deuced odd."

"And you saved her?" said Jack, without taking any notice of my question.

"Haven't I just told you so? Oh, bother! What's the use of all this fuss?"

"Miss O'Halloran?" said Jack.

"Miss O'Halloran," I repeated. "But

will you allow me to ask what in the name of common-sense is the matter with you? Is there a bee in your bonnet, man? What's Miss O'Halloran to you, or you to Miss O'Halloran? Haven't you got enough women on your conscience already? Do you mean to drag her in? Don't try it, my boy—for I'm concerned there."

"Miss O'Halloran!" cried Jack. "Look here, Macrorie—you'd better take care."

"Take care?"

"Yes. Don't you go humbugging about there."

"I don't know what you're up to, dear boy. What's your little joke?"

"There's no joke at all about it," said Jack, harshly. "Do you know who Miss O'Halloran is?"

"Well, I know that she's the daughter of Mr. O'Halloran, and that he's a fine old fellow. Any further information, however, I shall be delighted to receive. You talk as though you knew something about her. What is it? But don't slander. Not a word against her. That I won't stand."

"Slander! A word against her!" cried Jack. "Macrorie, you don't know who she is, or what she is to me. Macrorie, this Miss O'Halloran is that lady that we have been calling 'Number Three.'"

It was now my turn to be confounded. I, too, started to my feet, and not only my pipe, but my tumbler also, fell crashing on the floor.

"The devil she is!" I cried.

"She is—I swear she is—as true as I'm alive."

At this moment I had more need of a good, long, low whistle than ever I had in my life before. But I didn't whistle. Even a whistle was useless here to express the emotions that I felt at Jack's revelation. I stood and stared at him in silence. But I didn't see him. Other visions came before



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"Cut off?"

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"What do you me"

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Jack stood looking  
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"What!" said I.

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my mind's eye, Horatio, which shut out Jack from my view. I was again in that delightful parlor; again Nora's form was near—her laughing face, her speaking eyes, her expression—now genial and sympathetic, now confused and embarrassed. There was her round, rosy, smiling face, and near it the sombre face of Marion, with her dark, penetrating eyes. And this winning face, this laughter-loving Venus—this was the one about whom Jack raved as his Number Three. This was the one whom he asked to run off with him. She! *She* run off, and with him! The idea was simple insanity. She had written him a letter—had she?—and it was a scorching, according to his own confession. She had found him out, and thrown him over. Was not I far more to her than a fellow like Jack—I who had saved her from a hideous death? There could be no question about that. Was not her bright, beaming smile of farewell still lingering in my memory? And Jack had the audacity to think of her yet!

"Number Three," said I—"well, that's odd. At any rate, there's one of your troubles cut off."

"Cut off?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this, that Number Three won't bother you again."

Jack stood looking at me for some time in silence, with a dark frown on his brow.

"Look here, Macrorie," said he; "you force me to gather from your words what I am very unwilling to learn."

"What!" said I. "Is it that I admire Miss O'Halloran? Is that it? Come, now; speak plainly, Jack. Don't stand in sulks. What is it that you want to confess that I'm as much amazed as

are at finding that my Lady of the Ice

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the same as your 'Number Three.' But such is the case; and now what are you going to do about it?"

"First of all," said Jack, coldly, "I want to know what you are proposing to do about it."

"I?" said I. "Why, my intention is, if possible, to try to win from Miss O'Halloran a return of that feeling which I entertain toward her."

"So that's your little game—is it?" said Jack, savagely.

"Yes," said I, quietly; "that's exactly my little game. And may I ask what objection you have to it, or on what possible right you can ground any conceivable objection?"

"Right?" said Jack—"every right that a man of honor should respect."

"Right?" cried I. "Right?"

"Yes, right. You know very well that she's mine."

"Yours! Yours!" I cried. "Yours! You call her 'Number Three.' That very name of itself is enough to shut your mouth forever. What! Do you come seriously to claim any rights over a girl, when by your own confession there are no less than two others to whom you have offered yourself? Do you mean to look me in the face, after what you yourself have told me, and say that you consider that you have any claims on Miss O'Halloran?"

"Yes, I do!" cried Jack. "I do, by Jove! Look here, Macrorie. I've given you my confidence. I've told you all about my affair with her. You know that only a day or two ago I was expecting her to clope with me—"

"Yes, and hoping that she wouldn't," I interrupted.

"I was not. I was angry when she refused, and I've felt hard about it ever since

But she's mine all the same, and you know it."

"Yours? And so is Miss Phillips yours," I cried, "and so is Mrs. Finimore; and I swear I believe that, if I were to be sweet on Louie, you'd consider yourself injured. Hang it, man! What are you up to? What do you mean? At this rate, you'll claim every woman in Quebec. Where do you intend to draw the line? Would you be content if I were sweet on Miss Phillips? Wouldn't you be jealous if I were to visit the widow? And what would you say if I were seized with a consuming passion for Louie? Come, Jack—don't row; don't be quite insane. Sit down again, and take another pipe, and let's drop the subject."

"I won't drop the subject," growled Jack. "You needn't try to argue yourself out of it. You know very well that I got her first."

"Why, man, at this rate, you might get every woman in America. You seem to think that this is Utah."

"Come, no humbug, Macroric. You know very well what I am to that girl."

"You! you!" I cried. "Why, you have told me already that she has found you out. Hang it, man! If it comes to that, what are you in her eyes compared with me? You've been steadily humbugging her ever since you first knew her, and she's found it out. But I come to her as the companion of the darkest hour of her life, as the one who saved her from death. You—good Lord!—do you pretend to put yourself in comparison with me? You, with your other affairs, and your conscious falsity to her, with me! Why, but for me, she would by this time be drifting down the river, and lying stark and dead on the beach of Anticosti. That is what I have done for her. And what have you done? I might have laughed over the joke of it before I knew

her; but now, since I know her, and love her, when you force me to say what you have done, I declare to you that you have wronged her, and cheated her, and humbugged her, and she knows it, and you know it, and I know it. These things may be all very well for a lark; but, when you pretend to make a serious matter of them, they look ugly. Confound it! have you lost your senses?"

"You'll see whether I've lost my senses or not," said Jack, fiercely.

"You've got trouble enough on your shoulders, Jack," said I. "Don't get into any more. You actually have the face to claim no less than three women. Yes, four. I must count Louie, also. If this question were about Louie, wouldn't you be just as fierce?"

Jack did not answer.

"Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you say that I had violated your confidence? Wouldn't you declare that it was a wrong to yourself, and a bitter injury? If I had saved Louie's life, and then suddenly fallen in love with her, wouldn't you have warned me off in the same way? You know you would. But will you listen to reason? You can't have them all. You must choose one of them. Take Miss Phillips, and be true to your first vow. Take the widow, and be rich. Take Louie, and be happy. There you have it. There are three for you. As for Miss O'Halloran, she has passed away from you forever. I have snatched her from death, and she is mine forever."

"She shall never be yours!" cried Jack, furiously.

"She shall be mine!" cried I, in wrathful tones.

"Never! never!" cried Jack. "She's mine, and she shall be mine."

"Damn it, man! are you crazy? How many wives do you propose to have?"

"She shall be and no other. I may all go and alone, shall be r  
Saying this, I opened it, passed behind him. I as he went off, him, all my soul

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"She shall be mine!" cried Jack. "She, and no other. I give up all others. They may all go and be hanged. She, and she alone, shall be mine."

Saying this, he strode toward the door, opened it, passed through, and banged behind him. I heard his heavy footsteps as he went off, and I stood glaring after him, all my soul on fire with indignation.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

A FRIEND BECOMES AN ENEMY.—MEDITATIONS ON THE ANCIENT AND VENERABLE FABLE OF THE DOG IN THE MANGER.—THE CORRUPTION OF THE HUMAN HEART.—CONSIDERATION OF THE WHOLE SITUATION.—ATTEMPTS TO COUNTERMINE JACK, AND FINAL RESOLVE.

So Jack left, and so I stood staring after him in furious indignation.

"By Jove!" I exclaimed, addressing my own honorable self, "are you going to stand that sort of thing, Macrorie? And at your time of life, my boy! You, twenty-two years of age, six feet high, and with your knowledge of the world! You're not altogether an ass, are you? I think I can depend on you, my boy. You'll stand up for your rights. She's yours, old chap. Cling to her. Remember your ancestors. You'll get her, and if Jack chooses to make a fool of himself, let him!"

After this expression of opinion, I replaced my last pipe and tumbler, and resumed my seat. Over my head the clouds rolled; through my brain penetrated the gentle influence, bringing tranquillity and peace; bringing also wisdom, and the power of planning and of resolving.

My reflections made me feel that Nora must be mine. She seemed dearer than all the world, and all that. Hadn't I saved her

life? I had. Then that life was mine. No one else had such a claim on her as I had. Jack's absurd pretence at a claim was all confounded stuff and nonsense. I considered his attitude on this occasion a piece of the worst kind of selfishness, not to speak of its utter madness. The dog in the manger was nothing to this. I was not the man to let myself be pushed aside in this way. He would not, have thought of her if I had not put in my claim. Before that she was no more to him than "Number Three," one of his tormentors from whom he longed to get free, one who annoyed him with letters. All this he had confessed to me. Yet the moment that I told him my story, and informed him of her identity with the Lady of the Ice, at once he changed about, and declared he would never give her up.

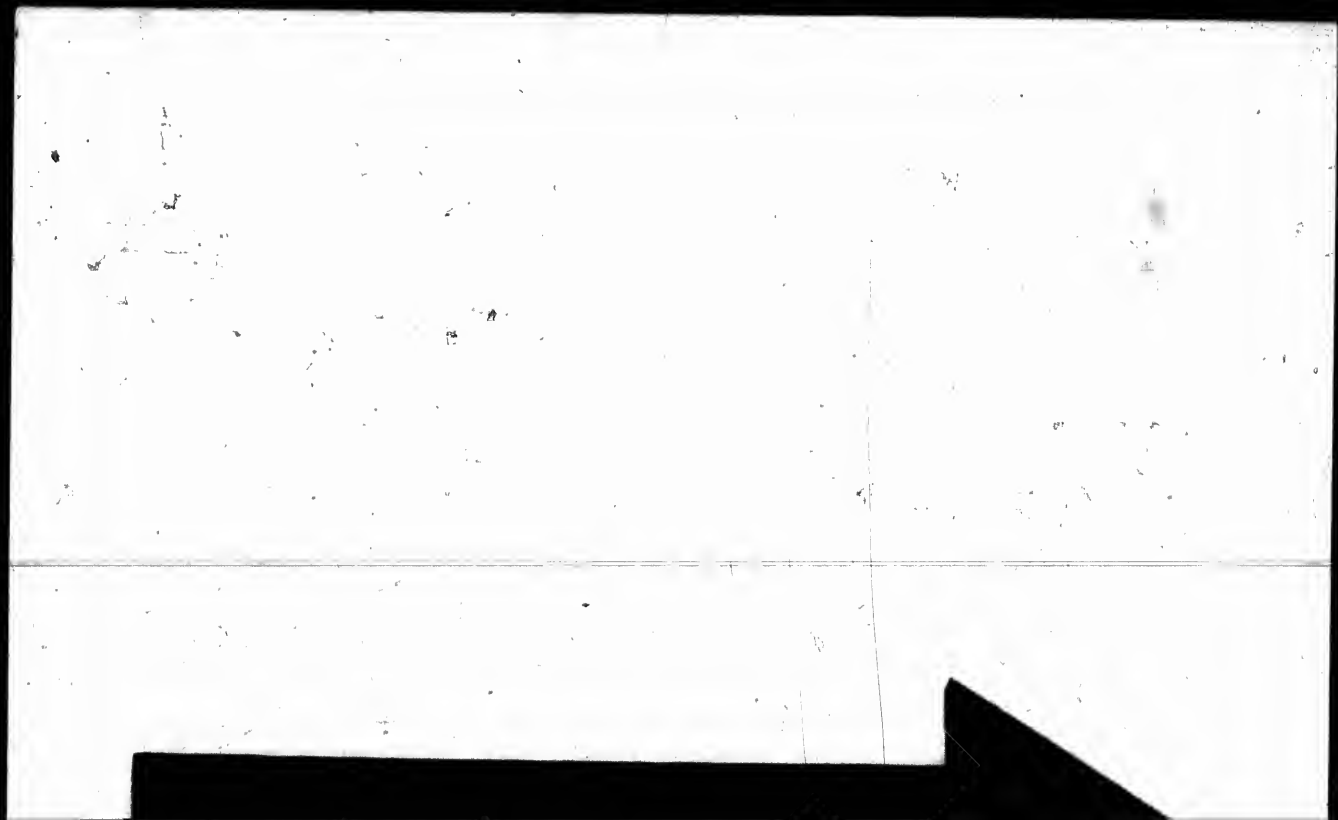
All of which reminded me forcibly of the language of a venerable female friend, who used to hold up her hands and exclaim, "Oh, dear! Oh, my! Oh, the corruption of the human heart! Oh, dear! Oh, my!"

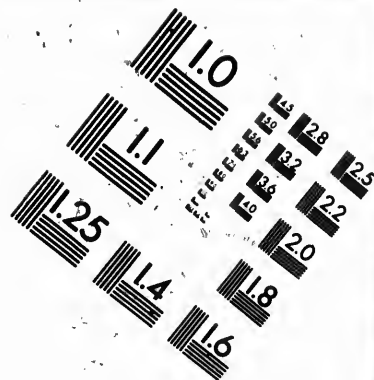
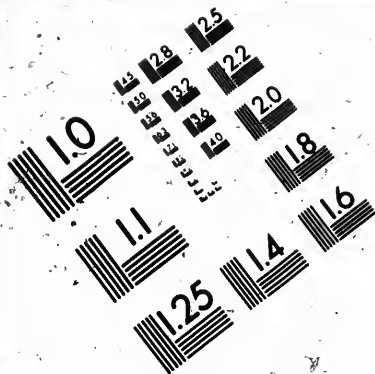
On the other hand, I was not so blind but that I could see that Jack's impudent and ridiculous claim to Miss O'Halloran had made her appear in a somewhat different light from that in which I had hitherto viewed her. Until that time I had no well-defined notions. My mind vibrated between her image and that of Marien. But now Miss O'Halloran suddenly became all in all to me. Jack's claim on her made me fully conscious of my superior claim, and this I determined to enforce at all hazards. And thus the one end, aim, and purpose of my life, suddenly and almost instantaneously darted up within me, and referred to making Miss O'Halloran my own.

But, if this was to be done, I saw that it

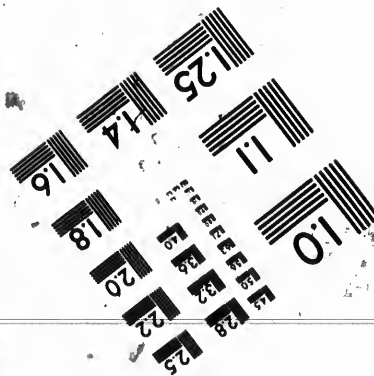
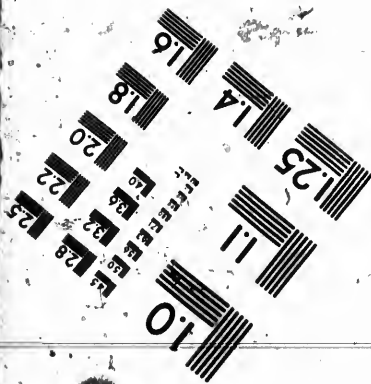
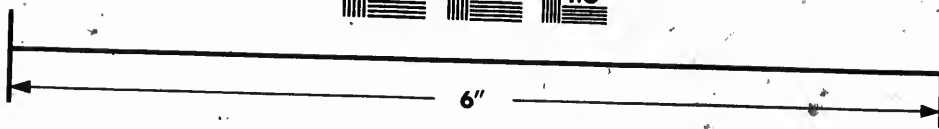
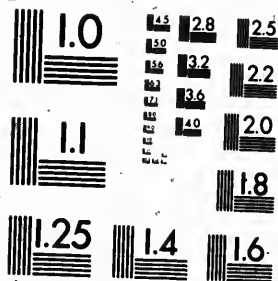








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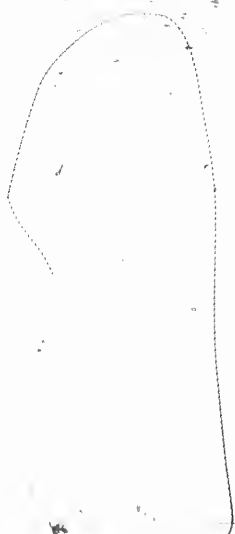
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must be done quickly. Jack's blood was up. He had declared that he would win her, and had departed with this declaration. I knew him well enough to feel sure that his action would be prompt. He was capable of any act of folly or of desperation. If I could hope to contend successfully against him, it would be necessary for me to be as foolish and as desperate. I must go in for a headlong game. It was to be a regular steeple-chase. No dilly-dallying—no shuffling—no coquetting—no wooing—but bold, instant, and immediate action. And why not? Our intercourse on the ice had been less than a day, but those hours were protracted singly to the duration of years, and we had been forced into intimacy by the peril of our path and the horror of our way. We were beaten together by the tempest, rocked by the ice, we sank together in the wave, together we crossed the tottering ice-ridge—together we evaded the fall of avalanches. Again and again, on that one unparalleled journey, she had received her life from me. Was all this to count for nothing? This! Why, this was every thing. What could her recollections of Jack be when compared to her recollections of me? For one who came to her as I had come there need be no delay. Enough to tell her what my feelings were—to urge and implore her for immediate acceptance of my vows.

This was my fixed resolve; but when, where, and how? I could not go to the house again for two days, and, during two days, Jack would have the advantage. No doubt he would at once reply to that last letter of hers. No doubt he would fling away every thought but the one thought of her. No doubt he would write her a letter full of protestations of love, and implore her, for the last time, to fly with him. He had done so before. In his new mood he

might do it again. The thought made my blood run cold. The more I dwelt upon it, the more confident I was that Jack would do this.

And what could I do?

One of two ways could be adopted:

First, I might go there on the following day, and call on Miss O'Halloran. Her father would be away.

And, secondly, I might write her a letter.

But neither of those plans seemed satisfactory. In the first place, I did not feel altogether prepared to go and call on her for such a purpose. It came on a fellow too suddenly. In the second place, a letter did not seem to be the proper style of thing. The fact is, when a fellow seeks a lady, he ought to do it face to face, if possible.

The more I thought of it, the more strongly I felt the absolute necessity of waiting for those two days which should intervene before I could go. Then I might go on a regular invitation. Then I might have an additional opportunity of finding out her sentiments toward me. In fact, I concluded to wait.

And so I waited.

The two days passed slowly. Jack, of course, kept aloof, and I saw nothing and heard nothing of him. Where he was, or what he was doing, I could not tell. I could only conjecture. And all my conjectures led to the fixed conviction that Jack in his desperation had written to her, and proposed flight.

This conviction became intensified more and more every hour. I grew more and more impatient. My mood became one of constant and incessant fidgetiness, nervousness, and harrowing suspense.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

TREMENDOUS EXCITEMENT.—THE HOUR APPROACHES, AND WITH IT THE MAN.—THE LADY OF THE ICE.—A TUMULTUOUS MEETING.—OUTPOURING OF TENDER EMOTIONS.—AGITATION OF THE LADY.—A SUDDEN INTERRUPTION.—AN INJURED MAN, AN AWFUL, FEARFUL, DIREFUL, AND UTTERLY-CRUSHING REVELATION.—WHO IS THE LADY OF THE ICE?

At last the appointed evening came, and I prepared to go to O'Halloran's. By this time I was roused up to a pitch of excitement such as I had never before experienced. For two days and two nights I had been brooding and dreaming over this one subject, imagining all sorts of things, making all sorts of conjectures about Jack's letter and Miss O'Halloran's reception of it. Was it possible that she could share his madness and his desperation? That I could not tell. Women in love, and men in love also, will always act madly and desperately. But was she in love? Could that serene, laughing, merry, happy face belong to one who was capable of a sudden act of desperation—of one who would flit with Jack, and fling her father into sorrow at a moment's warning? How could that be? So by turns my hopes and my fears rose in the ascendant, and the end of it all was that, by the time I reached O'Halloran's door, Jack himself, in his most frantic mood, could not have been more perfectly given up to any headlong piece of rashness, folly, and desperation, than I was.

I knocked at the door.

I was admitted, and shown into the room. O'Halloran, I was told, had just arrived, and was dressing. Would I be kind enough to wait?

I sat down.

In about two minutes I heard a light footstep.

My heart beat fast.

Some one was coming.

Who?

The light footstep and the rustling dress showed that it was a lady.

But who?

Was it the servant?

Or Marion?

Was it Nora?

My heart actually stood still as these possibilities suggested themselves, and I sat glaring at the door.

The figure entered.

My heart gave a wild bound; the blood surged to my face, and boiled in my veins. It was Nora's self! It was—it was—my Nora!

I rose as she entered. She greeted me with her usual beaming and fascinating smile. I took her hand, and did not say a word for a few moments. The hour had come. I was struggling to speak. Here she was. This was the opportunity for which I had longed. But what should I say?

"I've been longing to see you alone," I cried, at last. "Have you forgotten that day on the ice? Have you forgotten the eternal hours of that day? Do you remember how you clung to me as we crossed the ice-ridge, while the waves were surging behind us, and the great ice-heaps came crashing down? Do you remember how I raised you up as you fell lifeless, and carried your senseless form, springing over the open channel, and dashing up the cliff? And I lost you, and now I've found you again!"

I stopped, and looked at her earnestly, to see how she received my words.

And here let me confess that such a

mode of address was not generous or chivalrous, nor was it at all in good taste. True chivalry would have scorned to remind another of an obligation conferred; but then, you see, this was a very peculiar case. In love, my boy, all the ordinary rules of life, and that sort of thing, you know, must give way to the exigencies of the hour. And this was a moment of dire exigency, in which much had to be said in the most energetic manner. Besides, I spoke what I thought, and that's my chief excuse after all.

I stopped and looked at her; but, as I looked, I did not feel reason to be satisfied with my success so far. She retreated a step, and tried to withdraw her hand. She looked at me with a face of perplexity and despair. Seeing this, I let go her hand. She clasped both hands together, and looked at me in silence.

"What!" said I, tragically, yet sincerely—for a great, dark, bitter disappointment rose up within me—"what! Is all this nothing? Has it all been nothing to you? Alas! what else could I expect? I might have known it all. No. You never thought of me. You could not. I was less than the driver to you. If you had thought of me, you never would have run away and left me when I was wandering over the country thinking only of you, with all my heart yearning after you, and seeking only for some help to send you. And yet there was that in our journey which might at least have elicited from you some word of sympathy."

There again, my friend, I was ungenerous, unchivalrous, and all that. Bad enough is 't to remind one of favors done; but, on the heels of that, to go deliberately to work and reproach one for want of gratitude, is ten times worse. By Jove! And for this, as for the other, my

only excuse is the exigencies of the hour.

Meanwhile she stood with an increasing perplexity and grief in every look and gesture. She cast at me a look of utter despair. She wrung her hands; and at last, as I ended, she exclaimed:

"Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? Oh, dear! Oh, what a dreadful, dreadful thing! Oh, dear!"

Her evident distress touched me to the heart. Evidently, she was compromised with Jack, and was embarrassed by this.

"Follow your own heart," said I, mournfully. "But say—can you not give me some hope? Can you not give me one kind word?"

"Oh, dear!" she cried; "it's dreadful. I don't know what to do. It's all a mistake. Oh, I wish you could only know all! And me!! What in the world can I do!"

"Oh, Miss O'Halloran!" said I; "I love you—I adore—you—and—oh, Miss O'Halloran!—I—"

"Miss O'Halloran!" she cried, starting back as I advanced once more, and tried to take her hand.

"Nora, then," said I. "Dearest, sweetest! You cannot be indifferent. Oh, Nora!" and I grasped her hand.

But at that moment I was startled by a heavy footstep at the door. I dropped Nora's hand, which she herself snatched away, and turned.

It was O'HALLORAN!!!!

He stood for a moment looking at us, and then he burst out into a roar of laughter.

"Macrorie!" he cried—"Macrorie! May the devil seize me if I don't believe that ye're indulgin' in gallantries."

Now, at that moment, his laughter sounded harsh and ominous; but I had done no

wrong, and so, said:

"Mr. O'Halloran conjecture; but mere gallantry; affection for Miss O'Halloran! She asked her for her hand."

"Miss O'Halloran! She said, 'You! I cry, like a'

"Oh, dear!" ran's arm, and the ing face up to the dreadful, dreadful

know who I am Miss O'Halloran.

"You!" I cried not? Of course you?"

"Oh, tell him 'It's so dreadful mistake to make

A bright light ran's face. He Nora; and then laughter which was any of the gods of This time the laughter and joyous, and full

"Miss O'Halloran, ha, ha, ha! Miss O'Halloran, ha, ha, ha! Miss O'Halloran, it's me the same! Miss O'Halloran, to similitude—ha, for riciprocceteo

ha, ha, ha, ha! V'lvir injuleed ye to Nora was Miss O'Halloran! Miss O'Halloran! what else could now, when you night, you didn't If she isn't Miss

wrong, and, so, in conscious innocence, I said:

"Mr. O'Halloran, you are right in your conjecture; but I assure you that it was no mere gallantry; for, sir, I have a strong affection for Miss O'Halloran, and have just asked her for her hand."

"Miss O'Halloran!" cried he. "Miss O'Halloran! Sure, why didn't ye ask herself, thin, like a man?"

"Oh, dear!" cried Nora, taking O'Halloran's arm, and turning her beautiful, pleading face up to his—"oh, dear! It's all a dreadful, dreadful mistake. He doesn't know who I am. He thinks that I am Miss O'Halloran."

"You!" I cried. "You! Why, are you not? Of course, you are. Who else are you?"

"Oh, tell him, tell him!" cried Nora. "It's so dreadful! Such a horrid, horrid mistake to make!"

A bright light flashed all over O'Halloran's face. He looked at me, and then at Nora; and then there came forth a peal of laughter which would have done honor to any of the gods at the Olympian table. This time the laughter was pure, and fresh, and joyous, and free.

"Miss O'Halloran!" he cried—"ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Miss O'Halloran! ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Miss O'Halloran! Oh, be the powers, it's me that'll nivir get over that same! Miss O'Halloran! An' givin' wee to sintimint—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! an' askin' for reciprocetee av' tindr attachmint—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! What in the wolde wurruid ivir injuiced ye to think that me own little Nora was Miss O'Halloran?"

"Miss O'Halloran? Why," said I, "what else could I suppose? I recollect now, when you introduced me the other night, you didn't mention her name; and, if she isn't Miss O'Halloran, who is she?"

Let me know now, at least. But my sentiments remain the same," I concluded, "whatever name she has."

"The divull they do!" said O'Halloran, with a grin. "Well, thin, the quicker ye cheenge yer sintimints, the betther. Me own Nora—she's not Miss O'Halloran—an' lucky for me—she's somethin' betther—she's—MRS. O'HALLORAN!!!"

Let the curtain fall. There, reader, you have it. We won't attempt to enlarge—will we? We'll omit the exploding thunder-bolt—won't we? I will quietly put an end to this chapter, so as to give you leisure to meditate over the woes of Macrorico.

## CHAPTER XXV.

RECOVERY FROM THE LAST GREAT SHOCK.—GENERALITY OF MINE HOST.—OFF AGAIN AMONG ANTIQUITIES.—THE FENIANS.—A STARTLING REVELATION BY ONE OF THE INNER CIRCLE.—POLITICS, POETRY, AND PATRIOS.—FAR-REACHING PLANS AND DEEP-SEATED PURPOSES.

I WAS to dine with O'Halloran, and, though for some time I was overwhelmed, yet I rallied rapidly, and, soon recovered. O'Halloran himself was full of fun. The event had apparently only excited his laughter, and appeared to him as affording material for nothing else than endless chaff and nonsense.

As for Nora, she had been so agitated that she did not come to dinner, nor did Marion make her appearance. This was the only thing that gave me discomfort. O'Halloran seemed to understand how natural my mistake was, and I supposed that he made every allowance, and all that.

We sat at table for a long time. O'Halloran discoursed on his usual variety of sub-



jects. Something occurred which suggested the Fenians, whereupon he suddenly stopped; and, looking earnestly at me, he said:

"Ye know I'm a Fenian?"

"Oh, yes."

"I make no saycrit of it," said he. "As a British officer, you're my mortal inimice in my capacetee as a Fenian; but at this table, and in this house, we're nayther one thing nor the other. You're only Macrorie, and I'm only O'Halloran. Still I don't mind talking of the subject of Fenianism; it's an important one, and will one day take up a great speece in histhory. I don't intind to indulge in any offnsive objurgationa ageent the Saxon, nor will I mintion the wrongs of Oireland. I'll only enloighten you as to the purpose, the maining, and the attichood of the Fenian ordher."

With these words he rose from the table, and chatted on general subjects, while the servants brought in the spoons, glasses, tumblers, and several other things. Beneath the genial influence of these, O'Halloran soon grew eloquent, and resumed his remarks on the Fenians.

"The Fenian ordher," he began, "haa two eems. One is abroad; the other is at home.

"The first is that which is kipt before the eyes of the mimbers of the outher circles. It manes the liberecton of Oireland, and perpituall inimy to England. This purpose has its maneeifestecton in the attacks which have alriddy been made on the inimy. Two invectons have been made on Canada. Innumerable and multeeferious small interproles have been set on fut in Oireland and in England; and these things serve the purpose of keeping before the moinds of the mimbers the prospicet of some grand attack on the inimy, and of foirin' their ardhor.

"But there is an innermost circle, say-cludhid from the vulgar oi, undher the chootelar prayiminece of min of janius, in whose moinds there is a very different eem. It is the second which I have mintioned. It is dirictid against America.

"Thus—

"In the American raypublic there ars foive millions of Oirish vothera. Now, if these foive millions cud only be unoitid in one homojaneous congreegetion, for some one prayiminece objict, they cud aisly rule the counthre, an' dirict its poliece intoirely, at home and abroad.

"This, thin, is the thrue and genuoine cem of the shuparior min of the intayrior circles. It is a grand an' comprayhinsive scbayme to consoledecte all the Oirish votes into one overwhilming mass which can control all the llictions. It is sweed by a few min of praysoiding moinds and shupayrior janius.

"And hince you bayhowld a systim rolaing within the boosom of the American raypublic, which will soon be greather thin the raypublic itself. At prisint, though, we do not number much over a million. But we are incraysing. We have boighly-multeeferious raysourcis. All the *hills* are in our pee. These are our spoys. They infarrum us of all the saycrit doings of the American payple. They bring consunt accisions to our numbers. They meek us sure of our future.

"Oirishmin," he continued, "will nivir roise iffikecciouslee in Oireland. They can only roise in Amirica. Here, in this counthry, is their only chance. And this chance we have sayzed, an', begorra, we'll follow it up till all Amirica is domecencetid by the Oiriah ilimint, and ruled by Oirish votes. This is the only Oirish raypublic for which we care."

"But you've been divided in your coun



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"He suddenly stopped; and, looking earnestly at me, he said: 'Ye know I'm e Fenian?'"—page 86.

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sels," I suggested. "Did'n't this interfere with your prospects?"

"Oh," said he, "that was all our diplom-ecece."

"And were you never really divided?"

"Nlvir for a momint. These were only thrieka intindid to disave and schtoopeeify the Amrican and English governmint."

"So your true aim refers to America?"

"Yis. And we intind to saycure to Amrica a perpetual successlon of Oirish prisidints."

"When will you be able to begin? At the next election?"

"No—not so soon. Not for two or three to come. By the third eliction though, all the Oirish populection will be riddy to vote, and thin we'll have our own Oirish Prisdint. And afther that," said O'Halloran, in an oracular tone, and pausing to quaff the transparent draught—"afther that, Amrica will be simplee an Oirish rapublic. Then we'll cast our oys across the say. We'll cast there our arrums. We'll sind there our flates and armies. We'll take vinginee out of the Saxon for the wrongs of foive cinturies. We'll adopt Ould Oireland into the fameelee of the Steetes, as the youngest, but the fairist and the brightist of thin all. We'll throw our laygions across the Oirish Channel into the land of the Saxon, and bring that counthry dawn to its proimayval insignifeecance. That," said O'Halloran, "is the one schtoopiindous eem of the Fenian Ordher."

O'Halloran showed deep emotion. Once more he quaffed the restoring draught.

"Yis, me boy," he said, looking tenderly at me. "I'll yit return to the owld land. Perhaps ye'll vlist the eeged O'Halloran before he dolse. Oi'll teek up me risiglance at Dublin. Oi'll show ye Oireland—free—triumphint, ahuprame among the neetions. Oi'll show ye our noble plsintry, the foinist

in the wurruld. Oi'll take ye to the Rotondo. Oi'll show ye the Blarney-stone. Oi'll show ye the ruins of Tara, where me onncisthors once reigned."

At this his emotion overcame him, and he was once more obliged to seek a restorative.

After this he volunteered to sing a song, and trolled off the following to a lively, rollicking air:

"Yo choonful Nolne,  
Ye nymphs devoine,  
Shuprame in Jove's dominions!  
Assist me loyre,  
Wholie of aspoire  
To cilhbreet the Fenians.

"Our ordher bowld  
"All oncnthrowld  
Injud with power, be dad, ia  
Te pleece in arrums  
The stalwart farrums  
Of half a million Paddies.

"To Saxon laws  
For Oireland's cause  
Thin same did break allaygiance,  
An' marched awsy  
In war's array  
To froighten the Canajians.

"We soon intind.  
Our wee to wind  
Across the wolde Atlantic,  
Besalge the ports,  
Blow up the forts,  
An' drove the Saxon frantle.

"An' thin in seine,  
Our hosts will join  
Beneath the Oirish pinnint,  
Till Dublin falle,  
An' on its walls  
We hang the lord-liftinint.

The Saxon crew  
We'll thin parahoo  
Judgiously and calmly—  
On Windsor's plain  
We'll hang the Quane  
An' all the royal family.

An' thín—begob!  
 No more they'll rob  
 Ould Oireland of her taxes,  
 An' Earth shall rowl  
 From powl to powl  
 More aisy on its axis."

Now all the time O'Halloran was talking and singing, I had scarcely heard a word that he said. Once I caught the general run of his remarks, and said a few words to make him think I was attending; but my thoughts soon wandered off, and I was quite unconscious that he was talking rank treason. How do I know so much about it now, it may be asked. To this I reply that after-circumstances gave me full information about was said and sung. And of this the above will give a general idea.

But my thoughts were on far other subjects than Fenianism. It was the Lady of the Ice that filled my heart and my mind. Lost and found, and lost again! With me it was nothing but—"O Nora! Nora! Wherefore art thou, Nora?"—and all that sort of thing, you know.

Lost and found! Lost and found! A capital title for a sensation novel, but a bad thing, my boy, to be ringing through a poor devil's brain. Now, through my brain there rang that identical refrain, and nothing else. And all my thoughts and words the melancholy burden bore of never—never more. How could I enjoy the occasion? What was conviviality to me, or I to conviviality? O'Halloran's words were unheeded and unheard. While Nora was near, he used to seem a brilliant being, but Nora was gone!

And why had she gone? Why had she been so cut up? I had said but little, and my mistake had been hushed up by O'Halloran's laughter. Why had she retired? And why, when I spoke to her of my love, had she showed such extraordinary agita-

tion? Was it—oh, was it that she too loved, not wisely but too well? O Nora! Oh, my Lady of the Ice! Well did you say it was a dreadful mistake! Oh, mistake—irreparable, despairing! And could I never see her sweet face again?

By this, which is a pretty fair specimen of my thoughts, it will be plainly seen that I was in a very agitated frame of mind, and still clung as fondly and as frantically as ever to my one idea of the Lady of the Ice.

One thing came amid my thoughts like a flash of light into darkness, and that was that Jack, at least, was not crossing my path, nor was he a dog in my manger; Miss O'Halloran might be his, but she was nothing to me. Who Miss O'Halloran was, I now fully understood. It was Marion—Marion with the sombre, sad face, and the piercing, lustrous eyes.

Well, be she who she might, she was no longer standing between Jack and me. I could regain my lost friend at any rate. I could explain every thing to him. I could easily anticipate the wild shrieks of laughter with which he would greet my mistake, but that mattered not. I was determined to hunt him up. All my late bitter feeling against him vanished, and I began to feel a kind of longing for his great broad brow, his boyish carelessness, his never-ending blunders. So at an early hour I rose, and informed O'Halloran that I had an engagement at eleven o'clock, and would have to start.

"It's sorry I am," said he, "but I won't detain ye."

A FEW PARTING WORDS  
 HIS TOUCHING PAR  
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 OF HONOR.—PISTOL  
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## CHAPTER XXVI.

A FEW PARTING WORDS WITH O'HALLORAN.—  
HIS TOUCHING PARENTAL TENDERNES, HIGH  
CHIVALRIC SENTIMENT, AND LOFTY SENSE  
OF HONOR.—PISTOLS FOR TWO.—PLEASANT  
AND HARMONIOUS ARRANGEMENT.—“ME  
BOY, YE'RE AN HONOR TO YER SEX!”

“It's sorry I am,” said O'Halloran, “but I won't deceen ye, for I always respic an engeegemint.”

He stopped and looked at me with a benevolent smile. I had risen from my chair, and was standing before him.

“Sit down a momint,” said he. “There's a subject I wish to mention, the consideration of which I've postponed till now.”

I resumed my seat in some surprise.

“Me boy,” said he, in a tender and paternal voice, “it's now time for me to speak to ye about the ayyint of which I was a casual witness. I refer to your address to me wif. Don't interrupt me. I comprehend the whole matter. The leedies are all fond of ye. So they are of me. Ye're a divvil of a fellow with them—an' so am I. We comprehend one another. You see we must have a mayting.”

“A meeting!”

“Yis—of ecourse. A jool. There's nothing else to be done.”

“You understand,” said I, “of course, the nature of my awkward mistake, and the cause of it.”

“Don't mention it. Me onderstand? Of ecourse. Am I an owl? Be dad, I niver laughed so much these tin years. Onderstand! Every bit of it. But we won't have any explenections about that. What concerns us is the code of honor, and the jewty of gentlemen. A rigid sense of honor, and a shuprame reyard for the

sanctities of life, require that any violation, howivir unintentional, be submitted and subjected to the only tribunal of chivalry—the ancient and maydoayval orjil of the jool.”

I confess I was affected, and deeply, by the lofty attitude which O'Halloran assumed. He hadn't the slightest hard feeling toward me. He wasn't in the smallest degree jealous. He was simply a calm adherent to a lofty and chivalrous code. His honor had been touched ignorantly, no doubt—yet still it had been touched, and he saw no other course to follow than the one laid down by chivalry.

“My friend,” said I, enthusiastically, “I appreciate your delicacy, and your lofty sentiment. This is true chivalry. You surpass yourself. You are sublime!”

“I know I am,” said O'Halloran, naively.

A tear trembled in his eye. He did not seek to conceal his generous emotion. That tear rolled over and dropped into his tumbler, and hallowed the draught therein.

“So then,” said I, “we are to have a meeting—but where, and when?”

“Whinivir it shoots you, and wherivir. I'm afraid to take you out of your wee. We'll have to go off about twinty miles. There's a moighty convaynt place there, I'm sorry it's not nayrer, but it can't be helped. I've had three or fower maytings theré mesif this last year. You'll be delighted with it whin you once get there. There's good whiskey there too. The best in the country. We'll go there.”

“And when?”

“Well, well—the seconds may arcege about that. How'll next Monday do?”

“Delightfully, if it suits you.”

“Oh, I'll be shootéd at any tolme.”

“What shall we meet with?” I asked.

“Sure that's for you to decide.”

“Pistols,” I suggested.

O'Halloran nodded.

"I really have no preference. I'll leave it to you if you like," said I.

O'Halloran rose—a benovolent smile illumined his face. He pressed my hand.

"Me boy," said he, with the same paternal tone which he had thus far maintained, "don't mention it. Aliter will do. We'll say pistols. Me boy, ye're as thrue as steel—" He paused, and then wringing my hand, he said in a voice tremulous with emotion—"Me boy, ye're an honor to yer sex!"

### CHAPTER XXVII.

SENSATIONAL!—TERRIFIC!—TREMENDOUS!—  
LEAVE THE HOUSE IN A STRANGE WHIRL.  
—A STORM.—THE DRIVING SLEET.—I WANDER ABOUT.—THE VOICES OF THE STORM, AND OF THE RIVER.—THE CLANGOR OF THE BELLS.—THE SHADOW IN THE DOORWAY.—THE MYSTERIOUS COMPANION.—A TERRIBLE WALK.—FAMILIAR VOICES.—SINKING INTO SENSELESSNESS.—THE LADY OF THE ICE IS REVEALED AT LAST AMID THE STORM!

As I left the house there came a blast of stinging sleet, which showed me that it was a wild night. It was not many days now since that memorable journey on the river; and the storm that was blowing seemed to be the counterpart and continuation of that. It had been overcast when I entered O'Halloran's; when I left it, the storm had gathered up into fury, and the wind howled around, and the furious sleet dashed itself fiercely against me. The street was deserted. None would go out on so wild a night. It was after eleven; half-past, perhaps.

For a moment I turned my back to the sleet, and then drew forth my cloud from my pocket, and bound it about my head.

Thus prepared, and thus armed, I was ready to encounter the fiercest sleet that ever blew. I went down the steps, took the sidewalk, and went off.

As I went on, my mind was filled with many thoughts. A duel was before me; but I gave that no consideration. The storm howled about and shrieked between the houses; but the storm was nothing. There was that in my heart and in my brain which made all these things trivial. It was the image of my Lady of the Ice, and the great longing after her, which, for the past few days, had steadily increased.

I had found her! I had lost her! Lost and found! Found and lost!

The wrath of the storm had only this one effect on me, that it brought before me with greater vividness the events of that memorable day on the river. Through such a storm we had forced our way. From such pitiless peltings of stinging sleet I had sheltered her fainting, drooping head. This was the hurricane that had howled about her as she lay prostrate, upheld in my arms, which hurled its wrathful showers on her white, upturned face. From this I had saved her, and from worse—from the grinding ice, the falling avalanche, the dark, deep, cold, freezing flood. I had brought her back to life through all these perils, and now—and now!

Now, for that Lady of the Ice, whose image was brought up before me by the tempest and the storm, there arose within me a mighty and irrepressible yearning. She had become identified with Nora, but yet it was not Nora's face and Nora's image that dwelt within my mind. That smiling face, with its sparkling eyes and its witching smile, was another thing, and seemed to belong to another person. It was not Nora herself whom I had loved, but Nora as she

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stood the representative of my Lady of the Ice. Moreover, I had seen Nora in unfeigned distress; I had seen her wringing her hands and looking at me with piteous entreaty and despair; but even the power of these strong emotions had not given her the face that haunted me. Nora on the ice and Nora at home were so different, that they could not harmonize; nor could the never-to-be-forgotten lineaments of the one be traced in the other. And, could Nora now have been with me in this storm, I doubted whether her face could again assume that marble, statuque beauty—that immortal sadness and despair, which I had once seen upon it. That face—the true face that I loved—could I ever see it again?

I breasted the storm and walked on I knew not where. At last I found myself on the Esplanade. Beneath lay the river, which could not now be seen through the blackness of the storm and of the night, but which, through that blackness, sent forth a voice from all its waves. And the wind wailed mournfully, mingling its voice with that of the river. So once before had rushing, dashing water joined its uproar to the howl of pitiless winds, when I bore her over the river; only on that occasion there was joined in the horrid chorus the more fearful boom of the breaking ice-fields.

And now the voice of the river only increased and intensified that longing of which I have spoken. I could not go home. I thought of going back again to O'Halloran's house. There was my Lady of the Ice—Nora. I might see her shadow on the window—I might see a light from her room.

Now Nora had not at all come up to my ideal of the Lady of the Ice, and yet there was no other representative.—I might be

mad in love with an image, a shadow, an idea; but if that image existed anywhere in real life, it could exist only in Nora. And thus Nora gained from my image an attractiveness, which she never could have had in her own right. It was her identity with that haunting image of loveliness that gave her such a charm. The charm was an imaginary one. Had I never found her on the river and idealized her, she might have gained my admiration; but she would never have thrown over me such a spell. But now, whatever she was in herself, she was so merged in that ideal, that in my longing for my love I turned my steps backward and wandered toward O'Halloran's, with the faint hope of seeing her shadow on the window, or a ray of light from her room. For I could find no other way than this of satisfying those insatiable longings that had sprung up within me.

So back I went through the storm, which seemed still to increase in fury, and through the sleet, which swept in long horizontal lines down the street, and whirled round the corner, and froze fast to the houses. As I went on, the violence of the storm did not at all weaken my purpose. I had my one idea, and that one idea I was bent on carrying out.

Under such circumstances I approached the house of O'Halloran. I don't know what I expected, or whether I expected any thing or not. I know what I wanted. I wanted the Lady of the Ice, and in search of her I had thus wandered back to that house in which lived the one with whom she had been identified. A vague idea of seeing her shadow on the window still possessed me, and so I kept along on the opposite sidewalk, and looked up to see if there was any light or any shadow.

There was no light at all.



I stood still and gazed.

Was there a shadow? Or what was it? There was something moving there—a dark, dusky shadow, in a niche of the gateway, by the corner of the house—a dark shadow, dimly revealed in this gloom—the shadowy outline of a woman's form.

I do not know what mad idea possessed me. I looked, while my heart beat fast and painfully. A wild idea of the Lady of the Ice coming to me again, amid the storm, to be again my companion through the storm, flashed like lightning through my brain.

Suddenly, wild and clear and clanging, there came the toll of a bell from a neighboring tower, as it began to strike the hour of midnight. For a moment I paused in a sort of superstitious terror, and then, before the third stroke had rung out, I rushed across the street.

The figure had been watching me.

As I came, she started. She hurried forward, and met me at the curb. With a wild rush of joy and exultation, I caught her in my arms. I felt her frame tremble. At length she disengaged herself and caught my arm with a convulsive clasp, and drew me away. Mechanically, and with no fixed idea of any kind, I walked off.

She walked slowly. In that fierce gale, rapid progress was not possible. She, however, was well protected from the blast. A cloud was wrapped around her head, and kept her face from the storm.

We walked on, and I felt my heart throb to suffocation, while my brain reeled with a thousand new and wild fancies. Amid these, something of my late superstition still lingered.

"Who is she?" I wondered; "Who is she? How did she happen to wait for me here? Is it my Lady of the Ice? Am I a

haunted man? Will she always thus come to me in the storm, and leave me when the storm is over? Where am I going? Whither is she leading me? Is she taking me back to the dark river from which I saved her?"

Then I struggled against the superstitious fancy, and rallied and tried to think calmly about it.

"Yes. It's Nora," I thought; "it's herself. She loves me. This was the cause of her distress. And that distress has overmastered her. She has been unable to endure my departure. She has been convinced that I would return, and has waited for me.

"Nora! Yes, Nora! Nora! But, Nora! what is this that I am doing? This Nora can never be mine. She belongs to another. She was mine only through my mistake. How can she hope to be mine, or how can I hope to be hers? And why is it that I can dare thus to take her to ruin? Can I have the heart to?"

I paused involuntarily, as the full horror of this idea burst upon me. For, divested of all sentiment, the bald idea that burst upon my whirling brain was simply this, that I was running away with the wife of another man, and that man the very one who had lately given me his hospitality, and called me his friend. And even so whirling a brain as mine then was, could not avoid being penetrated by an idea that was so shocking to every sentiment of honor, and loyalty, and chivalry, and duty.

But as I paused, my companion forced me on. She had not said a single word. Her head was bent down to meet the storm. She walked like one bent on some desperate purpose, and that purpose was manifestly too strong and too absorbing to be checked by any thing so feeble as my fitful and uncertain irresolution. She

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"I took the cloud which was wrapped around her head, and tenderly and delicately draw it down from her face. Oh, Heaven! what was this that I saw?"—page 93.

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walked on like some fate that had gained possession of me. I surrendered to the power that thus held me. I ceased even to think of pausing.

At length we came to where there was a large house with lights streaming from all the windows. It was Colonel Berton's—I knew it well. A ball had been going on, and the guests were departing. Down came the sleighs as they carried off the guests, the jangle of the bells sounding shrilly in the stormy night. Thus far in my wanderings all had been still, and this sudden noise produced a startling effect.

One sleigh was still at the door, and as we approached nearer we could see that none others were there. It was probably waiting for the last guest. At length we reached the house, and were walking immediately under the bright light of the drawing-room windows, when suddenly the door of the house opened, and a familiar voice sounded, speaking in loud, eager, hilarious tones.

At the sound of that voice my companion stopped, and staggered back, and then stood rigid with her head thrust forward.

It was Jack's voice.

"Thanks," he said. "Ha! ha! ha! You're awfully kind, you know. Oh, yes. I'll be here to-morrow night. Good-by. Good-by."

He rushed down the steps. The door closed. He sprang into the sleigh. It started ahead in an opposite direction, and away it went, till the jangle of the bells died out in the distance, amid the storm.

All was still. The street was deserted. The storm had full possession. The lights of the house flashed out upon the snow-drifts, and upon the glittering, frozen sleet.

For a moment my companion stood rooted to the spot. Then snatching her arm from mine, she flung up her hand with a

sudden gesture, and tore my cloud down from off my face. The lights from the windows shone upon me, revealing my features to her.

The next instant her arms fell. She staggered back, and with a low moan of heart-broken anguish, she sank down prostrate into the snow.

Now hitherto there had been on my mind a current of superstitious feeling which had animated most of my wild fancies. It had been heightened by the events of my wanderings. The howl of the storm, the voice of the dark river, the clangor of the midnight bell, the shadowy figure at the doorway—all these circumstances had combined to stimulate my imagination and disorder my brain. But now, on my arrival at this house, these feelings had passed away. These signs of commonplace life—the jangling sleigh-bells, the lighted windows, the departing company—had roused me, and brought me to myself. Finally, there came the sound of Jack's voice, hearty, robust, healthy, strong—at the sound of which the dark shadows of my mind were dispelled. And it was at this moment, when all these phantasms had vanished, that my companion fell senseless in the snow at my feet.

I stooped down full of wonder, and full too of pity. I raised her in my arms. I supported her head on my shoulder. The storm beat pitilessly; the stinging sleet pelted my now uncovered face; the lights of the house shone out upon the form of my companion. All the street was deserted. No one in the house saw us. I, for my part, did not think whether I was seen or not. All my thoughts were turned to the one whom I held in my arms.

I took the cloud which was wrapped around her head, and tenderly and delicately drew it down from her face.

Oh, Heavens! what was this that I saw? The lights flashed out, and revealed it unmistakably. There—then—resting on my shoulder—under my gaze—now fully revealed—there lay the face that had haunted me—the face for which I had longed, and yearned, and craved! There it lay—that never-to-be-forgotten face—with the marble features, the white lips, the closed eyes, the stony calm—there it lay—the face of her whom alone I loved—the Lady of the Ice!

What was this? I felt my old mood returning. Was this real? Was it not a vision? How was it that she came to me again through the storm, again to sink down, and again to rest her senseless form in my arms, and her head upon my breast?

For a few moments I looked at her in utter bewilderment. All the wild fancies which I had just been having now came back. I had wandered through the storm in search of her, and she had come. Here she was—here, in my arms!

Around us the storm raged as once before; and again, as before, the fierce sleet dashed upon that white face; and again, as before, I shielded it from its fury.

As I looked upon her I could now recognize her fully and plainly; and at that recognition the last vestige of my wild, superstitious feeling died out utterly. For she whom I held in my arms was no phantom, nor was she Nora. I had been in some way intentionally deceived, but all the time my own instinct had been true; for, now, when the Lady of the Ice again lay in my arms, I recognized her, and I saw that she was no other than *Marion*.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

MY LADY OF THE ICE.—SNOW AND SLEET.—REAWAKENING.—A DESPERATE SITUATION.—SAVED A SECOND TIME.—SNATCHED FROM A WORSE FATE.—BORNE IN MY ARMS ONCE MORE.—THE OPEN DOOR.

So there she lay before me—the Lady of the Ice, discovered at last, and identified with Marion. And she lay there reclining on my arms as once before, and in the snow, with the pitiless blast beating upon her. And the first question that arose was, "What can I do?"

Ay—that was the question. What could I do?

I leave to the reader to try and imagine the unparalleled embarrassment of such a situation. For there was I, in an agony of eagerness to save her—to do something—and yet it was simply impossible to think of any one place to which I could take her.

Could I take her into Colonel Berton's? That was my first impulse. The lights from his windows were flashing brightly out into the gloom close beside us. But how could I take her there? With what story? Or if I trumped up some story—which I easily could do—would she not betray herself by her own incoherencies as she recovered from her faint? No, not Colonel Berton's. Where, then? Could I take her anywhere? To an hotel? No. To any friends? Certainly not. To her own home?—But she had fled, and it was locked against her. Where—where could I take her?

For I had to do something. I could not let her lie here—she would perish. I had to take her somewhere, and yet save her from that ruin and shame to which her rashness and Jack's perfidy had exposed

her. Too plain had urged her she had consented for her.

I raised her on her. Once in my arms—death; and now that I was trying far worse—from a long—from a father's curse. from this—could time from this and life, and so that my Lady of forget this second

I raised her knew not where. the streets. The light in the wild sleet and the increased at evening senseless in my where I was going but breasted the burden from it so toiled on, in desperation.

Now I beg leave situation of mine one as any that thus found forced honor, and the life of Ice for whom I had—whose life I had whom I had been saw that she had me, with her life, utterly impossible extricate her from though so fervent this, that, if my H would have laid it

her. Too plain it all seemed now. Jack had urged her to fly—beyond a doubt—she had consented, and he had not come for her.

I raised her up in my arms, and carried her on. Once before I had thus carried her in my arms—thus, as I saved her from death; and now, as I thus bore her, I felt that I was trying to save her from a fate far worse—from scandal, from evil speaking—from a dishonored name—from a father's curse. And could I but save her from this—could I but bear her a second time from this darker fate back to light, and life, and safety; then I felt assured that my Lady of the Ice could not so soon forget this second service.

I raised her up and carried her thus I knew not where. There was not a soul in the streets. The lamps gave but a feeble light in the wild storm. The beating of the eleet and the howling of the tempest increased at every step. My lady was senseless in my arms. I did not know where I was going, nor where I could go; but breasted the storm, and shielded my burden from it as well as I could; and so toiled on, in utter bewilderment and desperation.

Now I beg leave to ask the reader if this situation of mine was not as embarrassing a one as any that he ever heard of. For I thus found forced upon me the safety, the honor, and the life of the very Lady of the Ice for whom I had already risked my life—whose life I had already saved; and about whom I had been raving ever since. But now that she had thus been thrown upon me, with her life, and her honor, it was an utterly impossible thing to see how I could extricate her from this frightful difficulty; though so fervent was my longing to do this, that, if my life could have done it, I would have laid it down for her on the spot.

At last, to my inexpressible relief, I heard from her a low moan. I put her down on the door-step of a house close by, and sat by her side supporting her. A lamp was burning not far away.

She drew a long breath, and then raised herself suddenly, and looked all around. Gradually the truth of her position returned to her. She drew herself away from me, and buried her face in her hands, and sat in silence for a long time. I waited in patience and anxiety for her to speak, and feared that the excitement and the anguish which she had undergone might have affected her mind.

Suddenly she started, and looked at me with staring eyes.

"Did he send you?" she gasped, in a strange, hoarse, choking voice.

Her face, her tone, and the emphasis of her words, all showed the full nature of the dark suspicion that had flung itself over her mind.

"He! Me!" I cried, indignantly. "Never! never! Can you have the heart to suspect me? Have I deserved this?"

"It looks like it," said she, coldly.

"Oh, listen!" I cried; "listen! I will explain my coming. It was a mistake, an accident. I swear to you, ever since that day on the ice, I've been haunted by your face—"

She made an impatient gesture.

"Well, not your face, then. I did not know it was yours. I called it the Lady of the Ice."

"I do not care to hear," said she, coldly.

"Oh, listen!" I said. "I want to clear myself from your horrid suspicion. I was at your house this evening. After leaving, I wandered wildly about. I couldn't go home. It was half madness and superstition. I went to the Esplanade, and there seemed voices in the storm. I wandered.

back again to your house, with a vague and half-crazy idea that the Lady of the Ice was calling me. As I came up to the house, I saw a shadowy figure on the other side. I thought it was the Lady of the Ice, and crossed over, not knowing what I was doing. The figure came and took my arm. I walked on, frozen into a sort of superstitious silence. I swear to you, it happened exactly in this way, and that for a time I really thought it was the Lady of the Ice who had come to meet me in the storm. I held back once or twice, but to no avail. I swear to you that I never had the remotest idea that it was you, till the moment when you fell, and I saw that you yourself were the Lady of the Ice. I did not recognize you before; but, when your face was pale, with suffering and fear upon it, then you became the same one whom I have never forgotten."

"He did not send you, then?" said she again.

"He? No. I swear he didn't; but all is just as I have said. Besides, we have quarrelled, and I have neither seen nor heard of him for two days."

She said nothing in reply, but again buried her face in her hands, and sat crouching on the door-step. The storm howled about us with tremendous fury. All the houses in the street were dark, and the street itself showed no living forms but ours. A lamp, not far off, threw a feeble light upon us.

"Come," said I at last; "I have saved you once from death, and, I doubt not, I have been sent by Fate to save you once again. If you stay here any longer, you must perish. You must rouse yourself."

I spoke vehemently and quickly, and in the tone of one who would listen to no refusal. I was roused now, at last, from all irresolution by the very sight of her suffer-

ing. I saw that to remain here much longer would be little else than death for her.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she moaned.

"Tell me of some place where I can take you."

"There is no place. How could I dare to go to any of my friends?"

"Why should you not?"

"I cannot—I cannot."

"You can easily make up some story for the occasion. Tell me the name of some one, and I will take you."

"No," said she.

"Then," said I, "you must go home."

"Home! home!" she gasped.

"Yes," said I, firmly, "home. Home you must go, and nowhere else."

"I cannot."

"You must."

"I will not; I will die first."

"You shall not die!" I cried, passionately. "You shall not die while I am near you. I have saved your life before, and I will not let it end in this. No, you shall not die—I swear by all that's holy! I myself will carry you home."

"I cannot," she murmured, feebly.

"You must," said I. "This is not a question of death—it's a question of dishonor. Home is the only haven where you can find escape from that, and to that home I will take you."

"Oh, my God!" she wailed; "how can I meet my father?"

She buried her face in her hands again, and sobbed convulsively.

"Do not be afraid," said I. "I will meet him, and explain all. Or say—answer me this," I added, in fervid, vehement tones—"I can do more than this. I will tell him it was all my doing. I will accept his anger. I'll tell him I was half mad, and repented. I'll tell any thing—any thing you like. I'll shield you so that all his fury

shall fall on me, for you but pity.

"Stop," said she, "feet, and looking—stop! You my life to you alive. You have accept dishonor much. If my assurance you I am. But your offer is I permit it."

"Will you go as she paused.

"Yes," said she. I offered my arm heavily upon me. for the storm was weak.

"I think," said I left the back door may get in without

"I pray Heaven for—in that case ed."

We walked on a more and more heavy more and more slow

I knew what was utterly exhausted, impossible. I did

I said nothing. I in my arms without

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but I took no notice or her struggles.

too great even for me like a dead weight. I had been sure that should I not felt the convulsion time to time passed heard her frequent blings.

shall fall on me, and he will have nothing for you but pity."

"Stop," said she, solemnly, rising to her feet, and looking at me with her white face—"stop! You must not talk so. I owe my life to you already. Do not overwhelm me. You have now deliberately offered to accept dishonor for my sake. It is too much. If my gratitude is worth having, I assure you I am grateful beyond words. But your offer is impossible. Never would I permit it."

"Will you go home, then?" I asked, as she paused.

"Yes," said she, slowly.

I offered my arm, and she took it, leaning heavily upon me. Our progress was slow, for the storm was fierce, and she was very weak.

"I think," said she, "that in my haste I left the back door unlocked. If so, I may get in without being observed."

"I pray Heaven it may be so," said I, "for in that case all trouble will be avoided."

We walked on a little farther. She leaned more and more heavily upon me, and walked more and more slowly. At last she stopped.

I knew what was the matter. She was utterly exhausted, and to go farther was impossible. I did not question her at all.

I said nothing. I stooped, and raised her in my arms without a word, and walked vigorously onward. She murmured a few words of complaint, and struggled feebly; but I took no notice whatever of her words or her struggles. But her weakness was too great even for words. She rested on me like a dead weight, and I would have been sure that she had fainted again, had I not felt the convulsive shudders that from time to time passed through her frame, and heard her frequent heavy sighs and sobbings.

So I walked on through the roaring storm, beaten by the furious sleet, bearing my burden in my arms, as I had done once before. And it was the same burden, under the same circumstances—my Lady of the Ice, whom I thus again uplifted in my arms amid the storm, and snatched from a cruel fate, and carried back to life and safety and home. And I knew that this salvation which she now received from me was far more precious than that other one; for that was a rescue from death, but this was a rescue from dishonor.

We reached the house at last. The gate which led into the yard was not fastened. I carried her in, and put her down by the back door. I tried it. It opened.

The sight of that open door gave her fresh life and strength. She put one foot on the threshold.

Then she turned.

"Oh, sir," said she, in a low, thrilling voice, "I pray God that it may ever be in my power to do something for you—some day—in return—for all this. God bless you! you have saved me—"

And with these words she entered the house. The door closed between us—she was gone.

I stood and listened for a long time. All was still.

"Thank Heaven!" I murmured, as I turned away. "The family have not been alarmed. She is safe."

I went home, but did not sleep that night. My brain was in a whirl from the excitement of this new adventure. In that adventure every circumstance was one of the most impressive character; and at the same time every thing was contradictory and bewildering to such an extent that I did not know whether to congratulate myself or not, whether to rejoice or lament. I might rejoice at finding the Lady of the Ice; but



my joy was modified by the thought that I found her meditating flight with another man. I had saved her; but then I was very well aware that, if I had not come, she might never have left her home, and might never have been in a position to need help. Jack had, no doubt, neglected to meet her. Over some things, however, I found myself exulting—first, that, after all, I *had* saved her, and, secondly, that she had found out Jack.

As for Jack, my feelings to him underwent a rapid and decisive change. My excitement and irritation died away. I saw that we had both been under a mistake. I might perhaps have blamed him for his treachery toward Marion in urging her to a rash and ruinous elopement; but any blame which I threw on him was largely modified by a certain satisfaction which I felt in knowing that his failure to meet her, fortunate as it was for her, and fortunate as it was also for himself, would change her former love for him into scorn and contempt. His influence over her was henceforth at an end, and the only obstacle that I saw in the way of my love was suddenly and effectually removed.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

PUZZLING QUESTIONS WHICH CANNOT BE ANSWERED AS YET.—A STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION.—REUNION OF A BROKEN FRIENDSHIP.—PIECES ALL COLLECTED AND JOINED.—JOY OF JACK.—SOLEMN DEBATES OVER THE GREAT PUZZLE OF THE PERIOD.—FRIENDLY CONFERENCES AND CONFIDENCES.—AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

The night passed, and the morning came, and the impression of these recent events grew more and more vivid. The very circumstances under which I found my Lady

of the Ice were not such as are generally chosen by the novelist for an encounter between the hero and heroine of his novel. Of that I am well aware; but then I'm not a novelist, and I'm not a hero, and the Lady of the Ice isn't a heroine—so what have you got to say to that? The fact is, I'm talking about myself. I found Marion running away, or trying to run away, with my intimate friend. The elopement, however, did not come off. She was thrown into my way in an amazing manner, and I identified her with my Lady, after whom I longed and pined with a consuming passion. Did the discovery of the Lady of the Ice under such circumstances change my affections? Not at all. They *only* grew all the stronger. The Lady was the same as ever. I had not loved Nora, but the Lady of the Ice; and now that I found out who she was, I loved Marion. This happens to be the actual state of the case; and, whether it is artistic or not, does not enter into my mind for a single moment.

Having thus explained my feelings concerning Marion, it will easily be seen that any resentment which I might have felt against Jack for causing her grief, was more than counterbalanced by the prospect I now had that she would give him up forever. Besides, our quarrel was on the subject of Nora, and this had to be explained. Then, again, my duel was on the *tapis*, and I wanted Jack for a second. I therefore determined to hunt him up as soon as possible.

But in the course of the various meditations which had filled the hours of the night, one thing puzzled me extremely, and that was the pretension of Nora to be my Lady of the Ice. Why had she done so? Why did Marion let her? Why did O'Halloran announce his own wife to me as the lady whom I had saved? No doubt Nora

and Marion had and why? And ran for deceiving was evident that lady. It was all night of the real and my story, I companion of the member of his it, but he didn't secret of theirs, from him. But reason had Marion for coming forward character to O'H

All these were bewildering mysteries make nothing.

At length I came by going off to Jack.

He was just finishing

The moment he felt, and gave a gasp, he grasped my hand, his face grew red

"Macroric! oh! a perfect trump! going straight over this sort of thing use of all this business a moment's peace Macroric," he concluded, "I'll be hard on every one of the things that I'd give your old face again little Louie—" he down, load up, and And he brought down up all his unfeigned delight old feelings of friendship resumed their place

"Well, old fellow

and Marion had some reason. But what, and why? And what motive had O'Halloran for deceiving me? Clearly none. It was evident that he believed Nora to be the lady. It was also evident that on the first night of the reading of the advertisement, and my story, he did not know that the companion of that adventure of mine was a member of his family. The ladies knew it, but he didn't. It was, therefore, a secret of theirs, which they were keeping from him. But why? And what possible reason had Marion for denying it, and Nora for coming forward and owning up to a false character to O'Halloran?

All these were perplexing and utterly bewildering mysteries, of which I could make nothing.

At length I cut short the whole bother by going off to Jack's.

He was just finishing his breakfast.

The moment he saw me, he started to his feet, and gave a spring toward me. Then he grasped my hand in both of his, while his face grew radiant with delight.

"Maerorie! old boy!" he cried. "What a perfect trump! I'll be hanged if I wasn't going straight over to you! Couldn't stand this sort of thing any longer.—What's the use of all this beastly row? I haven't had a moment's peace since it begun. Yes, Maerorie," he continued, wringing my hand hard, "I'll be hanged if I wouldn't give up every one of the women—I was just thinking that I'd give them all for a sight of your old face again—except, perhaps, poor little Louise—" he added. "But, come, sit down, load up, and fumigate."

And he brought out all his pipes, and drew up all his chairs, and showed such unfeigned delight at seeing me, that all my old feelings of friendship came back, and resumed their places.

"Well, old fellow," said I, "do you

know in the first place—our row—you know—"

"Oh, bother the row!"

"Well, it was all a mistake."

"A mistake?"

"Yes. We mistook the women."

"How's that? I'm in the dark."

"Why, there are two ladies at O'Halloran's."

"Two?"

"Yes, and they weren't introduced, and, as they're both young, I thought they were both his daughters."

"Two women! and young? By Jove!" cried Jack—"and who's the other?"

"His wife!"

"His wife? and young?" The idea seemed to overwhelm Jack.

"Yes," said I, "his wife, and young, and beautiful as an angel."

"Young, and beautiful as an angel!" repeated Jack. "Good Lord, Maerorie!"

"Well, you know, I thought his wife was Miss O'Halloran, and the other Miss Marion."

"What's that? his wife? You thought she was Miss O'Halloran?"

"Yes, and the one I saved on the ice, you know—"

"Well, all I can say is, old fellow, I'm profoundly sorry for your sake that she's a married woman. That rather knocks your little game. At the same time it's a very queer thing that I didn't know any thing about it. Still, I wasn't at the house much, and Mrs. O'Halloran might have been out of town. I didn't know any thing about their family affairs, and never heard them mentioned. I thought there was only a daughter in the family. Never dreamed of there being a wife."

"Well, there is a wife—a Mrs. O'Halloran—so young and beautiful that I took her for the old girl's daughter; and Jack, my boy, I'm in a scrape."

"A scrape?"

"Yes—a duel. Will you be my second?"

"A duel!" cried Jack, and gave a long whistle.

"Fact," said I, "and it all arose out of my mistaking a man's wife for his daughter."

"Mistaking her?" cried Jack, with a roar of laughter. "So you did. Oh, Macrorie! how awfully spooney you were about her, you know—ready to fight with your best friend about her, and all that, you know. And how did it go on? What happened? Come, now, don't do the reticent. Out with it, man. Every bit of it. A duell! And about a man's wife! Good Lord! Macrorie, you'll have to leave the regiment. An affair like this will rouse the whole town. These infernal newspapers will give exaggerated accounts of every thing; you know. And then you'll get it. By Jove, Macrorie, I begin to think your scrape is worse than mine."

"By-the-way, Jack, how are you doing?"

"Confound it man, what do you take me for? Do you think I'm a stalk or a stone. No, by Jove, I'm a man, and I'm crazy to hear about your affair. What happened? What did you do? What did you say? Something must have taken place, you know. You must have been awfully sweet on her. By Jove! And did the old fellow see you at it? Did he notice any thing? A duel! Something must have happened. Oh, by Jove! don't I know the old rascal! Not bolsterous, not noisy, but keen, sir, as a razor, and every word a dagger. The most savage, cynical, cutting, insulting old scoundrel of an Irishman that I ever met with. By Heaven, Macrorie, I'd like to be principal in the duel instead of second. By Jove, how that old villain did walk into me that last time I called there!"

"Well, you see," I began, "when I went to his house he introduced me, and didn't introduce her."

"Yes."

"Well, I talked with her several times, but for various reasons, unnecessary to state, I never mentioned her name. I just chatted with her, you know, the way a fellow generally does."

"Was the old fellow by?"

"Oh, yes, but you know yesterday I went there and found her alone."

"Well?"

"Well—you know—you were so determined at the time of our row, that I resolved to be beforehand, so I at once made a rush for the prize, and—and—"

"And, what?"

"Why—did the spooney—you know—told her my feelings—and all that sort of thing, you know."

I then went on and gave Jack a full account of that memorable scene, the embarrassment of Nora, and the arrival of O'Halloran, together with our evening afterward, and the challenge.

To all this Jack listened with intense eagerness, and occasional bursts of uncontrollable laughter.

I concluded my narrative with my departure from the house. Of my return, my wanderings with Marion, my sight of him at Berton's, and all those other circumstances, I did not say a word. Those things were not the sort that I chose to reveal to anybody, much less to Jack.

Suddenly, and in the midst of his laughter and nonsense, Jack's face changed. He grew serious. He thrust his hand in his pocket with something like consternation, and then drew forth—

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## CHAPTER XXX.

A LETTER!—STRANGE HESITATION.—GLOOMY FOREBODINGS.—JACK DOWN DEEP IN THE DUMPS.—FRESH CONFESSIONS.—WHY HE MISSED THE TRYST.—REMORSE AND REVENGE.—JACK'S VOWS OF VENGEANCE.—A VERY SINGULAR AND UNACCOUNTABLE CHARACTER.—JACK'S GLOOMY MENACES.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I'll be hanged if I haven't forgot all about it. It's been in my pocket ever since yesterday morning."

Saying this he held up the letter and looked at it for some time without opening it, and with a strange mixture of embarrassment and ruefulness in his expression.

"What's that?" said I, carelessly. "A letter? Who's it from, Jack?"

Jack did not give any immediate answer. He turned the letter over and over, looking at it on the front and on the back.

"You seem hit hard, old man," said I, "about something. Is it a secret?"

"Oh, no," said Jack, with a sigh.

"Well, what's the matter?"

"Oh, only this," said he, with another sigh.

"What, that letter?"

"Yes."

"It don't look like a dun, old chap—so, why fret?"

"Oh, no," said Jack, with a groan.

"What's the reason you don't open it?" Jack shook his head.

"I've a pretty good idea of what's in it," said he. "There are some letters you can read without opening them, old boy, and this is one of them. You know the general nature of the contents, and you don't feel altogether inclined to go over all the small details."

"You don't mean to say that you're not going to open it?"

"Oh, I'll open it," said Jack, more dolefully than ever.

"Then, why don't you open it now?"

"Oh, there's no hurry—there's plenty of time."

"It must be something very unimportant. You say you've had it lying in your pocket ever since the day before yesterday. So, what's the use of getting so tragic all of a sudden?"

"Macrorie, old chap," said Jack, in a tone of hollow despair.

"Well?"

"Do you see that letter?" and he held it up in his hand.

"Yes."

"Well, in that I am to read a convincing proof that I am a scoundrel!"

"A what? Scoundrel? Pooh, nonsense! What's up now? Come, now, old boy, no melodrama. Out with it. But, first of all, read the letter."

Jack laid the unopened letter on the table, filled his pipe, lighted it, and then, throwing himself back in his chair, sat staring at the ceiling, and sending forth great clouds of smoke that gathered in dense folds and soon hung overhead in a dark canopy.

I watched him in silence for some time. I suspected what that letter might be, but did not in any way let my suspicion appear.

"Jack," said I, at last, "I've seen you several times in trouble during the last few days, but it is, now my solemn conviction, made up from a long observation of your character, your manner, your general style, and your facial expression, that on this present occasion you are hit harder than ever you've been since I had the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"That's a fact," said Jack, earnestly and solemnly.

"It isn't a secret, you said?"

"No, not from you. I'll tell you presently. I need one pipe, at least, to soothe my nerves."

He relapsed into silence, and, as I saw that he intended to tell me of his own accord, I questioned him no further, but sat waiting patiently till he found strength to begin the confession of his woes.

At length he reached forward, and once more raised the letter from the table.

"Macrorie, my boy."

"Well?"

"Do you see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Whom do you think it's from?"

"How do I know?"

"Well," said Jack, "this letter is the sequel to that conversation you and I had, which ended in our row."

"The sequel?"

"Yes. You remember that I left threatening that Number Three should be mine."

"Oh, yes; but don't bother about that now," said I.

"Bother about it? Man alive, that's the very thing that I have to do! The bother, as you call it, has just begun. This letter is from Number Three."

"Number Three? Marion!"

"Yes, Marion, Miss O'Halloran, the one I swore should be mine. Ha, ha!" laughed Jack, wildly; "a precious mess I've made of it! Mine? By Jove! What's the end of her broken heart—to me discomfited?"

"Discomfited?" said I, "doesn't it strike you that your language partakes to a slight extent, of the melodramatic? Don't get stagy, dear boy."

"Stagy? Good Lord, Macrorie! Wait till you see that letter."

"That letter! Why, confound it, you haven't seen it yourself yet."

"Oh, I know, I know. No need for me to open it. Look here, Macrorie, will you promise not to throw me over after I tell you about this?"

"Throw you over?"

"Yes: You'll stick by a fellow still—"

"Stick by you? Of course, through thick and thin, my boy."

Jack gave a sigh of relief.

"Well, old chap," said he, "you see, after I left you, I was bent on nothing but Marion. The idea of her slipping out of my hands altogether was intolerable. I was as jealous of you as fury, and all that sort of thing. The widow and Miss Phillips were forgotten. Even little Louie was given up. So I wrote a long letter to Marion."

Jack paused, and looked hard at me.

"Well," said I.

"Well," said he, "you know her last letter to me was full of reproaches about the widow and Miss Phillips. She even alluded to Louie, though how under heaven she had heard about her is more than I can imagine. Well, you know, I determined to write her a letter that would settle all these difficulties, and at the same time gain her for myself, for good and all. I had sworn to get her from you, and I should think of nothing but that oath. So I wrote—but, oh, Macrorie, Macrorie, why, in Heaven's name, did you make that mistake about Mrs. O'Halloran, and force that infernal oath out of me? Why did that confounded old blockhead forget to introduce her to you? That's the cause of all my woes. But I won't bore you, old fellow; I'll go on. So, you see, in my determination to get her, I stuck at nothing. First of all, instead of attempting to explain away her reproaches, I turned them all

back upon her. Macrorie, when I was not a little wiser, I had a great deal to say. Well, I told her me for my reluctance to do them. I refused to dope with me, her she cared far and comfort than I swore that I loved them, or all of them. I'll be hanged if I wrote it. Finally, time to save me, and of that love which her now to fly with name some time suggested—oh, Macrorie, swear at me—curse other—Macrorie, I midnight—I did, but

And, saying this some minutes in a passion that I had his face.

"Last night, M—midnight! Th you say something

"Say?" said I. "What can I say? If you've made such broken it, you've—say."

"That's true," said I, in a low tone; "That's true, Macrorie, and, Macrorie,

"Well, of course from the way you that's what I should if it isn't a secret."

"Oh, no. I'll make things connected with them, I put the letter

back upon her. I was an infatuated fool, Macrorie, when I wrote that letter, but I was not a villain. I wrote it with an earnest desire that it should be effective. Well, I told her that she should not blame me for my extravagances, but herself for forcing me to them. I reproached her for refusing to elope with me when I offered, and told her she cared far more for her father's ease and comfort than she did for my happiness. I swore that I loved her better than any of them, or all of them put together, and I'll be hanged if I didn't, Macrorie, when I wrote it. Finally, I told her there was yet time to save me, and, if she had a particle of that love which she professed, I implored her now to fly with me. I besought her to name some time convenient to her, and suggested—oh, Macrorie, I suggested—swear at me—curse me—do something or other—Macrorie, I suggested last night—midnight—I did, by Heaven!”

And, saying this, Jack looked at me for some minutes in silence, with a wild expression that I had never before seen on his face.

“Last night, Macrorie!” he repeated—“midnight! Think of that. Why don't you say something?”

“Say?” said I. “Why, hang it, man, what can I say? It's a case beyond words. If you've made such an appointment, and broken it, you've—well, there's nothing to say.”

“That's true,” said Jack, in a sepulchral tone: “That's true. I made the appointment, and, Macrorie—I was not there.”

“Well, of course, I gathered as much from the way you go on about it—but that's what I should like to understand, if it isn't a secret.”

“Oh, no. I'll make no secret about any thing connected with this business. Well, then, I put the letter in the post-office, and

strolled off to call on Miss Phillips. Will you believe it, she was 'not at home.' At that, I swear I felt so savage that I forgot all about Marion and my proposal. It was a desperate cut. I don't know any thing that has ever made me feel so savage. And I feel savage yet. If she had any thing against me, why couldn't she have seen me, and had it out with me, fair and square? It cut deep. By Jove! Well, then, I could think of nothing else but paying her off. So I organized a sleighing-party, and took out the Bertons and some other girls. I had Louie, you know, and we drove to Montmorency. Fun, no end. Great spirits. Louie teasing all the way. We got back so late that I couldn't call on the widow. That evening I was at Chelmsford's—a ball, you know—I was the only one of ours that went. Yesterday, didn't call on Miss Phillips, but took out Louie. On my way I got this letter from the office, and carelessly stuffed it into my pocket. It's been there ever since. I forgot all about it. Last evening there were a few of us at Berton's, and the time passed like lightning. My head was whirling with a cram of all sorts of things. There was my anger at Miss Phillips, there was a long story Louie had to tell about the widow, and then there was Louie herself, who drove every other thought away. And so, Macrorie, Marion and my letter to her, and the letter in my pocket, and the proposed elopement, never once entered into my head. I swear they had all passed out of my mind as completely as though it had all been some confounded dream.”

Jack stopped, and again relapsed into moody silence.

“I'll tell you what it is, old fellow,” said he, after a pause. “It's devilish hard to put up with.”

“What is?” I asked.

"This 'not-at-home' style of thing. But never mind—I'll pay her up!"

Now here was a specimen of rattle-brainishness—of levity—and of childishness; so desperate, that I began to doubt whether this absurd Jack ought to be regarded as a responsible being. It seemed simply impossible for him to concentrate his impulsive mind on any thing. He flings himself one day furiously into an elopement scheme—the next day, at a slight, he forgets all about the elopement, and, in a towering rage against Miss Phillips, devotes himself desperately to Louie. And now when the elopement scheme has been brought before him, even in the midst of his remorse—remorse, too, which will not allow him to open her letter—the thought of Miss Phillips once more drives away all recollection of Marion, even while he has before him the unopened letter of that wronged and injured girl. Jack's brain was certainly of a harum-scarum order, such as is not often found—he was a creature of whim and impulse—he was a rattle-brain, a scatter-brain—formed to win the love of all—both men and women—formed, too, to fall into endless difficulties—formed also with a native buoyancy of spirit which enabled him to float where others would sink. By those who knew him, he would always be judged lightly—by those who knew him not, he would not fail to be judged harshly. Louie knew him, and laughed at him—Marion knew him not, and so she had received a stroke of anguish. Jack was a boy—no, a child—of, better yet, a great big baby. What in the world could I say to him or do with him? I alone knew the fulness of the agony which he had inflicted, and yet I could not judge him as I would judge another man.

"I'll pay her up!" reiterated Jack, shaking his head fiercely.

"But before paying her up, Jack," said I, "wouldn't it be well to read that letter?" Jack gave a sigh.

"You read it, Macrorie," said he; "I know all about it."

"Well," said I, "that is the most astonishing proposal that I ever heard even from you. To read a letter like that!—Why, such a letter should be sacred."

Jack's face flushed. He seized the letter, tore it open, and read. The flush on his face deepened. As he finished, he crushed it in his hand, and then relapsed into his sombre fit.

"It's just as I said, Macrorie," said he. "She promised to meet me at the time I mentioned. And she was there. And I was not. And now she'll consider me a scoundrel!"

In a few moments Jack opened out the crushed note, and read it again.

"After all," said he, "she isn't so awfully affectionate."

"Affectionate!"

"No—she seems afraid, and talks a great deal too much of her father, and of her anguish of soul—yes, that's her expression—her anguish of soul in sacrificing him to me. By Jove!—sacrifice! Think of that! And she says she only comes because I reproach her with being the cause of grief—heavens and earth! and she says that she doesn't expect any happiness, but only remorse. By Jove! See here, Macrorie—did you ever in your life imagine that a woman, who loved a fellow well enough to make a runaway match with him, could write him in such a way? Why, henc it! she might have known that, before our honeymoon was over, that confounded old Irish scoundrel of a father of hers would have been after us, insisting on doing the heavy father of the comedy, and giving us his blessing in the strongest of brogues.

And, what's more, ing money of me, money! of me—myself and head overboard. I found his impudence.

And Jack, who was in a state of morse about Marion's indignation at her conduct upon a public scene, in which he was exposed to be extorred. And he looked at me with sympathy for such a fellow. I showed still more pique in him.

I made no answer. Marion's letter showed that she had been moved, and that her soul this resolve had been formed to understand the full force of the face which I had seen in her, and also could see that she had absented herself. Did this letter change her? How could it be known? It only elevated her at such a time by the claims of her hallucination, and upon Jack had thrown overboard a deep wrong—but I saw that she was her disenchantment.

"She'll never forgive me after a long silence.

"Who?" said I, which came forth in a conviction of Jack's.

"Who, Miss Phillips?"

"Oh, no," said Jack.

"Forgive you!" I said.

"Of course not." I said. I word in such a connection seem to till her dying.

And, what's more, he'd have been borrowing money of me, the beggar! Borrowing money! of me—me—without a penny myself and head over heels in debt. Confound his impudence!"

And Jack, who had begun this with remorse about Marion, ended with this burst of indignation at Marion's father, consequent upon a purely imaginary but very vivid scene, in which the latter was supposed to be extorting money from him. And he looked at me with a face that craved sympathy for such unmerited wrongs, and showed still more plainly the baby that was in him.

I made no answer. His quotations from Marion's letter showed me plainly how she had been moved, and what a struggle of soul this resolve had cost her. Now I could understand the full meaning of that sombre face which I had seen in O'Halloran's parlor, and also could see why it was that she had absented herself on that last evening. Did this letter change my sentiments about her? How could it, after what I already knew? It only elevated her, for it showed that at such a time her soul was racked and torn by the claims of filial duty. Under her hallucination, and under the glamour which Jack had thrown over her, she had done a deep wrong—but I alone knew how fearful was her disenchantment, and how keen was the mental anguish that followed.

"She'll never forgive me," said Jack, after a long silence.

"Who?" said I, with some bitterness, which came forth in spite of my new-found conviction of Jack's utter babyhood.—

"Who, Miss Phillips?"

"Oh, no," said Jack—"Marion."

"Forgive you!" I ejaculated.

"Of course not. It's bosh to use the word in such a connection. She'll hate and scorn me till her dying day."

"No, Jack," said I, somewhat solemnly, "I think from what little I know of her, that if she gets over this, she'll feel neither hate nor scorn."

"Yes, she will," said Jack, pettishly.

"No," said I.

"You don't know her, my boy. She's not the one to forget this."

"No, she'll never forget it—but her feelings about you will be different from hate and scorn. She will simply find that she has been under a glamour about you, and will think of you with nothing but perfect indifference—and a feeling of wonder at her own infatuation."

Jack looked vexed.

"To a woman who don't know you, Jack, my boy—you become idealized, and heroic; but to one who does, you are nothing of the kind." So very impressive a fellow as you are, cannot inspire a very deep passion. When a woman finds the fellow she admires falling in love right and left, she soon gets over her fancy. If it were some one other woman that had robbed her of your affection, she would be jealous; but when she knows that all others are equally charming, she will become utterly indifferent."

"See here, old boy, don't get to be so infernally oracular. What the mischief does a fellow like you know about that sort of thing? I consider your remarks as a personal insult, and, if I didn't feel so confidently cut up, I'd resent it. But as it is, I only feel bored, and, on the whole, I should wish it to be with Marion as you say it's going to be. If I could think it would be so, I'd be a deuced sight easier in my mind about her. If it weren't for my own abominable conduct, I'd feel glad that this sort of thing had been stopped—only I don't like to think of Marion being disappointed, you know—or hurt—and that sort of thing, you know. The fact is, I have no



business to get married just now—no—not even to the angel Gabriel—and this would have been so precious hard on poor little Louie."

"Louie—why," said I, "you speak confidently about her."

"Oh, never fear about her," said Jack.

"She's able to take care of herself. She does nothing but laugh at me—no end."

"Nothing new, then, in that quarter?" I asked, feeling desirous now of turning away from the subject of Marion, which was undergoing the same treatment from Jack which a fine and delicate watch would receive at the hands of a big baby. "No fresh proposals?"

"No," said Jack, dolefully, "nothing but chaff."

"And Miss Phillips?"

"Affairs in that quarter are in *status quo*," said Jack. "She's chosen to not-at-home me, and how it's going to turn out is more than I can tell. But I'll be even with her yet. I'll pay her off!"

"Perhaps you won't find it so easy as you imagine."

"Won't I?" said Jack, mysteriously; "you'll see."

"Perhaps she's organizing a plan to pay you off."

"That's more than she can do."

"By-the-way—what about the widow?"

"Well," said Jack, seriously, "whatever danger is impending over me, may be looked for chiefly in that quarter."

"Have you seen her lately?"

"No—not since the evening I took the chaplain there."

"You must have heard something."

"Yes," said Jack, moodily.

"What?"

"Well, I heard from Louie, who keeps well up in my affairs, you know. She had gathered something about the widow."

"Such as what?"

"Well, you know—the wouldn't tell."

"Wouldn't tell?"

"No—wouldn't tell—chaffed me—no end, but wouldn't go into particulars."

"But could you find out whether it affected you or not?"

"Oh, of course, I took that for granted. That was the point of the whole joke, you know. Louie's chaff consisted altogether of allusions to some mysterious plan of the widow's, by which she would have full, ample, perfect, complete, and entire vengeance on me."

"That's bad."

"It is."

"A widow's a dangerous thing."

"Too true, my boy," said Jack, with a sigh; "nobody knows that better than I do."

"I wonder you don't try to disarm her."

"Disarm her?"

"Yes—why don't you call on her?"

"Well, confound it, I did call only a day or two ago, you know. The last two or three days I've been engaged."

"Yes, but such an engagement will only make the widow more furious."

"But, confound it, man, it's been simply impossible to do anything else than what I have been doing."

"I'll tell you what it is, Jack," said I, solemnly, "the widow's your chief danger. She'll ruin you. There's only one thing for you to do, and that is what I've already advised you to do, and Louie, too, for that matter. You must fly."

"Oh, bosh!—how can I?"

"Leave of absence—sell out—any thing."

Jack shook his head, and gave a heavy sigh.

A FRIENDLY CALL  
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## CHAPTER XXXI.

A FRIENDLY CALL.—PRELIMINARIES OF THE DUEL NEATLY ARRANGED.—A DAMP JOURNEY, AND DEPRESSED SPIRITS.—A SECLUDED SPOT.—DIFFICULTIES WHICH ATTEND A DUEL IN A CANADIAN SPRING.—A MASTERLY DECISION.—DEBATES ABOUT THE NICETIES OF THE CODE OF HONOR.—WHO SHALL HAVE THE FIRST SHOT, STRUGGLE FOR PRECEDENCE.—A VERY SINGULAR AND VERY OBSTINATE DISPUTE.—I SAVE O'HALLORAN FROM DEATH BY RHEUMATISM.

BEFORE the close of the day a gentleman called on me from O'Halloran, whom I referred to Jack, and these two made arrangements for the duel. It was to take place in a certain locality, which I do not intend to mention, and which was no matter how many miles out of town.

We left at an early hour, and the doctor accompanied us. Jack had sufficient foresight to fill the sleigh with all the refreshments that might be needed on such an occasion. We drove to O'Halloran's house, where we found his sleigh waiting, with himself and a friend all ready to start. They led the way, and we followed.

It was a nasty time, the roads were terrible. They were neither one thing nor the other. There was nothing but a general mixture of ice heaps, slush, thawing snowdrifts, bare ground, and soft mud. Over this our progress was extremely slow. Added to this, the weather was abominable. It was warm, soft, slimy, and muggy. The atmosphere had changed into a universal drizzle, and was close and oppressive. At first O'Halloran's face was often turned back to hail us with some jovial remark, to which we responded in a similar manner; but after a time silence settled on the par-

ty, and the closeness, and the damp, and the slow progress, reduced us one and all to a general state of sulkiness.

At length we came to a little settlement consisting of a half-dozen houses, one of which bore a sign on which we read the words *Hôtel de France*. We kept on without stopping, and O'Halloran soon turned to the right, into a narrow track which went into the woods. In about half an hour we reached our destination. The sleighs drew up, and their occupants prepared for business.

It was a small cleared space in the middle of the woods. The forest-trees arose all around, dim, gloomy, and dripping. The ground was dotted with decayed stumps, and covered with snow in a state of semi-liquefaction. Beneath all was wet; around all was wet; and above all was wet. The place with its surroundings was certainly the most dismal that I had ever seen, and the dank, dark, and dripping trees threw an additional gloom about it.

We had left Quebec before seven. It was after twelve when we reached this place.

"Well, me boy," said O'Halloran to me, with a gentle smile, "it's an onseasonable toime of year for a jool, but it can't be helped—an' it's a moighty uncomfortable pleece, so it is."

"We might have had it out in the road in a quiet way," said I, "without the trouble of coming here."

"The road!" exclaimed O'Halloran. "Be the powers, I'd have been delighted to have had it in me own parrulor. But what can we do? Sure it's the barbarous legislection of this country, that throis to stoife and raypriss the sintimints of honor, and the code of chivalry. Sure it's a bad pleece intoirly. But you ought to see it in the summer. It's the most sayquistered localitec that yo could wish to see."

Saying this, O'Halloran turned to his friend and then to us.

"Gintlemen," said he, "allow me to introduce to ye me very particular friend, Mr. Murtagh McGinty."

Mr. Murtagh McGinty rose and bowed, while we did the same, and disclosed the form of a tall, elderly, and rather dilapidated Irishman.

All this time we had remained in our sleighs. The surrounding scene had impressed us all very forcibly, and there was a general disinclination to get out. The expanse of snow, in its half-melted condition, was enough to deter any reasonable being. To get out was to plunge into an abyss of freezing slush.

A long discussion followed as to what ought to be done. Jack suggested trying the road; McGinty thought we might drive on farther. The doctor did not say any thing. At last O'Halloran solved the difficulty.

He proposed that we should all remain in the sleighs, and that we should make a circuit so as to bring the backs of the sleighs at the requisite distance from one another.

It was a brilliant suggestion; and no sooner was it made, than it was adopted by all. So the horses were started, and the sleighs were turned in the deep slush until their backs were presented to one another. To settle the exact distance was a matter of some difficulty, and it had to be decided by the seconds. Jack and McGinty soon got into an altercation, in which Jack appealed to the light of reason, and McGinty to a past that was full of experience. He overwhelmed Jack with so many precedents for his view of the case, that at last the latter was compelled to yield. Then we drove forward, and then backward; now we were too far away, again we were too near, and

there didn't appear to be any prospect of a settlement.

At last O'Halloran suggested that we should back the sleighs toward one another till they touched, and then his sleigh would move forward twelve paces.

"But who's to pace them?" asked Jack. "Why the horse, of course," said O'Halloran. "Sure it's a regular pacer he is, and bred up to it, so he is."

To this Jack had nothing to say. So the horses backed and the sleighs touched one another.

"Wait a minute McGinty, me boy," said O'Halloran—putting his hand on his friend's arm—"let's all take somethin' warrum. Me system is slowly conjaylin, an' such a steete of things is moighty on-wholesome."

This proposition was received with the same unanimity which had greeted O'Halloran's other propositions. Flasks were brought out; and some minutes were passed in a general, a convivial, and a very affectionate interchange of courtesies.

"Me boy," said O'Halloran to me, affectionately, "ye haven't had so much ixpatrience as I have, so I'll teek the liberty to give ye a small bit of instherruction. Whin ye foire, cem low! Moind that, now—ye'll be sure to hit."

"Thank you," said I.

He wrung my hand heartily; and then motioning to McGinty, his sleigh started off, and advanced a few paces from ours, a little farther than the usual distance on such an occasion. With this he seemed to be satisfied, and, as nobody made any objection, we prepared for the business of the day.

O'Halloran and I stood up in the sleighs, while the seconds kept their seats. Jack and the doctor sat in the front seat of our sleigh. McGinty sat beside O'Halloran as

he stood up. I saw our sleigh.

"Shall I give th

"No," said McGinty. "I've experience. I've jools—an' hope more."

"Shure we won't," said O'Halloran.

more jools than yo friend Macrorie and ourselives—so we w

"Ye can't give McGinty.

"An' what do thin?" said O'Halloran.

"To foire by," said

"There's a peculiar ran, loftily, "in the obveceates the nicia ings, and inables 1 word of command frind of me sowl—Oirish addressd the 'Fire first!'"

And saying this, then stood erect, fe countenance.

"Fire first?" said O'Halloran, I'll do n "Indade and yo a laugh. "I insist

"Well, if it con "what's to prevent you shall fire the first "Shure and ye wo the pliaure of giving said he.

"Then, really," said to insist upon your You're an older man to have the first pl ran—fire first!"

"Thank you," said

he stood up. I stood in the after-seat of our sleigh.

"Shall I give the word?" said Jack.

"No," said McGinty. "I've had more experience. I've been sicond at elivin jools—an' hope to assist at as minny more."

"Shure we won't throuble ayther of ye," said O'Halloran. "It's me that's fought more jools than you've been sicond at. Me friend Macorie and I'll manage it to shoot ourselves—so we will."

"Ye can't give the word yersilves," said McGinty.

"An' what do we want of a word, thin?" said O'Halloran.

"To foire by," said McGinty.

"There's a peculearectee," said O'Halloran, loftily, "in the prising o'cession that obveates the nicisitee of such prosaydings, and inables us to dispinsow with any word of command. Macorie, me boy—frind of me sowl—I address you as the O'irish addressd the English at Fontenny: 'Fire first!'"

And saying this, O'Halloran bowed and then stood erect, facing me with a grave countenance.

"Fire first?" said I. "Indeed, Mr. O'Halloran, I'll do nothing of the kind."

"Indade and you shall," said he, with a laugh. "I insist upon it!"

"Well, if it comes to that," said I, "what's to prevent me from insisting that you shall fire the first shot?"

"Shure and yo wouldn't dayprove me of the plisure of giving you the prasydinee," said he.

"Then, really," said I, "you will force me to insist upon your having the precedence. You're an older man than I am, and ought to have the first place. So, Mr. O'Halloran—fire first!"

"Thank you," said he, with a bow, "but

really, me boy, you must excuse me if I insist upon it."

"Oh, no," said I. "If it were any other o'casion, I would cheerfully give you the precedence, and so I give it to you here."

"But, you see," said O'Halloran, "you must consider me in the loight of an intertainer. Ye're my guest to a certain xintin. I must give up all the honors to you. So foire awco, me boy, and eem low."

"No," said I, "I really couldn't think of it."

This friendly altercation went on for some time, while the others sat listening in amazement.

McGinty was the first to interrupt.

"It's in defoince of all the joolin' code," said he, starting up. "I must inter my protest."

"So say I," cried Jack. "I say let the usual word be given—or else if one must have the first shot, let them draw for it."

O'Halloran looked upon them both with a smile of benevolent pity.

"McGinty," said he.

"Well."

"Ye know me?"

"Sure an' I do."

"And how many jools I've fought?"

"Meself does."

"Am I a choild at it? Will yo be koind enough to mintion any one that has any eleem to consider himself the shupayrior of Phaylin O'Halloran in the noiceties and the dilicacies of the jooling code? Will ye be so good as to infarrum me what there is lift for me to lerrun?"

At this appeal Mr. Murtagh McGinty subsided into silence, and sat down again, shaking his head.

Jack still insisted that the word of command should be given; but O'Halloran silenced him effectually by asking him if he had ever fought a duel.

"No," said Jack.

"Have ye ivir been second at one before?"

"Nö," said Jack, again.

"So this is your first time, out?"

"Yes," said Jack, who looked deeply humiliated.

"Will, thin," said O'Halloran, loftily, "allow me to infarrum you, sir, that this is the thirty-seventh toime that I've had the plisure of taking part in a jool, ayther as principal or sicond."

Whereupon Jack was suppressed.

In all this the doctor took no part. He looked cold, wet, uncomfortable, and unhappy.

And now O'Halloran turned to me again.

"Me boy," said he, "if ye'll not grant me this as a fevor, I'll cleem it as a roight."

"A right?" said I.

"Yis," said O'Halloran, solemnly, "a roight!"

"I don't know what you mean," I said, in some perplexity.

"I'll, exploen. I'm undher a debt of obleegeetion to you that I nivir can repee. Ye've seeved the loife of me daughter, me choild, me Marion—that's one debt—then ye've seeved my loife, me own. But for you, I'd have been tarrun in payces by a howling mob, so I would. Me own loife is yours. Jewty, and the cleems of gratichood, and the code of honor, all inspoire me with a desoire to meek some rayturrun for what ye've done for me.

"On the other hand," he continued, "ye've made a misteek of an onplisint nature about Mrs. O'H. Ye didn't main any harrum; but the dade's done, and there it is. It neccisitates a jool. We must feece one another to satisfy offindid honor. But at the aecm toime, while this jool is thus neccisiteeted by the code of honor,

jewty and gratichood must be considered. It's a moighty noice case," he continued, meditatively, "and I don't think such a case ivir came within my ixparyience; but that ixtinsive ixparyience which I've had rinders me, the best judge of what may be the most shootable course on the prisint occasion. But the ulteemete-tindincy of all me midetecteons on the subijet is this—that I must allow you to fire the first shot."

"Well," said I, "if you insist on looking at it in that light, and if you persist in feeling obligation, that sense of obligation ought to make you yield to my wishes, and, if I don't want to, fire first, you ought not to insist upon it."

"No, me boy," said O'Halloran; "that's all oidle casuisthree an' impty mitaphysica. There's no process of ratioshceetion that'll be ivir eeble to overturrun the simtimints of jewty and dilicacy that spring spontaneous in the brist. So blaze away."

"Excuse me, but I insist on your firing first."

"Be the powers, thin! and I insist on your taking the lade."

"Pardon me, but you must."

"I'm inkeepible of such a lack of common cevilcetece," said he. "I must still insist."

"And so must I."

This singular and very original altercation went on for some time. At last O'Halloran took the cushions off the seat, and deliberately sat down, facing me, with his legs dangling over the back of the sleigh. Seeing that our argument was to be continued for some time, and that he was thus making himself comfortable, I did the same. We thus sat facing ope another.

The seconds here again interposed, but were again baffled by O'Halloran, who explained the whole situation to them in so

forcible a manner how to answer him firm in my resolve, fire unless we both I might have fired O'Halloran so well convinced, if I did reproach me for it, again. And in that to be commenced aft

So there we sat, over the backs of c facting one another, p gionally renewing th obstinate, I was equ began to pass awa gradually grew more our companions. Sti any thing. It was which they could not hind all the argument there arose the very tion of O'Halloran's field of honor. So al was to make the best

The situation! It one. Overhead was a neath, the thawing assumed a mora water distance arose the dr choly forest-trees; wh thin, fine drizzle, which rating and soaking us We all became limp an as well as body. The m any of spirit could not ence of that drizzle, an sank beneath it.

But not without a str as O'Halloran and I th other, we did not forget ties of life, nor were w and staring at one anothe r, we sought to begull

forcible a manner that they did not know how to answer him. For my part, I was firm in my resolve, and was not going to fire unless we both fired together. True, I might have fired in the air; but I knew O'Halloran so well by this time that I was convinced, if I did such a thing, he would reproach me for it, and insist on my firing again. And in that case it would all have to be commenced afresh.

So there we sat, with our legs dangling over the backs of our respective sleighs, facing one another, pistol in hand, and occasionally renewing the discussion. He was obstinate, I was equally so, and the time began to pass away, and the situation gradually grew more and more tedious to our companions. Still they could not say any thing. It was a punctilio of honor which they could not argue down, and behind all the argument which might be used there arose the very impressive accumulation of O'Halloran's past experience in the field of honor. So all that they could do was to make the best of the situation.

The situation! It was, at best, a dismal one. Overhead was a leaden sky; underneath, the thawing snow, which every hour assumed a more watery appearance; in the distance arose the dreary, gloomy, melancholy forest-trees; while all around was a thin, fine drizzle, which enveloped us, saturating and soaking us with watery vapor. We all became limp and bedraggled, in soul as well as body. The most determined buoyancy of spirit could not withstand the influence of that drizzle, and, one by one, we all sank beneath it.

But not without a struggle. For, at first, as O'Halloran and I thus sat facing one another, we did not forget the ordinary civilities of life, nor were we satisfied with sitting and staring at one another. On the contrary, we sought to beguile the time with an

interchange of courtesy on both sides. I took my flask and drank to the health of O'Halloran. O'Halloran responded. Then the seconds followed. Then O'Halloran drank to the health of Jack and the doctor. Then I drank to the health of McGinty. Then Jack and the doctor drank to the health of O'Halloran, and McGinty pledged me.

Two hours passed, and found each of us sitting there in the same position. Jack and the doctor made a doleful attempt at a game of euchre, but soon gave it up. McGinty sat refreshing himself with his flask, defying the weather, laughing, joking, and singing. Then we all smoked. From time to time the seconds would make fresh efforts to shake our resolve. They proposed once more that we should toss up for it, or drive home now, and come out again—in fact, any thing rather than sit here amid this cold, and drizzle, and wet, and dismal gloom, and miserable, rheumatic atmosphere. But all these proposals were declined, and O'Halloran was immovable in his purpose; while I, on the other hand, was equally resolved that I would not fire first.

Thus time passed, and neither of us would yield. At length, the doctor settled himself down into the bottom of the sleigh, and drew the buffalo-ropes over him. After a final expostulation, accompanied with a threat to drive off, Jack imitated his example. McGinty, seeing this, proceeded to make himself comfortable in the same way.

The poor horses had the worst time of it. The cold snow was up to their knees; and, as they stood there, they moved uneasily, tramping it down, till a pool of icy water lay beneath, in which they had to stand. I mentioned this to O'Halloran; but he only turned it against me, and made use

of it as a fresh argument to shake my decision.

At last I saw that O'Halloran's face and attitude had undergone a change. For my part, I was wet to the skin, and chilled to my very bones; but I was young and strong, and could stand even that. With O'Halloran, however, it was different. A man of sixty cannot sit with impunity, inactive, and exposed to a cold, slimy drizzle, such as this was, without feeling very serious effects, and anticipating worse. This he soon experienced. I saw his figure crouching down, and an expression of pain coming over his face. In the midst of his pain he still maintained his punctilious resolution; but how much did that cost him! It was his own fault, of course. It was all brought on by his impracticability, his whimsicality, his eccentricity, and his punctiliousness. Nevertheless, there was in him that which excited my deepest commiseration. The wretchedness and the pain of his face, and the suffering which was visible in his attitude, all touched me. He sat crouched down, shivering, shuddering, his teeth chattering, and presented a deplorable picture of one who struggled vainly against an overmastering pain.

My resolution was shaken by this. I rose to my feet.

"Mr. O'Halloran," said I, "pardon me. I see that I am subjecting you to very great suffering. If you sit there any longer, exposed to this damp, you'll never get over it. It would be but poor courtesy to subject you to that any longer. And so I don't see what better I can do than allow you to have your own way. I'll have to give up my scruples, I suppose. I can't sit here any longer, and see you suffer. And so—here goes!—I'm willing to fire as you wish."

At this O'Halloran rose to his feet with a cry of joy.

"The first shot!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said I, "the first. I'll fire, if you insist on it."

"And that's just what I do," said he, shivering.

At this I took aim.

Bang! went the shot. I afterward found that it passed through his hat.

O'Halloran now raised his pistol, and levelled it at me. But the pleasure of his triumph had excited him; and, besides, he was shivering from head to foot, and his teeth were chattering. An accurate aim was impossible. His hand could scarcely hold the pistol, and his benumbed finger could scarcely pull the trigger. He fired, and the bullet passed through the sleeve of my coat, and close to the doctor's head.

"Mc boy," he cried, flinging down the pistol, "there's no ind to the obblegections you put me under! I owe ye me loife a second toime. Ye've seered me from death by fraizing."

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

HOME AGAIN.—THE GROWLS OF A CONFIRMED GROWLER.—HOSPITALITY.—THE WELL-KNOWN ROOM.—VISION OF A LADY.—ALONE WITH MARION.—INTERCHANGE OF THOUGHT AND SENTIMENT.—TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.—AN EVENING TO BE REMEMBERED.—THE CONVIVIALITY OF O'HALLORAN.—THE HUMORS OF O'HALLORAN, AND HIS RACCHIC JOY.

We all hurried away from the ground as rapidly as possible, and soon reached the *Hôtel de France*. It was small, stuffy, and rather close, but, to people in our half-frozen condition, the big Canadian stove was a blessing beyond words. O'Halloran seemed like an *habitué* of the place, judging by the way he button-holed the landlord.



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" At this I took aim. Bang I went the shot. I afterward found that it passed through his hat."—page 112.



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and by the success with which he obtained "somethin' warrum," for the company. But the *Hôtel de France* was not a place where one might linger; and so, after waiting long enough to allow the heat of the Canadian stove to penetrate us, aided by the blended power of "somethin' warrum"—and long enough also to give oats to the horses, which, after all, must have had the worst of it—poor devils!—we started and dragged on to the town.

All this time O'Halloran did not appear to have recognized Jack at all. On the drive out this might have been accounted for, but, in the *Hôtel de France*, O'Halloran had a full and perfect inspection of him. If he did recognize him, it certainly did not appear in his manner. He exchanged words with Jack in a tone of hilarious cordiality, which did not seem as though he considered Jack an enemy; and Jack, who never failed to respond when greeted in such a way, met him more than halfway. It was evident that O'Halloran had not the smallest idea that Jack was that identical British officer whom he had expelled from his house.

Of all the party the doctor seemed to have suffered most; and, on the journey back, he kept up one prolonged growl at me. I was fated, he said, to bring him bad luck, and I would be the death of him. Once before he had ridden all night in the storm for me; and now here was another fool's errand. He seemed inclined to consider it as a personal insult, and actually felt aggrieved because O'Halloran's bullet had not shattered my arm, or penetrated my brain. Thus he alternated between thivring and swearing all the way back.

"I tell you what it is, Maeroric," he growled, "if you ever come to ask my help again on any occasion whatever, I'll take it as a personal insult. I wouldn't have

come this time, but I thought it was to be an affair of honor. An affair of honor! Rot and nonsense! Dragging a fellow over the country all day to see a couple of pistols fired in the air! What sort of a thing do you call that? And here am I—in for it—yes—damn it, man!—I say again—in for it—to any extent—rheumatism, neuralgia, gout, inflammation, and fifty other things! If I thought you'd have any of them, I'd feel satisfied. But no—you're all right, and can afford to sit there grinning at the sufferings of a better man than yourself."

From which it will appear that the doctor was savage, and I was not.

On reaching Quebec, O'Halloran gave us all a comprehensive invitation to dinner.

But the doctor could not accept it. He had taken cold, and would have to go home. Jack could not accept it. He had a very pressing engagement. Mr. McGinty could not accept it, for he had some important business. So O'Halloran pressed me. I alone was disengaged. I had no rheumatism, no pressing engagement, no important business. O'Halloran was urgent in his invitation. Our duel seemed only to have heightened and broadened his cordiality. I was dying to see Marion—or to find out how she was—so what did I do? Why, I leaped at the invitation, as a matter of course.

So once more I was ushered into that comfortable and hospitable back-parlor. Since I had been there last, what events had occurred! O'Halloran left me for a time, and I was alone. I sat down, and thought of that night when I had wandered forth. I thought of all the wild fancies that had filled my brain, as I wandered about amid the storm, listening to the howl of the wind, and the deep, sullen moan

of the river. I recalled that strange, weird superstition, which had drawn me back once more to the house—and the deep longing and craving which had filled my heart for one glimpse, however faint, of my Lady of the Ice. I thought of my return—of my earnest gaze around, of the deep toll of the midnight bell, and of the sudden revelation of that dim, shadowy figure of a veiled lady, that stood in faint outline by the house, which advanced to meet me as I hurried over to her.

It was quite dark. There were no lamps lighted, but the coal-fire flickered and threw a ruddy glow about the apartment; at times leaping up into brightness, and again dying down into dimness and obscurity. O'Halloran had gone up-stairs, leaving me thus alone, and I sat in the deep arm-chair with my mind full of these all-absorbing fancies; and, in the midst of these fancies, even while I was thinking of that veiled figure which I had seen under the shadow of the house—even thus—I became aware of a light footfall, and a rustling dress beside me.

I turned my head with a quick movement of surprise.

There was the figure of a lady—graceful, slender, formed in a mould of perfect elegance and loveliness, the dark drapery of her dress descending till it died away among the shadows on the floor. I stared for a moment in surprise. Then the light of the fire, which had subsided for a moment, leaped up, and flashed out upon the exquisite features, and the dark, lustrous, solemn eyes of Marion.

I sprang to my feet, with my heart beating so fast that it seemed impossible to breathe. The surprise was overwhelming. I had thought of her as having in brain-fever, descending deep down into the abyss of delirium, and now—here she was—here

—by my side!—my Lady of the Ice!—Marion!

"I heard that you were here," she said, in a low, tremulous voice, "and I could not help coming down to tell you how I—how I bless you, for—for that night."

She stopped—and held out her hand in silence.

I seized it in both of mine. For a few moments I could not speak. At last I burst forth:

"Oh, my God! What bliss it is for me to see you!—I've been thinking about it ever since—I've been afraid that you were ill—that you would never get over it."

And still holding her hand in mine, I raised it with tremulous eagerness, and pressed it to my lips.

She gently withdrew it, but without any appearance of anger.

"No," said she, "I was not ill. A wakeful night, a very feverish excitement—that was all."

"I listened long after you left," said I, in a low voice; "and all was still."

"Yes," she said, in the same low voice. "No one heard me. I reached my room without any one knowing it. But I had much to sustain me. For oh, sir, I felt deeply, deeply grateful to find myself back again, and to know that my folly had ended so. To be again in my dear home—with my dear papa—after the anguish that I had known!"

She stopped.—It was a subject that she could not speak on without an emotion that was visible in every tone. Her voice was sad, and low, and solemn, and all its intonations thrilled to the very core of my being. And for me—I had nothing to say—I thrilled, my heart bounded at the sight of her face, and at the tones of her voice; while within me there was a great and unspeakable joy. If I had dared to say to her

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all that I felt at that moment! But how dare I? She had come in the fulness of her warm gratitude to thank me for what I had done. She did not seem to think that, but for me, she would not have left her home at all. She only remembered that I had brought her back. It was thus that her generous nature revealed itself.

Now, while she thus expressed such deep and fervent gratitude, and evinced such joy at being again in her home, and at finding such an ending to her folly, there came to me a great and unequalled exultation. For by this I understood that her folly was cured—that her infatuation was over—that the glamour had been dissipated—that her eyes had been opened—and the once-adored Jack was now an object of indifference.

"Have you told any one about it?" I asked.

"No," said she, "not a soul."

"He is my most intimate friend," said I, "but I have kept this secret from him. He knows nothing about it."

"Of course he does not," said she, "how was it possible for you to tell him? This is our secret."

I cannot tell the soft, sweet, and soothing consolation which penetrated my inmost soul at these words. Though few, they had a world of meaning. I noticed with delight the cool indifference with which she spoke of him. Had she expressed contempt, I should not have been so well pleased. Perfect indifference was what I wanted, and what I found. Then, again, she acknowledged me as the only partner in her secret, thus associating me with herself in one memorable and impressive way. Nor yet did she ask any questions as to whom I meant. Her indifference to him was so great that it did not even excite curiosity as to how I had found out who

he was. She was content to take my own statement without any questions or observations.

And there, as the flickering light of the coal-fire sprang up and died out; as it threw from time to time the ruddy glow of its uprising flames upon her, she stood before me—a vision of perfect loveliness—like a goddess to the devotee, which appears for an instant amid the glow of some mysterious light, only to fade out of sight a moment after. The rare and perfect grace of her slender figure, with its dark drapery, fading into the gloom below—the fair outline of her face—her sad, earnest, and melancholy expression; the intense and solemn earnestness of her dark, lustrous eyes—all these conspired to form a vision such as impressed itself upon my memory forever. This was the full realization of my eager fancy—this was what I had so longed to see. I had formed my own ideal of my Lady of the Ice—in private life—in the parlor—meeting me in the world of society. And here before me that ideal stood.

Now, it gives a very singular sensation to a fellow to stand face to face with the woman whom he worships and adores, and to whom he dares not make known the feelings that swell within him; and still more singular is this sensation, when this woman, whom he adores, happens to be one whom he has carried in his arms for an indefinite time; and more singular yet is it, when she happens to be one whom he has saved once, and once again, from the most cruel fate; by whose side he has stood in what may have seemed the supreme moment of mortal life; whom he has sustained and cheered and strengthened in a dread conflict with Death himself; singular enough is the sensation that arises under such circumstances as these, my boy—singular, and overwhelming, and intolerable; a sensation

which paralyzes the tongue and makes one mute, yet still brings on a resistless and invincible desire to speak and make all known; and should such a scene be too long continued, the probability is that the desire and the longing thus to speak will eventually burst through all restraint, and pour forth in a volume of fierce, passionate eloquence, that will rush onward, careless of consequences. Now, such was my situation, and such was my sensation, and such, no doubt, would have been the end of it all, had not the scene been brought to an end by the arrival of O'Halloran and his wife, preceded by a servant with lights, who soon put the room in a state of illumination.

Nora, as I must still call her, was somewhat embarrassed at first meeting me—for she could not forget our last interview; but she gradually got over it, and, as the evening wore on, she became her old, lively, laughing, original self. O'Halloran, too, was in his best and most genial mood, and, as I caught at times the solemn glance of the dark eyes of Marion, I found not a cloud upon the sky that overhung our festivities. Marion, too, had more to say than usual. She was no longer so self-absorbed, and so abstracted, as she once was. She was not playful and lively like Nora; but she was, at least, not sad; she showed an interest in all that was going on, and no longer dwelt apart like a star.

It was evident that Nora knew nothing at all about the duel. That was a secret between O'Halloran and me. It was also evident that she knew nothing about Marion's adventure—that was a secret between Marion and me. There was another secret, also, which puzzled me, and of which O'Halloran must, of course, have known as little as I did, and this was that strange act of Nora's in pretending to be

the Lady of the Ice. Why had she done it? For what possible reason? Why had Marion allowed her to do it? All this was a mystery. I also wondered much whether she thought that I still believed in that pretence of hers. I thought she did, and attributed to this that embarrassment which she showed when she first greeted me. On this, as on the former occasion, her embarrassment had, no doubt, arisen from the fact that she was playing a part, and the consciousness that such a part was altogether out of her power to maintain. Yet, why had she done it?

That evening I had a better opportunity to compare these two most beautiful women; for beautiful each most certainly was, though in a different way from the other. I had already felt on a former occasion the bewitching effect of Nora's manner, and I had also felt to a peculiar and memorable extent that spell which had been cast upon me by Marion's glance. Now I could understand the difference between them and my own feelings. For in witchery, in liveliness, in musical laughter, in never-failing merriment, Nora far surpassed all with whom I had ever met; and for all these reasons she had in her a rare power of fascination. But Marion was solemn, earnest, intense; and there was that on her face, which sent my blood surging back to my heart, as I caught her glance. Nora was a woman to laugh and chat with; Nora was kind and gracious, and gentle too; Nora was amiable as well as witty; charming in manner, pliant in expression, inimitable at an anecdote, with never-failing resources, a first-rate lady-conversationist, if I may use so formidable a word—in fact, a thoroughly fascinating woman; but Marion!—Marion was one, not to laugh with, but to die for; Marion had a face that haunted you; a glance that made your heart leap, and your

nerves tingle; a tions vibrated th a certain mystic after you had le in your thoughts by night—Marion veiled calmly, and analyzed; but M self, who bewilde ysis.

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So the evening p ladies retired. Nor her usual cordiality bewitching glance; threw upon me th



nerves tingle; a voice whose deep intonations vibrated through all your being with a certain mystic meaning, to follow you after you had left her, and come up again in your thoughts by day, and your dreams by night—Marion! why Nora could be surveyed calmly, and all her fascinating power analyzed; but Marion was a power in herself, who bewildered you and defied analysis.

During that time when Nora had been confounded in my mind with the Lady of the Ice, she had indeed risen to the chief place in my thoughts, though my mind still failed to identify her thoroughly. I had thought that I loved her, but I had not. It was the Lady of the Ice whom I loved; and, when Marion had revealed herself, then all was plain. After that revelation Nora sank into nothingness, and Marion was all in all.

Oh, that evening, in that pleasant parlor! Shall I ever forget it!

Our talk was on all things. Of course, I made no allusion to my journey over the ice, and Nora soon saw that she was free from any such unpleasant and embarrassing remarks. Freed from this fear, she became herself again. Never was she more vivacious, more sparkling, or more charming. O'Halloran joined the conversation in a manner that showed the rarest resources of wit, of fun, and of genial humor. Marion, as I said before, did not hold aloof, but took a part which was subordinate, it is true, yet, to me, far more effective; indeed, incomparably more so than that of the others. Indeed, I remember now nothing else but Marion.

So the evening passed, and at length the ladies retired. Nora bade me adieu with her usual cordiality, and her kindly and bewitching glance; while Marion's eyes threw upon me their lustrous glow, in

which there was revealed a certain deep and solemn earnestness, that only intensified, if such a thing were possible, the spell which she had thrown over my soul.

And then it was "somethin' warrum." Under the effects of this, my host passed through several distinct and well-defined moods or phases.

First of all, he was excessively friendly and affectionate. He alluded to our late adventure, and expressed himself delighted with the result.

Then he became confidential, and explained how it was that he, an old man, happened to have a young wife.

Fifteen years ago, he said, Nora had been left under his care by her father. She had lived in England all her life, where she had been educated. Shortly after he had become her guardian he had been compelled to fly to America, on account of his connection with the Young-Ireland party, of which he was a prominent member. He had been one of the most vigorous writers in one of the Dublin papers, which was most hostile to British rule, and was therefore a marked man. As he did not care about imprisonment or a voyage to Botany Bay, he had come to America, bringing with him his ward Nora, and his little daughter Marion, then a child of not more than three or four. By this act he had saved himself and his property, which was amply sufficient for his support. A few years passed away, and he found his feelings toward Nora somewhat different from those of a parent—and he also observed that Nora looked upon him with tenderer feelings than those of gratitude.

"There's a great difference intirely," said he, "between us now. I've lost my youth, but she's kept hers. But thin, at that toime, me boy, Phaylim O'Halloran was a moightily different man from the one

you see before you. I was not much over forty—in no prime—feeling as young as any of them, an' it wasn't an unnatural thing that I should win the love of ayen a young gyerrul, so it wasn't. An' so she became me wife—my Nora—me darlin'—the loight of me loife. And she's accompanied me iver since on all my wandherin's and phelandherin's, and has made the home of the poor ixoile a paradoise, so she has."

All this was very confidential, and such a confidence would probably never have been given, had it not been for the effects of "somethin' wurrum;" but it showed me several things in the plainest manner. The first was, that Nora must be over thirty, at any rate, and was therefore very much older than I had taken her to be. Again, her English accent and style could be accounted for; and finally the equally English accent and style of Marion could be understood and accounted for on the grounds of Nora's influence. For a child always catches the accent of its mother rather than of its father, and Nora must, for nearly fifteen years, have been a sort of mother, more or less, to Marion.

And now, why the mischief did Nora pretend to be my Lady of the Ice, and in the very presence of Marion try to maintain a part which she could not carry out? And why, if she were such a loving and faithful wife, did she deliberately deceive the confiding O'Halloran, and make him believe that she was the one whom I had saved? It was certainly not from any want of love for him. It must have been some scheme of hers which she had formed in connection with Marion. But what in the world could such a scheme have been, and why in the world had she formed it?

This was the puzzling question that arose

afresh, as O'Halloran detailed to me very confidentially the history of this romantic experience in his life.

But this was only one of his moods, and this mood passed away. The romantic and the confidential was succeeded by the literary and the scholastic, with a dash of the humorous.

A trivial remark of mine, in the course of some literary criticisms of his, turned his thoughts to the subject of puns. He at once plunged into the history of puns. He quoted Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, Cicero. He brought forward illustrations from Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton, Puritan writers, Congreve, Cowper, and others, until he concluded with Hood, who he declared had first unfolded to the human mind the possibility of the pun.

From this he passed off lightly and easily into other things, and finally glided into the subject of mediæval Latin. This, he asserted, was born and nourished under peculiar circumstances, so different from classical Latin as to be almost a new language, yet fully equal to it in all the best characteristics of a language. He defied me to find any thing in classical poetry that would compare with the "Dies Irae," the "Stabat Mater," or the "Rhythm of Bernard de Morlaix." As I was and am rather rusty in Latin, I did not accept the challenge. Then he asserted that mediæval Latin was so comprehensive in its scope that it was equally good for the convivial and for the solemn, and could speak equally well the sentiments of fun, love, and religion. He proved this by quotations from the immortal Walter Mapes. He overwhelmed me, in fact, with quotations. I cared in. I was suppressed. I became extinct. Finally he offered to show me an original song of his own, which he asserted

was "iminintly a sion."

As I had no opinion of it, I b and give here a *literatim*, notea a

PHELMIMI H

Omlbr  
Semp  
Vino c  
Ant m  
Is qui n  
Aut e  
Ille, Pol  
Parvu

Omlbr  
Semp  
Taba, fr  
Nicot  
Dens f  
Et viv  
Hoc est  
Sic Te

Omlia t  
Migrot  
Veniat A  
Vivat L  
Nostram  
Et mor  
Erit, Pol  
In secu

\* *Montano roro*—  
stem, id. Scot., Hib.,  
† *Parvus potator*—  
ter.

‡ *Te Baccho*—cf.,  
tobacco.

§ *Baccam*—in A  
Bacchi.

| *Americus*—cf., l

was "imminently shouted to the prisint occasion."

As I had no other way of showing my opinion of it, I begged the paper from him, and give here a true copy of it, *verbatim et literatim*, notes and all :

PHELIUM HALLORANII CAEMEN.

Omnibus Hibernicis  
Semper est ex more  
Vino curas pellere  
Aut montano rore;  
Ia qui nescit bibere,  
Aut eat cito satag,  
Ille, Pol! me iudice  
Parvus est potator.†

Omnibus Americis  
Semper est in ore  
Tuba, frondes babens ex  
Nicotino flore;  
Densis sumi nubibus  
Et vivunt et movent,  
Hoc eat summum gaudium  
Sic Te Bacche i fovent.‡

Omnis tunc Hibernicus  
Migret sine mora,  
Veniât Americam—  
Vivat hac in ora,  
Nostram Baccam capiat, §  
Et montanum rorem,  
Erit, Pol! Americus |  
In sæcula sæculorum.  
Amen.

\* *Montano rore*—cf., id. Hib., *mountain-dew*;  
nem., id. Scot., Hib., et Amer., *whiskey*.

† *Parvus potator*—cf., id. Amer., *small potator*.

‡ *Te Bacche*—cf., id. Amer., *Tobacco*, i. e., *tabacco*.

§ *Baccam*—in America vulgo dici solet, *Baccy*.

| *Americus*—cf., id. Amer., *a merry cuss*.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM APRIL TO JUNE.—TEMPORA MUTANTUR,  
ET NOS MUTAMUR IN ILLIS.—STARTLING  
CHANGE IN MARION!—AND WHY?—JACK  
AND HIS WOES.—THE VENGEANCE OF MISS  
PHILLIPS.—LADIES WHO REFUSE TO ALLOW  
THEIR HEARTS TO BE BROKEN.—NOBLE AT-  
TITUDE OF THE WIDOW.—CONSOLATIONS OF  
LOUIE.

Time passed on, and week succeeded to week; without any occurrence of a decisive nature. April died out, May passed, and June came. Then all the trees burst into leaf, and the fields arrayed themselves in green, and all Nature gave one grand leap from winter into summer.

During all this time I was a constant and a favored guest at O'Halloran's. I really don't think I ever went anywhere else. I cut off all visits to others—that is, in the evening—and went there only. O'Halloran always received me with the same cordiality, and the ladies always met me with the same smile.

So many evenings in that comfortable parlor, so many chats with the ladies, so many interviews with my host, could not fail to bring us nearer together. Such was, indeed, the case with O'Halloran and Nora; but with Marion it was different. There was, indeed, between us the consciousness of a common secret, and she could not fail to see in my manner something warmer than common—something more tender than friendship, for instance—something, in fact, which, without being at all spooney, was still expressive of very delicate regard. Yet there came over her something which excited my fears, and filled me with gloomy foreboding. She seemed to lose that cordiality which she

evinced on that first evening when I talked with her alone. She never threw at me those deep glances which then had made my nerves tingle. She seemed constrained and reserved. Only in speaking to me, there was always in her voice an indefinable sweetness and gentleness, which made her tones ring in my memory afterward like soft music. That showed me that there was no coldness on her part; and so, too, when I did catch at times the glance of her dark eyes, there was something in them so timid, so soft, and so shy, that I could not think of her as wearing of me. Yet this Marion, timid, tender, and shy; this Marion, holding aloof under evident constraint, keeping apart, giving me no opportunity; this Marion, who had now exchanged the intensity and the solemnity of former days for something so very different—became a puzzle to me.

Why had she changed? Was it her returning regard for Jack? Impossible. His name had several times been mentioned without causing any emotion in her. His approaching marriage with Mrs. Finimore had once been mentioned by Nora, who spoke of it as an interesting item of news. Marion heard it with indifference. Or was she trying to withdraw from any further intimacy with me? Was she suspicious of my intentions, and desirous of giving me no hope? Was she trying to repel me at the outset? It seemed so. And so a great fear gradually arose in my heart.

So went the time away, and toward the latter part of May and the beginning of June I used to take the ladies out driving, hoping that these new circumstances might elicit some show of cordiality in Marion. But this proved a complete failure; for, the closer we were thrown together, the greater seemed her shy reticence, her timid reserve, and her soft and gentle yet per-

sistent manner of keeping me at a distance.

And so, here was I. I had found my Lady of the Ice; yet no sooner had I found her than she withdrew herself to an inaccessible height, and seemed now as far out of my reach as on that eventful morning when I sought her at the hut at Montmorency, and found that she had fled.

Spending so much time as I did at O'Halloran's, I did not see so much of Jack as before; yet he used to drop in from time to time in the morning, and pour forth the sorrows of his soul.

Marion's name he never mentioned. Either he had forgotten all about her, which was not improbable; or the subject was too painful a one for him to touch upon, which also was not improbable; or, finally, her affair became overshadowed by other and weightier matters, which was in the highest degree natural.

His first great trouble arose from the action of Miss Phillips.

He had gone there a second time, to call, and had again been told that she was not at home. He turned away vowing vengeance, but in the following morning found that vengeance was out of the question, for he received a parcel, containing all the letters which he had ever written to Miss Phillips, and all the presents that he had ever given her, with a polite note, requesting the return of her letters. This was a blow that he was not prepared for. It struck home. However, there was no help for it—so he returned her letters, and then came to me with all kinds of vague threats.

Such threats, however, could not be carried out; and as for Miss Phillips, she was quite beyond the reach of them. She accepted the situation wonderfully well. She did more—she triumphed over it. In a short time she had others at her feet, prom-

inent among who dashing officer, noble fellow in Phillips revenged tossed him aside and replaced himself felt to be was gall and worry was more, he was

The worst thing the crushing blow love. I am inclined very much taken when I informed Marion was in said to be in better known for years. however, was a several all along been his tangled love-affairs a broken heart, or life-long sorrow, or more of his victim such a fate, he talk was highly romantic, and even my unfortunately for event did not coincide colored views. Their hearts. Those captible and tender beat bravely on. Not with indifference. contemptuously cast found new consolation another. Broken heartness! Life-long sorrow They didn't think of side their wrongs to either of other male rechallenge. He was simply forgotten. Now a chagrin which such caused to one of Jac

ment among whom was Colonel Blount—a dashing officer, a Victoria Cross, and a noble fellow in every respect. Thus Miss Phillips revenged herself on Jack. She tossed him aside coolly and contemptuously, and replaced him with a man whom Jack himself felt to be his superior. And all this was gall and wormwood to Jack. And, what was more, he was devoured with jealousy.

The worst thing about it all, however, was the crushing blow which it gave to his self-love. I am inclined to think that he was very much taken down, on one occasion, when I informed him incidentally that Marion was in excellent spirits, and was said to be in better health than she had known for years. Miss Phillips's policy, however, was a severer blow. For it had all along been his firm belief that his tangled love-affairs could not end without a broken heart, or melancholy madness, or life-long sorrow, or even death, to one or more of his victims. To save them from such a fate, he talked of suicide. All this was highly romantic, feebly melodramatic, and even mysteriously tragic. But, unfortunately for Jack's self-conceit, the event did not coincide with these highly-colored views. The ladies refused to break their hearts. Those organs, however susceptible and tender they may have been, beat bravely on. Number Three viewed him with indifference. Miss Phillips coolly and contemptuously cast him off, and at once found new consolation in the devotion of another. Broken hearts! Melancholy madness! Life-long sorrow! Not they, indeed. They didn't think of him. They didn't confide their wrongs to any avenger. No brother or other male relative sent Jack a challenge. He was simply dropped. He was forgotten. Now any one may see the chagrin which such humiliation must have caused to one of Jack's temper.

And how did the widow treat Jack all this time? The widow! She was sublime; for she showed at once the fostering care of a mother, and the forgiveness of a saint. Forgiveness? That's not the word. I am wrong. She showed nothing of the kind. On the contrary, she evinced no consciousness whatever that any offence had been committed. If Jack had deceived her as to Miss Phillips, she showed no knowledge of such deceit; if he had formed other entanglements of which he had never told her, she never let him know whether she had found out or not; if Jack went every evening to console himself with Louie, any discovery which the widow may have made of so very interesting yet transparent a fact was never alluded to by her. Such was the lofty ground which the widow took in reference to Jack and his affairs, and such was the manner with which she viewed him and them—a manner elevated, serene, calm, untroubled—a manner always the same. For she seemed above all care for such things. Too high-minded, you know. Too lofty in soul, my boy, and all that sort of thing. Like some tall cliff that rears its awful form, swells from the vale, and midway cleaves the storm, and all the rest of it. Such was the demeanor of the widow Finnimore.

She was so kind and cordial that Jack had not a word to say. After a few days of absence, during which he had not dared to call on her, he had ventured back, and was greeted with the gentlest of reproaches for his neglect, and was treated with an elaboration of kindness that was positively crushing. So he had to go, and to keep going. She would not suffer a single cloud to arise between them. An unvarying sweetness diffused itself evermore over her very pretty face, and through all the tones of her very musical voice. And so Jack was held fast, bound by invisible yet infrangible

bonds, and his soul was kept in complete subjection by the superior ascendancy of the widow.

So he went to see her every day. About six, generally dined there. Always left at eight, or just as dinner was over. Not much time for tenderness, of course. Jack didn't feel particularly inclined for that sort of thing. The widow, on the other hand, did not lay any stress on that, nor did she allow herself to suspect that Jack was altogether too cold for a lover. Not she. Beaming, my boy. All smiles, you know. Always the same. Glad to see him when he came—a pleasant smile of adieu at parting. In fact, altogether a model *fiancée*, such as is not often met with in this vale of tears.

Now always, after leaving this good, kind, smiling, cordial, pretty, clever, fascinating, serene, accomplished, hospitable, and altogether unparalleled widow, Jack would calmly, quietly, and deliberately go over to the Bertons', and stay there as long as he could. What for? Was he not merely heaping up sorrow for himself in continuing so ardently this Platonic attachment? For Louie there was no danger. According to Jack, she still kept up her teasing, quizzing, and laughing mood. Jack's break-up with Miss Phillips was a joke. He had confided to her that he had also broken off with Number Three; and, though she could not find out the cause, this became another joke. Finally, his present attitude with regard to the widow was viewed by her as the best joke of all. She assured him that the widow was to be his fate, and that she had driven the others from the field, so as to have him exclusively to herself.

And thus Jack alternated and vibrated between the widow and Louie, and all his entanglements were now reduced to these two.

Such is a full, frank, fair, free, ample.

lucid, and luminous explanation of the progress of affairs, which explanation was necessary in order to make the reader fully understand the full meaning of what follows.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

JACK'S TRIBULATIONS.—THEY RISE UP IN THE VERY FACE OF THE MOST ASTONISHING GOOD FORTUNES.—FOR, WHAT IS LIKE A LEGACY?—AND THIS COMES TO JACK!—SEVEN THOUSAND POUNDS STERLING PER ANNUM!—BUT WHAT'S THE USE OF IT ALL?—JACK COMES TO GRIEF!—WOE! SORROW! DESPAIR! ALL THE WIDOW!—INFATUATION.—A MAD PROPOSAL.—A MADMAN, A LUNATIC, AN IDIOT, A MARCH HARE, AND A BATTER, ALL ROLLED INTO ONE, AND THAT ONE THE LUCKY YET UNFORTUNATE JACK.

JACK had been falling off more and more. I was taken up with the O'Hallorans; he, with those two points between which he oscillated like a pendulum; and our intercourse diminished, until at length days would intervene without a meeting between us.

It was in the middle of June.

I had not seen Jack for more than a week.

Suddenly, I was reminded of him by a startling rumor that reached my ears after every soul in the garrison and in the city had heard it. It referred to Jack. It was nothing about the widow, nothing about Louie, nothing about Marion, nothing about Miss Phillips.

It did not refer to duns.

He had not been nabbed by the sheriff.

He had not put an end to himself.

In short, the news was, that an uncle of his had died, and left him a fortune of un-

known proportion *mirifico*, of course fortune to twenty had told me about reason to know the seven thousand; or seven thousand to be laughed at.

So here was Jack—far above the du and despair; raised a better world, who never arise, and ba my boy, to a reg where, like the god survey from his clo and the gloom of tune, by Jove! sterling a year! thing fairly took down to grapple thought. Aha! w now? What wou say now, that had lawyers' letters? off? Methought th why, meknew they they would fawn, ar and explain, and lic polish his noble be selves for the hon him. Nothing is common humanity credit toward a attitude of that s learns that his del come rich.

Having finally a this great idea, I congratulate him.

I found him in hi down, looking very utterly used up. A this, but burst forth

known proportions. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico*, of course; and so up went Jack's fortune to twenty thousand a year. Jack had told me about that uncle, and I had reason to know that it was at least six or seven thousand; and, let me tell you, six or seven thousand pounds per annum isn't to be laughed at.

So here was Jack—raised up in a moment—far above the dull level of debt, and duns, and despair; raised to an upper and, I trust, a better world, where swarms of duns can never arise, and bailiffs never come; raised, my boy, to a region of serene delight, where, like the gods of Epicurus, he might survey from his cloudless calm the darkness and the gloom of the lower world. A fortune, by Jove! Seven thousand pounds sterling a year! Hard cash! Why, the thing fairly took my breath away. I sat down to grapple with the stupendous thought. Aha! where would the duns be now? What would those miserable devils say now, that had been badgering him with lawyers' letters? Wouldn't they all haul off? Methought they would. Methought! why, methought they would—methought how they would fawn, and cringe, and apologize, and explain, and lick the dust, and offer to polish his noble boots, and present themselves for the honor of being kicked by him. Nothing is more degrading to our common humanity than the attitude of a creditor toward a poor debtor—except the attitude of that same creditor, when he learns that his debtor has suddenly become rich.

Having finally succeeded in mastering this great idea, I hurried off to Jack to congratulate him.

I found him in his room. He was lying down, looking very blue, very dismal, and utterly used up. At first, I did not notice this, but burst forth in a torrent of congra-

tulations, shaking his hand most violently. He raised himself slightly from the sofa on which he was reclining, and his languid hand did not return my warm grasp, nor did his face exhibit the slightest interest in what I said. Seeing this, I stopped short suddenly.

"Hallo, old boy!" I cried. "What's the matter? Any thing happened? Isn't it true, then?"

"Oh, yes," said Jack, dolefully, leaning forward, with his elbows on his knees, and looking at the floor.

"Well, you don't seem very jubilant about it. Any thing the matter? Why, man, if you were dying, I should think you'd rise up at the idea of seven thousand a year."

Jack said nothing.

At such a check as this to my enthusiastic sympathy, I sat in silence for a time, and looked at him. His elbows were on his knees, his face was pale, his hair in disorder, and his eyes were fixed on the wall opposite with a vacant and abstracted stare. There was a haggard look about his handsome face, and a careworn expression on his broad brow, which excited within me the deepest sympathy and sadness. Something had happened—something of no common kind. This was a something which was far, very far, more serious than those old troubles which had oppressed him. This was something far different from those old perplexities—the entanglements with three engagements. Amid all those he was nothing but a big, blundering baby; but now he seemed like a sorrow-stricken man. Where was the light of his eyes, the glory of his brow, the music of his voice? Where was that glow that once used to pervade his fresh, open, sunny face? Where! It was Jack—but not the Jack of old. It was Jack—but

"Alas! how changed from him  
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!"

Or, as another poet has it—

"'Twas Jack—but livings Jack no more!"

"Jack," said I, after a long and solemn silence, in which I had tried in vain to conjecture what might possibly be the cause of this—"Jack, dear boy, you and I have had confidences together, a little out of the ordinary line. I came here to congratulate you about your fortune; but I find you utterly cut up about something. Will you let me ask you what it is? I don't ask out of idle curiosity, but out of sympathy. At the same time, if it's any thing of a private nature, I beg pardon for asking you to tell it."

Jack looked up, and a faint flicker of a smile passed over his face.

"Oh, all right, old boy!" he said. "I'm hit hard—all up—and that sort of thing—hit hard—yes, damned hard—serves me right, too, you know, for being such an infernal fool."

He frowned, and drew a long breath.

"Wait a minute, old chap," said he, rising from the sofa; "I'll get something to sustain nature, and then I'll answer your question. I'm glad you've come. I don't know but that it'll do me good to tell it all to somebody. It's hard to stay here in my den, fretting my heart out—damned hard!—but wait a minute, and I'll explain."

Saying this, he walked over to the side-board.

"Will you take any thing?"

"Thanks, no," said I; "a pipe is all I want." And I proceeded to fill and light one.

Thereupon Jack poured out a tumbler of raw brandy, which he swallowed. Then he came back to the sofa. A flush came

to his face, and his eyes looked brighter; but he had still the same haggard aspect.

"I'm in for it, Macrorie," said he at last, gloomily.

"In for it?"

"Yes—an infernal scrape."

"What?"

"The widow—damn her!" and he struck his clinched fist against the head of the sofa.

"In for it? The widow?" I repeated.

"What do you mean?"

Jack drew a long breath, and regarded me with a fixed stare.

"I mean," said Jack, fixing his eyes upon me with an awful look, "I mean this—that I have to marry that woman."

"Marry her?"

"Yes," he exclaimed, dashing his fist upon the table savagely, "marry her! There you have it. I'm in for it. No escape. Escape—ha! ha! Nabbed, sir. All up! Married and done for—yes, eternally done for!"

He jerked these words out in a fierce, feverish way; and then, flinging himself back, he clasped his knees with his hands, and sat regarding me with stern eyes and frowning brow.

This mood of Jack's was a singular one. He was evidently undergoing great stress of mind. Under such circumstances as these, no levity could be thought of. Had he not been so desperate, I might have ventured upon a jest about the widow driving the others from the field and coming forth victorious; but, as it was, there was no room for jest. So I simply sat in silence, and returned his gaze.

"Well?" said he at last, impatiently.

"Well?" said I.

"Haven't you got any thing to say about that?"

"I don't know what to say. Your man-

ner of telling the  
prize than the th  
must have looked

"Looked forw  
did, except in a  
it, man! I thought  
on a fellow, and  
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"At once? Y  
event were near."

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"Next week?  
really mean it?"

"Next week—y  
day—not the end,  
week—Tuesday, t

"Tuesday, the  
ed, in amazement.

"Yes, Tuesday,  
Jack.

"Heavens, man  
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Jack looked at  
very earnestly.

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ue. of telling this takes me more by surprise than the thing itself. After all, you must have looked forward to this."

"Looked forward? I'll be hanged if I did, except in a very general way. Damn it, man! I thought she'd have a little pity on a fellow, and allow me some liberty. I didn't look forward to being shut up at once."

"At once? You speak as though the event were near."

"Near? I should think it was. What do you say to next week? Is that near or not? Near? I should rather think so."

"Next week? Good Lord! Jack, do you really mean it? Nonsense!"

"Next week—yes—and worse—on Tuesday—not the end, but the beginning, of the week—Tuesday, the 20th of June."

"Tuesday, the 20th of June!" I repeated, in amazement.

"Yes, Tuesday, the 20th of June," said Jack.

"Heavens, man! what have you been up to? How did it happen? Why did you do it? Couldn't you have postponed it? It takes two to make an agreement. What do you mean by lamenting over it now? Why didn't you get up excuses? Haven't you to go home to see about your estates? Why, in Heaven's name, did you let it be all arranged in this way, if you didn't want it to be?"

Jack looked at me for a few moments very earnestly.

"Why didn't I?" said he, at length; "simply because I happen to be an unmitigated, uncontrollable, incorrigible, illimitable, and inconceivable ass! That's the reason why, if you must know."

Jack's very forcible way of putting this statement afforded me no chance whatever of denying it or combating it. His determination to be an ass was so vehement,

that remonstrance was out of the question. I therefore accepted it as a probable truth.

For some time I remained silent, looking at Jack, and puffing solemnly at my pipe. In a situation of this kind, or in fact in any situation where one is expected to say something, but doesn't happen to have any thing in particular to say, there's nothing in the world like a pipe. For the human face, when it is graced by a pipe, and when the pipe is being puffed, assumes, somehow, a rare and wonderful expression of profound and solemn thought. Besides, the presence of the pipe in the mouth is a check to any overhasty remark. Vain and empty words are thus repressed, and thought, divine thought, reigns supreme. And so as I sat in silence before Jack, if I didn't have any profound thoughts in my mind, I at least had the appearance of it, which after all served my purpose quite as well.

"I don't mind telling you all about it, old chap," said Jack, at last, who had by this time passed into a better frame of mind, and looked more like his old self. "You've known all about the row, all along, and you'll have to be in at the death, so I'll tell you now. You'll have to help me through—you'll be my best man, and all that sort of thing, you know—and this is the best time for making a clean breast of it, you know: so here goes."

Upon this Jack drew a long breath, and then began:

"I've told you already," he said, "how abominably kind she was. You know when I called on her after the row with Miss Phillips, how sweet she was, and all that, and how I settled down on the old terms. I hadn't the heart to get up a row with her, and hadn't even the idea of such a thing. When a lady is civil, and kind, and all that, what can a fellow do? So you see

I went there as regular as clock-work, and dined, and then left. Sometimes I went at six, and stayed till eight; sometimes at five, and stayed till nine. But that was very seldom. Sometimes, you know, she'd get me talking, and somehow the time would fly, and it would be ever so late before I could get away. I'm always an ass, and so I felt tickled, no end, at her unflinching kindness to me, and took it all as so much incense, and all that—I was her deity, you know—snuffing up incense—receiving her devotion—feeling half sorry that I couldn't quite reciprocate, and making an infernal fool of myself generally.

"Now you know I'm such a confounded ass that her very reticence about my other affairs, and her quiet way of taking them, rather piqued me; and several times I threw out hints about them, to see what she would say. At such times she would smile in a knowing way, but say nothing. At last there was one evening—it was a little over a week ago—I went there, and found her more cordial than ever; more amusing, more fascinating—kinder, you know, and all that. There was no end to her little attentions. Of course all that sort of thing had on me the effect which it always has, and I rapidly began to make an ass of myself. I began to hint about those other affairs—and at last I told her I didn't believe she'd forgiven me."

Here Jack made an awful pause, and looked at me in deep solemnity.

I said nothing, but puffed away in my usual thoughtful manner.

"The moment that I said that," continued Jack, "she turned and gave me the strangest look. 'Forgiven you,' said she; 'after all that has passed, can you say that?'"

"Well," I said, "you don't seem altogether what you used to be—"

"I!" she exclaimed. "I not what I used to be?—and you can look me in the face and say that."

"And now, Macrorie, listen to what an ass can do.

"You see, her language, her tone, and her look, all piqued me. But at the same time I didn't know what to say. I didn't love her—confound her!—and I knew that I didn't—but I wanted to assert myself, or some other damned thing or other—so what did I do but take her hand."

I puffed on.

"She leaned back in her chair.

"Ah, Jack," she sighed, "I don't believe you care any thing for poor me."

Jack paused for a while, and sat looking at the floor.

"Which was quite true," he continued, at last. "Only under the circumstances, being thus challenged, you know, by a very pretty widow, and being an ass, and being conceited, and being dazzled by the surroundings, what did I do, but begin to swear that I loved her better than ever?"

"And me alone!" she sighed.

"Yes, you alone!" I cried, and then went on in the usual strain in which impassioned lovers go under such circumstances, but with this very material difference, that I didn't happen to be an impassioned lover, or any other kind of a lover of hers at all, and I knew it all the time, and all the time felt a secret horror at what I was saying.

"But the fact of the business is, Macrorie, that woman is—oh—she is awfully clever, and she managed to lead me on, I don't know how. She pretended not to believe me—she hinted at my indifference, she spoke about my joy at getting away from her so as to go elsewhere, and said a thousand other things, all of which had the effect of making me more of an ass than

ever, and so I rushed out."

Here Jack paused apairingly.

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Here Jack paused, and looked at me despairingly.

"Well?" said I.

"Well?" said he.

"Go on," said I. "Make an end of it. Out with it! What next?"

Jack gave a groan.

"Well—you see—somehow—I went on—and before I knew it there I was offering to marry her on the spot—and heaven and earth! Macrorie—wasn't it a sort of judgment on me—don't you think?—I'd got used to that sort of thing, you know—offering to marry people off hand, you know, and all that—and so it came natural on this occasion; and I supposed that was how it happened, that before I knew what I was doing I had pumped out a violent and vehement entreaty for her to be mine at once.—Yes, at once—any time—that evening—the next day—the day after—no matter when. I'll be hanged if I can say now whether at that moment I was really sincere or not. I'm such a perfect and finished ass, that I really believe I meant what I said, and at that time I really wanted her to marry me. If that confounded chaplain that goes humbugging about here all the time had happened to be in the room, I'd have asked him to tie the knot on the spot. Yes, I'll be hanged if I wouldn't! His not being there is the only reason, I believe, why the knot wasn't tied. In that case I'd now be Mr. Finimore—no, by Jove—what rot!—I mean I'd now be her husband, and she'd be Mrs. Randolph—confound her!"

Jack again relapsed into silence. His confession was a difficult task for him, and it came hard. It was given piecemeal, like the confession of a murderer on the day before his execution, when his desire to con-

less struggles with his unwillingness to recall the particulars of an abhorrent deed, and when after giving one fact he delays and falters, and lapses into long silence before he is willing or able to give another.

"Well, after that," he resumed, at last, "I was fairly in for it—no hope, no going back—no escapes—trapped, my boy—nabbed—gone in forever—head over heels, and all the rest of it. The widow was affected by my vehemence, as a matter of course—she stammered—she hesitated, and of course, being an ass, I was only made more vehement by all that sort of thing, you know. So I urged her, and pressed her, and then, before I knew what I was about, I found her coyly granting my insane request to name the day."

"Oh, Jack! Jack! Jack!" I exclaimed.

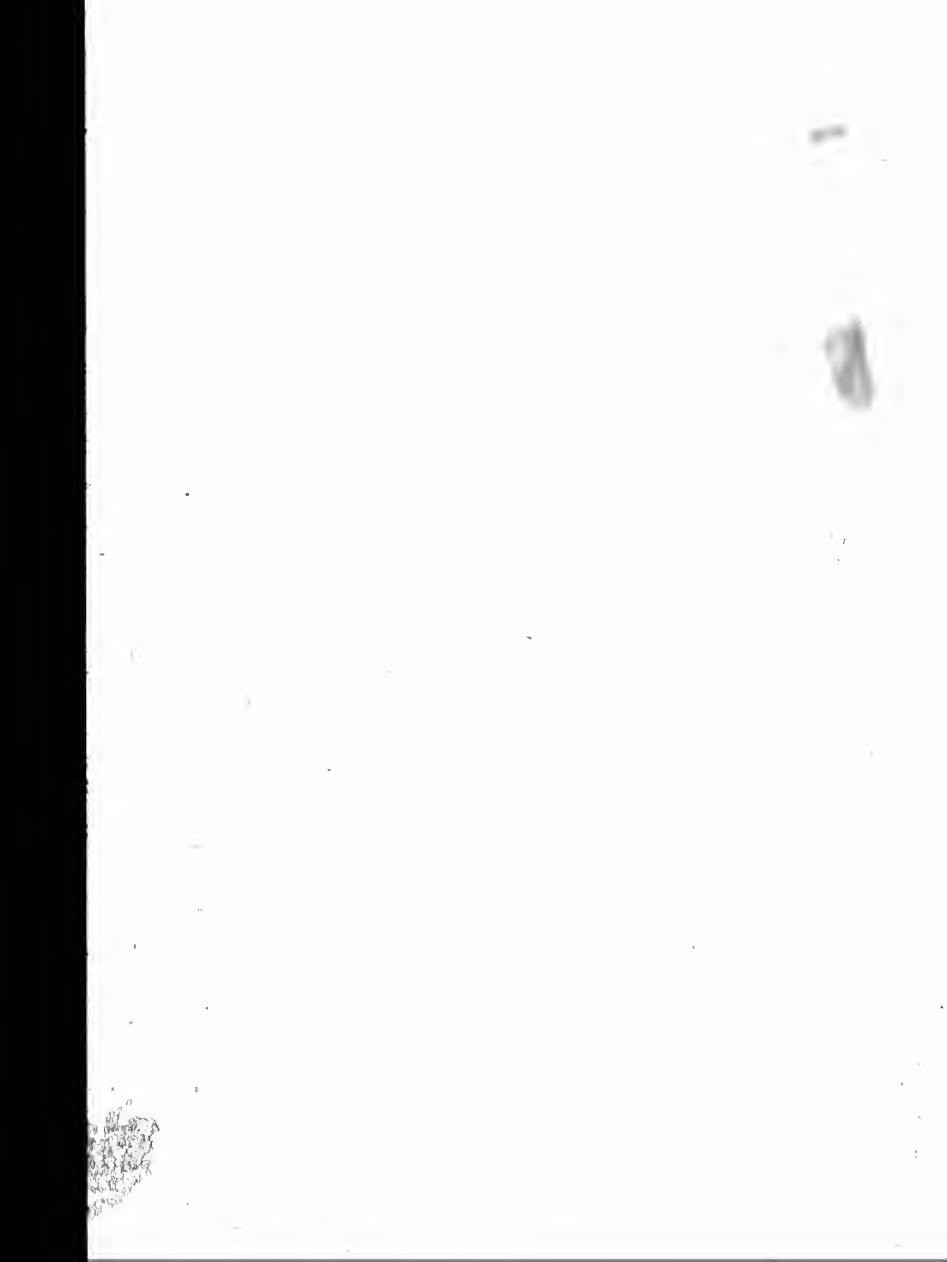
"Go on," said he. "Haven't you something more to say? Pitch in. Give it to me hot and heavy. You don't seem to be altogether equal to the occasion, Macrodie. Why don't you hit hard?"

"Can't do it," said I. "I'm knocked down myself. Wait, and I'll come to time. But don't be too hard on a fellow. Be reasonable. I want to take breath."

"Name the day! name the day! name the day!" continued Jack, ringing the changes on the words; "name the day! By Jove! See here, Macrorie—can't you get a doctor's certificate for me and have me quietly put in the lunatic asylum before that day comes?"

"That's not a bad idea," said I. "It might be managed. It's worth thinking about, at any rate."

"Wild!" said Jack, "mad as a March hare, or a hatter, or any other thing of that sort—ungovernable—unmanageable, devoid of all sense and reason—what more do you want?—If I am not a lunatic, who is? That's what I want to know."





"There's a great deal of reason in that," said I, gravely.

"No there isn't," said Jack, pettishly. "It's all nonsense. I tell you I'm a madman, a lunatic, an idiot, any thing else. I don't quite need a strait-jacket as yet, but I tell you I do need the seclusion of a comfortable lunatic asylum. I only stipulate for an occasional drop of beer, and a whiff or two at odd times. Don't you think I can manage it?"

"It might be worth trying," said I. "But trot on, old fellow."

Jack, thus recalled to himself, gave another very heavy sigh.

"Where was I?" said he: "Oh, about naming the day. Well, I'll be hanged if she didn't do it. She did name the day. And what day do you think it was that she named? What day! Good Heavens, Macrorie! Only think of it. What do you happen to have to say, now, for instance, to the 20th of June? Hey? What do you say to next Tuesday? Tuesday, the 20th of June! Next Tuesday! Only think of it. Mad! I should rather think so."

I had nothing to say, and so I said nothing.

At this stage of the proceedings Jack filled a pipe, and began smoking savagely, blowing out the puffs of smoke fast and furious. Both of us sat in silence, involved in deep and anxious thought—I for him, he for himself.

At last he spoke.

"That's all very well," said he, putting down the pipe, "but I haven't yet told you the worst."

"The worst?"

"Yes; there's something more to be told—something which has brought me to this. I'm not the fellow I was. It isn't the widow; it's something else. It's—

## CHAPTER XXXV.

"LOUIE!"—PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP.—ITS RESULTS.—ADVICE MAY BE GIVEN TOO FREELY, AND CONSOLATION MAY BE SOUGHT FOR TOO EAGERLY.—TWO INFLAMMABLE HEARTS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO COME TOGETHER.—THE OLD, OLD STORY.—A BREAK-DOWN, AND THE RESULTS ALL AROUND.—THE CONDEMNED CRIMINAL.—THE SLOW YET SURE APPROACH OF THE HOUR OF EXECUTION.

"It's Louie!" said Jack again, after a pause. "That's the 'hinc illæ lachrymæ' of it, as the Latin grammar has it."

"Louie?" I repeated.

"Yes, Louie," said Jack, sadly and solemnly.

I said nothing. I saw that something more was coming, which would afford the true key to Jack's despair. So I waited in silence till it should come.

"As for the widow herself," said Jack, meditatively, "she isn't a bad lot, and, if it hadn't been for Louie, I should have taken all this as an indication of Providence that my life was to be lived out under her guidance; but then the mischief of it is, there happens to be a Louie, and that Louie happens to be the very Louie that I can't manage to live without. You see there's no nonsense about this, old boy. You may remind me of Miss Phillips and Number Thre, but I swear to you solemnly they were both nothing compared with Louie. Louie is the only one that ever has fairly taken me out of myself, and fastened herself to all my thoughts, and hopes, and desires. Louie is the only one that has ever chained me to her in such a way that I never wished to leave her for anybody else. Louie! why, ever since I've

known her, womankind her, it all so you have it Louie. Then are they? I dities of a Macrorie, I twined herse thought of calf of a boy it all. Now her up so close. I know it all, tell you what about suicide near it this la to laugh at."

And Jack wild face an began to the head-stone of bility which w all.

"I'll tell. "It's a relief. already after w

"You see," which his fro were fixed or evening I stay with the wide The deed was made every ne ried off to see did I want of only answer is wanted her. N her. I've been face and the past two mont ly knew it until all become pla to Louie, becau

known her, all the rest of the world and of womankind has been nothing, and, beside her, it all sank into insignificance. There you have it! That's the way I feel about Louie. These other scrapes of mine—what are they? Bosh and nonsense, the absurdities of a silly boy! But Louie! why, Maerorie, I swear to you that she has twined herself around me so that the thought of her has changed me from a calf of a boy into a man. Now I know it all. Now I understand why I followed her up so close. Now, now, and now, when I know it all, it is all too late! By Jove, I tell you what it is, I've talked like a fool about suicide, but I swear I've been so near it this last week that it's not a thing to laugh at."

And Jack looked at me with such a wild face and such fierce eyes that I began to think of the long-talked-of head-stone of Anderson's as a possibility which was not so very remote, after all.

"I'll tell you all about it," said he. "It's a relief. I feel a good deal better already after what I have said.

"You see," said he, after a pause, in which his frown grew darker, and his eyes were fixed on vacancy—"you see, that evening I stayed a little later than usual with the widow. At last I hurried off. The deed was done, and the thought of this made every nerve tingle within me. I hurried off to see Louie. What the mischief did I want of Louie? you may ask. My only answer is: I wanted her because I wanted her. No day was complete without her. I've been living on the sight of her face and the sound of her voice for the past two months and more, and never fairly knew it until this last week, when it has all become plain to me. So I hurried off to Louie, because I had to do so—because

every day had to be completed by the sight of her.

"I reached the house somewhat later than usual. People were there. I must have looked different from usual. I know I was very silent, and I must have acted queer, you know. But they were all talking, and playing, and laughing, and none of them took any particular notice. And so at last I drifted off toward Louie, as usual. She was expecting me. I knew that. She always expects me. But this time I saw she was looking at me with a very queer expression. She saw something unusual in my face. Naturally enough. I felt as though I had committed a murder. And so I had. I had murdered my hope—my love—my darling—my only life and joy. I'm not humbugging, Maerorie—don't chaff, for Heaven's sake!"

I wasn't chaffing, and had no idea of such a thing. I was simply listening, with a very painful sympathy with Jack's evident emotion.

"We were apart from the others," he continued, in a tremulous voice. "She looked at me, and I looked at her. I saw trouble in her face, and she saw trouble in mine. So we sat. We were silent for some time. No nonsense now. No laughter. No more teasing and coaxing. Poor little Louie! How distressed she looked! Where was her sweet smile now? Where was her laughing voice? Where was her bright, animated face—her sparkling eyes—her fun—her merriment—her chaff? Poor little Louie!"

And Jack's voice died away into a moan of grief.

But he rallied again, and went on:

"She asked me what was the matter. I told her—nothing. But she was sure that something had happened, and begged me to

tell her. So I told her all. And her face, as I told her, turned as white as marble. She seemed to grow rigid where she sat. And, as I ended, she bent down her head—and she pressed her hand to her forehead—and then she gave me an awful look—a look which will haunt me to my dying day—and then—and then—then—she—she burst into tears—and, oh, Macrorie—oh, how she cried!”

And Jack, having stammered out this, gave way completely, and, burying his face in his hands, he sobbed aloud.

Then followed a long, long silence.

At last Jack roused himself.

“You see, Macrorie,” he continued, “I had been acting like the devil to her. All her chaff, and nonsense, and laughter, had been a mask. Oh, Louie! She had grown fond of me—poor miserable devil that I am—and this is the end of it all!

“She got away,” said Jack, after another long silence—“she got away somehow; and, after she had gone, I sat for a while, feeling like a man who has died and got into another world. Paralyzed, bewildered—take any word you like, and it will not express what I was. I got off somehow—I don’t know how—and here I am. I haven’t seen her since.

“I got away,” he continued, throwing back his head, and looking vacantly at the ceiling—“I got away, and came here, and the next day I got a letter about my uncle’s death and my legacy. I had no sorrow for my poor dear old uncle, and no joy over my fortune. I had no thought for any thing but Louie. Seven thousand a year, or ten thousand, or a hundred thousand, whatever it might be, it amounts to nothing. What I have gained is nothing to what I have lost. I’d give it all for Louie. I’d give it all to undo what has been done. I’d give it all, by Heaven, for one more

sight of her! But that sight of her I can never have. I dare not go near the house. I am afraid to hear about her. My legacy! I wish it were at the bottom of the Atlantic. What is it all to me, if I have to give up Louie forever? And that’s what it is!”

There was no exaggeration in all this. That was evident. Jack’s misery was real, and was manifest in his pale face and general change of manner. This accounted for it all. This was the blow that had struck him down. All his other troubles had been laughable compared with this. But from this he could not rally. Nor, for my part, did I know of any consolation that could be offered. Now, for the first time, I saw the true nature of his sentiments toward Louie, and learned from him the sentiments of that poor little thing toward him. It was the old story. They had been altogether too much with one another. They had been great friends, and all that sort of thing. Louie had teased and given good advice. Jack had sought consolation for all his troubles. And now—lo and behold!—in one moment each had made the awful discovery that their supposed friendship was something far more tender and far-reaching.

“I’ll never see her again!” sighed Jack.

“Who?” said I. “The widow?”

“The widow!” exclaimed Jack, contemptuously; “no—poor little Louie!”

“But you’ll see the widow?”

“Oh, yea,” said Jack, dryly. “I’ll have to be there.”

“Why not kick it all up, and go home on leave of absence?”

Jack shook his head despairingly.

“No chance,” he muttered—“not a ghost of a one. My sentence is pronounced; I must go to execution. It’s my own doing, too. I’ve given my own word.”

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"Next Tuesday?"

"Next Tuesday."

"Where?"

"St. Malachi's."

"Oh, it will be at church, then?"

"Yes."

"Who's the parson?"

"Oh, old Fletcher."

"At what time?"

"Twelve; and see here, Macrobio, you'll stand by a fellow—of course—won't you? see me off—you know—adjust the noose, watch the drop fall—and see poor Jack Randolph launched into—"

"Oh, of course."

Silence followed, and soon I took my departure, leaving Jack to *his meditations and his despair.*

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FRIEND'S APOLOGY FOR A FRIEND.—JACK DOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF A DEEP ABYSS OF WOE.—HIS DESPAIR.—THE HOUR AND THE MAN!—WHERE IS THE WOMAN!—A SACRED SPOT.—OLD FLETCHER.—THE TOLL OF THE BELL.—MEDITATIONS ON EACH SUCCESSIVE STROKE.—A WILD SEARCH.—THE PRETTY SERVANT-MAID, AND HER PRETTY STORY.—THROWING GOLD ABOUT.

Jack's strange revelation excited my deepest sympathy, but I did not see how it was possible for him to get rid of his difficulty. One way was certainly possible. He could easily get leave of absence and go home, for the sake of attending to his estates. Once in England, he could sell out, and retire from the army altogether, or exchange into another regiment. This was certainly possible physically; but to Jack it was morally impossible.

Now, Jack had appeared in this story in very awkward circumstances, engaging

himself right and left to every young lady that he fancied, with a fatal thoughtlessness, that cannot be too strongly reprehended. Such very diffusive affection might argue a lack of principle. Yet, after all, Jack was a man with a high sense of honor. The only difficulty was this, that he was too susceptible. All susceptible men can easily understand such a character. I'm an awfully susceptible man myself, as I have already had the honor of announcing, and am, moreover, a man of honor—consequently I feel strongly for Jack, and always did feel strongly for him.

Given, then, a man of very great susceptibility, and a very high sense of honor, and what would he do?

Why, in the first place, as a matter of course, his too susceptible heart would involve him in many tenderesses; and, if he was as reckless and thoughtless as Jack, he would be drawn into inconvenient entanglements; and, perhaps, like Jack, before he knew what he was about, he might find himself engaged to three different ladies, and in love with a fourth.

In the second place, his high sense of honor would make him eager to do his duty by them all. Of course, this would be impossible. Yet Jack had done his best. He had offered immediate marriage to Miss Phillips, and had proposed an elopement to Number Three. This shows that his impulses led him to blind acts which tended in a vague way to do justice to the particular lady who happened for the time being to be in his mind.

And so Jack had gone blundering on until at last he found himself at the mercy of the widow. The others had given him up in scorn. She would not give him up. He was bound fast. He felt the bond. In the midst of this his susceptibility drove him

on further, and, instead of trying to get out of his difficulties, he had madly thrust himself further into them.

And there he was—doomed—looking forward to the fateful Tuesday.

He felt the full terror of his doom, but did not think of trying to evade it. He was bound. His word was given. He considered it irrevocable. Flight? He thought no more of that than he thought of committing a murder. He would actually have given all that he had, and more too, for the sake of getting rid of the widow; but he would not be what he considered a sneak, even for that.

There was, therefore, no help for it. He was doomed. Tuesday! June 20th! St. Malachi's! Old Fletcher! Launched into matrimony! Hence his despair.

During the intervening days I did not see him. I did not visit him, and he did not come near me. Much as I sympathized with him in his woes, I knew that I could do nothing and say nothing. Besides, I had my own troubles. Every time I went to O'Halloran's, Marion's shyness, and reserve, and timidity, grew more marked. Every time that I came home, I kept bothering myself as to the possible cause of all this, and tormented myself as to the reason of such a change in her.

One day I called at the Bertons'. I didn't see Louie. I asked after her, and they told me she was not well. I hoped it was nothing serious, and felt relieved at learning that it was nothing but a "slight cold." I understood that. Poor Louie! Poor Jack! Would that "slight cold" grow worse, or would she get over it in time? She did not seem to be of a morbid, moping nature. There was every reason to hope that such a one as she was would surmount it. And yet it was hard to say. It is often these very natures—buoy-

ant, robust, healthy, straightforward—which feel the most. They are not impressive. They are not touched by every new emotion. And so it sometimes happens that, when they do feel, the feeling lasts forever.

Tuesday, at last, came—the 20th—the fated day!

At about eleven o'clock I entered Jack's room, prepared to act my part and stand by his side in that supreme moment of fate.

Jack was lying on the sofa, as I came in. He rose and pressed my hand in silence. I said nothing, but took my seat in an easy-chair. Jack was arrayed for the ceremony in all respects, except his coat, instead of which garment he wore a dressing-gown. He was smoking vigorously. His face was very pale, and, from time to time, a heavy sigh escaped him.

I was very forcibly struck by the strong resemblance which there was between Jack, on the present occasion, and a condemned prisoner before his execution. So strong was this, that, somehow, as I sat there in silence, a vague idea came into my head that Jack was actually going to be hanged; and, before I knew where my thoughts were leading me, I began to think, in a misty way, of the propriety of calling in a clergyman to administer ghostly consolation to the poor condemned in his last moments. It was only with an effort that I was able to get rid of this idea, and come back from this foolish, yet not unnatural fancy, to the reality of the present situation. There was every reason, indeed, for such a momentary misconception. The sadness, the silence, the gloom, all suggested some prison cell; and Jack, prostrate, stricken, miserable, mute, and despairing, could not fail to suggest the doomed victim.

After a time Jack rose, and, going to the sideboard, offered me something to drink. I declined. Whereupon he poured

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out a tumblerful of raw brandy and hastily swallowed it. As he had done that very same thing before, I began to think that he was going a little too far.

"See here, old boy," said I, "arn't you a little reckless? That sort of thing isn't exactly the best kind of preparation for the event—is it?"

"What?—this?" said Jack, holding up the empty tumbler, with a gloomy glance toward me; "oh, it's nothing. I've been drenching myself with brandy this last week. It's the only thing I can do. The worst of it is, it don't have much effect now. I have to drink too much of it before I can bring myself into a proper state of calm."

"Calm!" said I, "calm! I tell you what it is, old chap, you'll find it'll be any thing but calm. You'll have delirium tremens before the week's out, at this rate."

"Delirium tremens?" said Jack, with a faint, cynical laugh. "No go, my boy—too late. Not time now. If it had only come yesterday, I might have had a reprieve. But it didn't come. And so I have only a tremendous headache. I've less than an hour, and can't get it up in that time. Let me have my swing, old man. I'd do as much for you."

And, saying this, he drank off a half tumbler more.

"There," said he, going back to the sofa. "That's better. I feel more able to go through with it. It takes a good lot now, though, to get a fellow's courage up."

After this, Jack again relapsed into silence, which I ventured to interrupt with a few questions as to the nature of the coming ceremony. Jack's answers were short, reluctant, and dragged from him piecemeal. It was a thing which he had to face in a very short time, and any other

subject was preferable as a theme for conversation.

"Will there be much of a crowd?"

"Oh, no."

"You didn't invite any."

"Me? invite any? Good Lord! I should think not!"

"Perhaps she has?"

"Oh, no; she said she wouldn't."

"Well, I dare say the town, by this time, has got wind of it, and the church'll be full."

"No, I think not," said Jack, with a sigh.

"Oh, I don't know; it's not a common affair."

"Well, she told me she had kept it a secret—and you and Louie are the only ones I've told it to—so, unless you have told about it, no one knows."

"I haven't told a soul."

"Then I don't see how anybody can know, unless old Fletcher has proclaimed it."

"Not he; he wouldn't take the trouble."

"I don't care," said Jack, morosely, "how many are there, or how few. Crowd or no crowd, it makes small difference to me, by Jove!"

"Look here, old fellow," said I, suddenly, after some further conversation, "if you're going, you'd better start. It's a quarter to twelve now."

Jack gave a groan and rose from his sofa. He went into his dressing-room and soon returned, in his festive array, with a face of despair that was singularly at variance with his costume. Before starting, in spite of my remonstrances, he swallowed another draught of brandy. I began to doubt whether he would be able to stand up at the ceremony.

St. Malachi's was not far away, and a few minutes' drive brought us there.

The church was quite empty. A few stragglers, unknown to us, had taken seats in the front pews. Old Fletcher was in the chancel. We walked up and shook hands with him. He greeted Jack with an affectionate earnestness of congratulation, which, I was sorry to see, was not properly responded to.

After a few words, we all sat down in the choir.

It wanted about five minutes of the time.

The widow was expected every moment.

Old Fletcher now subsided into dignified silence. I fidgeted about, and looked at my watch every half-minute. As for Jack, he buried his face in his hands and sat motionless.

Thus four minutes passed.

No signs of the widow.

One minute still remained.

The time was very long.

I took out my watch a half-dozen times, to hasten its progress. I shook it impatiently to make it go faster. The great empty church looked cold and lonely. The little group of spectators only added to the loneliness of the scene. An occasional cough resounded harshly amid the universal stillness. The sibilant sounds of whispers struck sharply and unpleasantly upon the ear.

At last the minute passed.

I began to think my watch was wrong; but no—for suddenly, from the great bell above, in the church-tower, there tolled out the first stroke of the hour. And between each stroke there seemed a long, long interval, in which the mind had leisure to turn over and over all the peculiarities of this situation.

ONE! I counted.

[No widow. What's up?—Did any one ever hear of a bride missing the hour, or delaying in this way?]

TWO!

[What a humbug of a woman! She has cultivated procrastination all her life, and this is the result.]

THREE!

[Not yet. Perhaps she wants to make a sensation. She anticipates a crowded church, and will make an entrance in state.]

FOUR!

[But no; she did not invite anybody, and had no reason to suppose that any one would be here.]

FIVE!

[No, it could not be vanity; but, if not, what can be the possible cause?]

SIX!

[Can it be timidity, bashfulness, and all that sort of thing? Bosh! The widow, Fimmimore is not a blushing, timid maiden.]

SEVEN!

[Perhaps her watch is out of the way. But, then, on one's marriage-day, would not one see, first of all, that one's watch was right?]

EIGHT!

[Perhaps something is the matter with her bridal array. The dress might not have arrived in time. She may be waiting for her feathers.]

NINE!

[Not yet! Perhaps she is expecting Jack to go to her house and accompany her here. It is very natural Jack may have agreed to do so, and then forgotten all about it.]

TEN!

[Perhaps there has been some misunderstanding about the hour, and the widow is not expecting to come till two.]

ELEVEN!

[Perhaps she is ill. Sudden attack of vertigo, acute rheumatism, and brain-fever, consequent upon the excitement of the

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"Waiting for the Widow."—page 134.

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TWELVE!!!

The last toll of the bell rolled out slowly and solemnly, and its deep tones came along the lofty church, and died away in long reverberations down the aisles and along the galleries. Twelve! The hour had come, and with the hour the man; but where was the woman?

Thus far Jack had been holding his face in his hands; but, as the last tones of the bell died away, he raised himself and looked around with some wildness in his face.

"By Jove!" said he.

"What?"

"The widow!"

"She's not here," said I.

"By Jove! Only think of it. A widow, and too late! By Jove! I can't grapple with the idea, you know."

After this we relapsed into silence, and waited.

The people in the pews whispered more vigorously, and every little while looked anxiously around to see if the bridal party was approaching. Old Fletcher closed his eyes, folded his arms, and appeared either buried in thought or in sleep—probably a little of both. Jack sat stolidly with his legs crossed, and his hands hugging his knee, looking straight before him at the opposite side of the chancel, and apparently reading most diligently the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, which were on the wall there. I was in a general state of mild but ever-increasing surprise, and endeavored to find some conceivable reason for such very curious procrastination.

So the time passed, and none of us said any thing, and the little company of spectators grew fidgety, and Jack still stared, and I still wondered.

At last old Fletcher turned to Jack.

"You said twelve, I think, sir," said he, mildly and benevolently.

"Twelve—did I? Well—of course; why not? Twelve, of course."

"The lady is rather behind the time, I think—isn't she?" said the reverend gentleman, with mild suggestiveness.

"Behind the time?" said Jack, fumbling at his watch; "why, so she is; why, it's twenty minutes to one. By Jove!"

"Perhaps you mistook the hour," hinted the clergyman.

"Mistook it? Not a bit of it," cried Jack, who looked puzzled and bewildered. "The hour? I'm as confident it was twelve as I'm confident of my existence. Not a bit of doubt about that."

"Perhaps something's happened," said I; "hadn't I better drive round to the house, Jack?"

"Yes; not a bad idea," said Jack. "I'll go too. I can't stand it any longer. I've read the ten commandments through seventy-nine times, and was trying to work up to a hundred, when you interrupted me. Do you know, old chap—I feel out of sorts; that brandy's got to my head—I'd like a little fresh air. Besides, I can't stand this waiting any longer. If it's got to be—why, the sooner the better. Have it out—and be done with it, I say. A fellow don't want to stand all day on the scaffold waiting for the confounded hangman—does he?"

Jack spoke wildly, cynically, and desperately. Old Fletcher listened to these words with a face so full of astonishment and horror, that it has haunted me ever since. And so we turned away, and we left that stricken old man looking after us in amazement and horror too deep for words.

Jack's spirits had flushed up for a moment into a fitful light; but the next mo-

ment they sank again into gloom. We walked slowly down the aisle, and, as we passed down, the spectators, seeing us go out, rose from their seats with the evident conviction that the affair was postponed, and the determination to follow. Jack's carriage was at the door, and we drove off.

"Maerorie, my boy," said Jack.

"What?"

"You didn't bring your flask, I suppose," said Jack, gloomily.

"No," said I; "and it's well I didn't, for I think you've done enough of that sort of thing to-day."

"To-day? This is the day of all days when I ought. How else can I keep up? I must stupefy myself, that's all. You don't know, old boy, how near I am to doing something desperate."

"Come, Jack, don't knock under that way. Confound it, I thought you had more spirit."

"Why the deuce does she drive me mad with her delay?" cried Jack, a few minutes after. "Why doesn't she come and be done with it? Am I to spend the whole day waiting for her? By Jove, I've a great mind to go home, and, if she wants me, she may come for me."

"Do," said I, eagerly. "She's missed the appointment; why should you care?"

"Pooh! a fellow can't act in that sort of way. No. Have it out. I've acted badly enough, in a general way, but I won't go deliberately and do a mean thing. I dare say this sort of thing will wear off in the long run. We'll go to England next week. We'll start for New York to-night, and never come back. I intend to try to get into the 178th regiment. It's out in Bombay, I believe. Yes. I've made up my mind to that. It's the only thing to be done. Yes—it's the best thing—far the best for both of us."

"Both of you!"

"Both, yea; of course."

"What, you and the widow?"

"The widow? Confound the widow! Who's talking of her?"

"I thought you were talking of her. You said you were going to take her to England."

"The widow? No," cried Jack, peevishly; "I meant Louie, of course. Who else could I mean? Louie. I said it would be far better for me and Louie if I went to Bombay."

And with these words he flung himself impatiently back in the carriage and scowled at vacancy.

And this was Jack. This was my broad-browed, frank-faced, golden-haired, bright, smiling, incoherent, inconsistent, inconsequential, light-hearted, hilarious Jack—the Jack who was once the joy of every company, rollicking, reckless, and without a care. To this complexion had he come at last. Oh, what a moral ruin was here, my countrymen! Where now were his jests and gibes—his wit, that was wont to set the table in a roar? Alas! poor Yorick! *Amour! amour! quand tu nous tiens*, who can tell what the mischief will become of us! Once it was "not wisely but too many"—now it was "not wisely but too well"—and this was the end of it. O Louie! O Jack! Is there no such thing as true Platonic love on earth?

But there was not much time for Jack to scowl or for me to meditate. The widow did not live very far away, and a quarter of an hour was enough to bring us there.

It was a handsome house. I knew it well. Jack knew it better. But it looked dark now, and rather gloomy. The shutters were closed, and there was no sign of life whatever.

Jack stared at the house for a moment.

and then hurried up the pull at the bell third.

At the third closed a maid-

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stepped into the

The servant-

"Mrs. Finn-

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and then jumped out. I followed. We hurried up the steps, and Jack gave a fierce pull at the bell, followed by a second and a third.

At the third pull the door opened and disclosed a maid-servant.

"Mrs. Finnimore?" said Jack, as he stepped into the hall—and then stopped.

The servant seemed surprised.

"Mrs. Finnimore?" said she.

"Yes," said Jack. "Is she here?"

"Here?"

"Yes."

"Why, sir—she's gone—"

"Gone!" cried Jack. "Gone! Impossible! Why we drove straight here from St. Malachi's, and didn't meet her. Which street did she go?"

"Which street, sir? St. Malachi's, sir?" repeated the servant, in bewilderment.

"Yes—which way did she go?"

"Why, sir—she went to Montreal," said the servant—"to Montreal, you know, sir," she repeated, in a mincing tone, bridling and blushing at the same time.

"To—where? what?" cried Jack, thunderstruck—"Montreal! Montreal! What the devil is the meaning of all that?" And Jack fairly gasped, and looked at me in utter bewilderment. And I looked back at him with emotions equal to his own. And we both stood, to use an expressive but not by any means classical word—dumfounded.

[Had a thunder-bolt burst—and all that sort of thing, you know, my boy.]

Jack was quite unable to utter another word. So I came to his help.

"I think you said your mistress went to Montreal?" said I, mildly and encouragingly, for the servant began to look frightened.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you be kind enough to tell me what she went there for? I wouldn't ask

you, but it's a matter of some importance."

"What for, sir?" said the servant—and a very pretty blush came over her rather pretty face. "What for, sir? Why, sir—you know, sir—she went off, sir—on her—her—wedding-tower, sir."

"Her WHAT!!!" cried Jack, wildly.

"Her wedding-tower, sir," repeated the servant, in a faint voice.

"Her wedding-tour!" cried Jack. "Her wedding-tour! Do you mean what you say? Is this a joke? What do you mean?"

At this, which was spoken most vehemently by Jack, who was now in a state of frightful excitement, the servant turned pale and started back in fear—so I interposed.

"Don't be at all alarmed," I said, kindly.

"We merely want to know, you know, what you mean by saying it was a wedding-tour. What wedding? We want to know, you know."

"Wedding, sir? Lor', sir! Yes, sir. This morning, sir. She was married, you know, sir."

"MARRIED!" cried Jack, in a strange, wild voice.

"This morning!" I exclaimed.

"Lor', sir! Yes, sir," continued the maid, who was still a little frightened at the presence of such excited visitors. "This morning, sir. Early, sir. Six o'clock, sir. And they took the seven o'clock train, sir—for Montreal, you know, sir—and they talked of New York, sir."

"They talked? They? Who? Married! Who married her? The widow! Mrs. Finnimore! Married! Nonsense! And gone! What do you mean? Who was it?"

The maid started back in fresh fear at Jack's terrible agitation. Terrible!

should rather think so. Imagine a criminal with the noose about his neck hearing a whisper going about that a pardon had arrived. Agitation? I should say that there was occasion for it. Still, I didn't like to see that pretty servant-maid frightened out of her wits. So I interposed once more.

"We merely want to know," said I, mildly, "who the gentleman was to whom your mistress was married this morning, and with whom she went to Montreal?"

"Who, sir? Why, sir—it was the chaplain, sir—of the Bobtails, sir—the Rev. Mr. Trenaman."

"THE CHAPLAIN!!!" cried Jack, with a strange voice that was somewhere between a shout and a sob. He turned to me. There was ecstacy on his face. His eyes were all aglow, and yet I could see in them the moisture of tears. He caught my hand in both of his.

"Oh, Macrorio!" he faltered, "see here, old boy—it's too much—Louie—all right—at last—too much, you know."

And the long and the short of it is, he nearly wrung my hand off.

Then he turned to the servant-maid, and fumbling in his pockets drew out a handful of sovereigns—

"See here!" he said, "you glorious little thing! you princess of servant-maids! here's something for a new bonnet, you know, or any thing else you fancy."

And he forced the sovereigns into her hand.

Then he wrung my hand again.

Then he rushed wildly out.

He flung some more sovereigns at the astonished coachman.

Then he sprang into the carriage, and I followed.

"Where shall I drive to, sir?" said the coachman.

"To Colonel Berton's!" roared Jack.

"Nonsense, Jack!" said I; "It's too early."

"Early—the devil! No it isn't.—Drive on."

And away went the carriage.

I prevailed on Jack to drop me at the corner of one of the streets, and, getting out, I went to my den, meditating on the astonishing events of the day.

The conclusions which I then came to about Mrs. Finimore, now Mrs. Trenaman, were verified fully by discoveries made afterward.

She had been quick-sighted enough to see that Jack did not care for her, and had given him up. The chaplain was far more to her taste. As Jack came again to her, she could not resist the desire to pay him up. This was the reason why she led him on to an offer of matrimony, and named the day and place. Miss Phillips had paid him up in one way; the widow chose another method, which was more in accordance with her own genius. All this time she had come to a full understanding with the chaplain, and the day which she had named to Jack was the very one on which her real marriage was to come off. I never could find out whether the chaplain knew about it or not. I rather think he did not. If he had known, he would have dropped a hint to Jack. He was such a confoundedly good-hearted sort of a fellow, that he would have interposed to prevent the success of the plan. As it was, it was carried out perfectly.

After all, she wasn't a bad little thing. She knew about Jack's devotion to Louie, and thought that her little plot, while it gratified her own feelings, would not in any way interfere with Jack's happiness. And it didn't. For, ever since then, Jack has never ceased to declare that the widow

as he still called her a trump—a glorious name that has pressed whatever admirable in human nature.

The next morning I went into my room. I was not surprised enough. Jack poured forth a very incoherent and very incoherent things. I can only

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as he still called her, was—a brick—a trump—a glorious lot—and every other name that has ever been invented to express whatever is noble, excellent, or admirable in human nature.

The next morning Jack came bursting into my room. One look at him was enough. Jack was himself again. He poured forth a long, a vehement, and a very incoherent account of his proceedings. I can only give the general facts.

He had driven at once to Colonel Ber-ton's. He had dashed into the house and asked for Louie. After a while Louie came down. He didn't say a word to her, but caught her in his arms. She didn't resist. Perhaps she had seen in his face, at one glance, that he was free. It was a long time before the absurd fellow could tell her what had happened. At length he managed to get it all out. He must have acted like a madman, but, as all lovers are more or less mad, his behavior may not have seemed very unnatural to Louie. The poor little girl had been moping ever since her last interview with Jack; every day had made it worse for her; and Jack assured me that, if he hadn't turned up at that particular hour on that particular day, she would have taken to her bed, and never risen from it again. But as it was Jack's inveterate habit to doom to death all the ladies who had cherished a tender passion in his behalf, the assertion may not be absolutely true. Louie might possibly have rallied from the blow, and regained the joy and buoyancy of her old life; yet, however that may be, it was certainly best for her that things should have turned out just as they did.

But I must now leave Jack, and get on to—

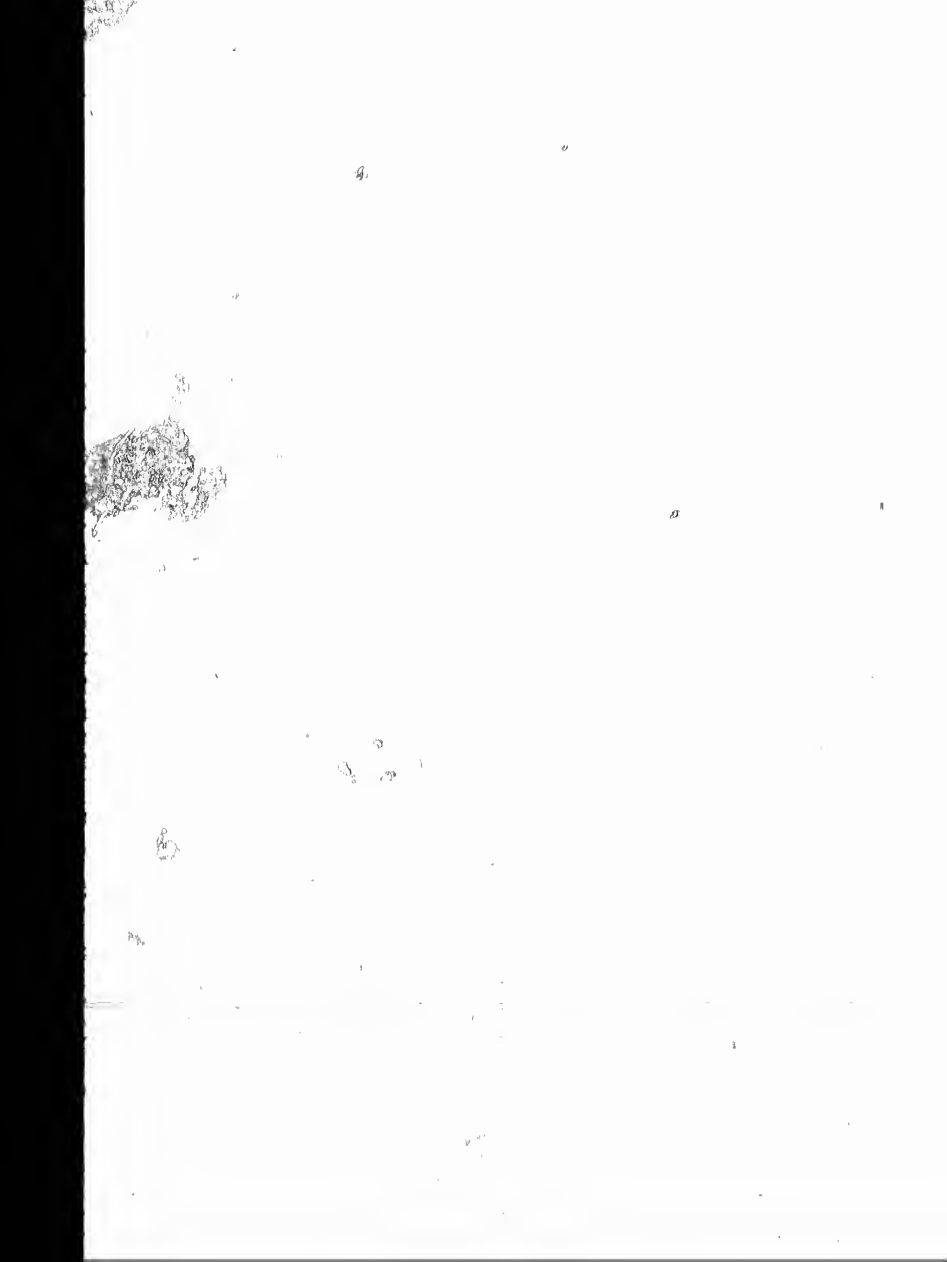
## CHAPTER XXXVII

MY OWN AFFAIRS.—A DRIVE AND HOW IT CAME OFF.—VARYING MOODS.—THE EXCITED, THE GLAD, AND THE GENTLEMANLY.—STRATAGEM.—MONTMORENCY.—REVISITING A MEMORABLE SCENE.—EFFECT OF SAID SCENE.—MY FEELING AND AN APPEAL IN CONNECTION.—RESULTS OF THE APPEALS.—“WILL YOU GO AWAY?”—GRAND RESULT.—CLIMAX.—FINALE.—A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING ALL ROUND, AND A UNIVERSAL EXPLANATION OF NUMEROUS PUZZLES.

All this was very well. Of course. To a generous nature like mine, the happiness of a friend could not fail to extend itself. For I'm awfully sympathetic, you know. I don't remember whether I've made that remark before or not, but in either case the fact remains. Yet, sympathetic or not, every fellow has his own affairs, you know, and, as a matter of course, these engage his chief attention. Now all my affairs circled around one centre, and that centre was—Marion!

I had seen her on the previous evening. I had made an engagement with her and Nora to go out with me for a drive on the following day, and we had arranged all about it. We were to drive to Montmorency Falls, a place which is the chief attraction among the environs of Quebec. I had not been there since that memorable day when I rode there with the doctor to find my bird flow.

Accordingly on the next day, at the appointed hour, I drew up in front of O'Halloran's and went in. The ladies were there, but Nora was half-reclining on a couch, and seemed rather miserable. She complained of a severe attack of neuralgia, and lamented that she could not go. Up



on this I expressed my deepest regrets, and hoped that Miss O'Halloran would come. But Marion demurred, and said she wouldn't leave Nora. Whereupon Nora urged her to go, and finally, after evident reluctance, Marion allowed herself to be persuaded.

It was with an inexpressible feeling of exaltation that I drove off with her. At last we were alone together, and would be so for hours. The frigidty which had grown up within her during the last two months might possibly be relaxed now under the influence of this closer association. My heart beat fast. I talked rapidly about every thing. In my excitement I also drove rapidly at first, but finally I had sufficient sense to see that there was no need to shorten so precious an interview by hurrying it through, and so I slackened our speed.

As for Marion, she seemed as calm as I was agitated. Her demeanor was a singular one. She was not exactly frigid or repellent. She was rather shy and reserved. It was rather the constraint of timidity than of dislike. Dislike? No. Not a bit of it. Whatever her feelings might be, she had no reason for dislike. Still she was cold—and her coldness began gradually to affect me in spite of my exultation, and to change my joy to a feeling of depression.

After a few miles this depression had increased sufficiently to sober me down completely. I no longer rattled. I became grave. A feeling of dependency came over me. My spirits sank. There seemed no sympathy between us—no reciprocity of feeling. She had no cordiality of manner—no word, or look, or gesture, to give encouragement.

After a time my mood changed so under the influence of Marion's depressing manner, that I fell into long fits of very ungal-

lant silence—silence, too, which she never attempted to break. Amid these fits of silence I tried to conjecture the cause of her very great coolness, and finally came to the very decision which I had often reached before. "Yes," I thought, "she has discovered how I love her, and she does not care for me. She has gratitude, but she cannot feel love. So she wishes to repel me. She didn't want to come with me, and only came because Nora urged her. She did not like to refuse, for fear of seeming unkind to me. At the same time, now that she is with me, she is trying to act in such a way as will effectually quell any unpleasant demonstrations of mine." Thoughts like these reduced me to such a state of gloom that I found myself indulging in fits of silence that grew longer and longer.

At last I roused myself. This sort of thing would never do. If nothing else could influence me, I felt that I ought to obey the ordinary instincts of a gentleman. I had invited her for a drive, and, because she was constrained, that was no reason why I should be rude. So I rallied my failing faculties, and endeavored now not to secure enjoyment for myself, but rather to make the drive agreeable to my companion.

This better mood lasted all the rest of the way, and the few miles of feverish excitement, which were followed by the few miles of sullenness, were finally succeeded by the ordinary cheerfulness of a travelling companion. The change was very much for the better. My feverish excitement had served to increase the constraint of Marion; and now, since it had passed away, she seemed more inclined to be agreeable. There were many things to attract and interest those who travelled merely for the pleasure of the thing, without any ulterior motives. The long French

villages, the crosses by the road, the cultivated trees, the radiation, the rad around, which richest verdure the road—all things sufficed to elicit remarks. or cager, or v aloof; but now monplace and herself sufficient so our drive reached our destination.

If I were in might go into where the river banks, and overbles over a loft, in foam into the dark cliffs rise, twist, where the the span of its moment this sank into insignificance. comparison with granted that the interest in Marion and therefore w description of Byron's lines with equal force.

Well. To rest. We wandered an hour or more broad, flat ledges. We climbed her over every down. I helped my hand a hunt that scramble.

There was a

villages, the huge chapels, the frequent crosses by the way-side, the smooth, level road, the cultivated fields, the overshadowing trees, the rich luxuriance of the vegetation, the radiant beauty of the scene all around, which was now clothed in the richest verdure of June, the *habitants* along the road—all these and a thousand other things sufficed to excite attention and elicit remarks. While I was impassioned, or eager, or vehement, Marion had held aloof; but now, while I was merely commonplace and conventional, she showed herself sufficiently companionable. And so our drive went on, and at last we reached our destination.

If I were inclined to bore the reader, I might go into raptures over this scene—where the river, winding on amid wooded banks, and over rocky ledges, finally tumbles over a lofty precipice, and flings itself in foam into the St. Lawrence; where the dark cliffs rise, where the eddies twirl and twist, where the spray floats upward through the span of its rainbow arch. But at that moment this scene, glorious though it was, sank into insignificance in my estimation in comparison with Marion. I will take it for granted that the reader, like me, finds more interest in Marion than in Montmorency, and therefore will not inflict upon him any description of the scene. I refer him to Byron's lines about Velino: They apply with equal force to Montmorency.

Well. To resume.

We wandered about Montmorency for an hour or more. We walked over the broad, flat ledges. We descended deep slopes. We climbed lofty rocks. I helped her over every impediment. I helped her down. I helped her up. She had to take my hand a hundred times in the course of that scramble.

There was an informal and an uncon-

ventional character about such proceedings as these which did much toward thawing the crust of Marion's reserve. She evidently enjoyed the situation—she enjoyed the falls—she enjoyed the rocky ledges—she enjoyed the scramble—she even went so far on one occasion as to show something like enthusiasm. Nor did I, in the delight of that time, which I experienced to the most vivid degree, ever so far forget myself as to do the impassioned in any shape or way. Whatever was to be the final result, I had determined that this day should be a happy one, and, since Marion objected so strongly to the intense style, she should see nothing but what was simply friendly and companionable.

But it was a hard struggle. To see her beautiful, animated face—her light, agile form—to feel her little hand—to hear the musical cadence of her unequalled voice, and yet to repress all undue emotion. By Jove! I tell you what it is, it isn't every fellow who could have held out as long as I did.

At last we had exhausted the falls, and we went back to the little inn where the horses were left. We had still over an hour, and I proposed a walk to the river-bank. To this Marion assented.

We set out, and I led the way toward that very cottage where I had taken her on that memorable occasion when I first met her. I had no purpose in this, more than an irresistible desire to stand on that bank by her side, and, in company with her, to look over that river, and have the eyes of both of us simultaneously looking over the track of our perilous journey. And still, even with such a purpose as this, I resolved to discard all sentiment, and maintain only the friendly attitude.

The cottage was not far away, and, in a short time, we entered the gate of the

farm, and found ourselves approaching it.

As we went on, a sudden change came over Marion.

Up to the time of our entering the gate she had still maintained the geniality of manner and the lightness of tone which had sprung up during our wanderings about the falls. But here, as we came within sight of the cottage, I saw her give a sudden start. Then she stopped and looked all around. Then she gave a sudden look at me—a deep, solemn, earnest look, in which her dark, lustrous eyes fastened themselves on mine for a moment, as though they would read my very soul.

And at that look every particle of my commonplace tone, and every particle of my resolution, vanished and passed away utterly.

The next instant her eyes fell. We had both stopped, and now stood facing one another.

"Pardon me," said I, in deep agitation. "I thought it might interest you. But, if you wish it, we may go back. Shall we go back, or shall we go on?"

"As you please," said she, in a low voice.

We went on.

We did not stop at the cottage. We passed by it, walking in silence onward toward the river-bank. We reached it at last, and stood there side by side, looking out upon the river.

We were at the top of a bank which descended steeply for a great distance. It was almost a cliff, only it was not rock, but sandy soil, dotted here and there with patches of grass and clumps of trees. Far below us was the river, whose broad bosom lay spread out for miles, dotted with the white sails of passing vessels. The place where we stood was a slight promontory,

and commanded a larger and more extended view than common. On the left and below us was the Ile d'Orleans, while far away up the river Cape Diamond jutted forth, crowned by its citadel, and, clustering around it, we saw the glistening tin roofs and tapering spires of Quebec. But at that moment it was neither the beauty nor the grandeur of this wonderful scene that attracted my gaze, but rather the river itself. My eyes fastened themselves on that broad expanse of deep and dark-blue water, and wandering from the beach beneath, up the river, to the shore opposite Quebec—many a mile away—in that moment all the events of our memorable journey came back before me, distinctly and vividly. I stood silent. Marion, too, was silent, as though she also had the same thoughts as those which filled me. Thus we both stood in silence, and for a long time our eyes rested upon the mighty river which now rolled its vast flood beneath us, no longer ice-bound, but full and free, the pathway for mighty navies, and the thoroughfare of nations.

Now I was able to grasp the full and complete reality of our fearful adventure. We had wandered from the opposite shore far up near Point Levi, toiling over treacherous ice, which, even as we walked, had moved onward toward the sea, and had thus borne us down for miles till we attained the shore at this place. Looking at the river, I could trace the pathway which we had taken, and could fix the locality of every one of those events which had marked that terrible journey—where the horse ran—where the sleigh floated—where I had drawn it to the ice—where the ice-ridge rose—where we had clambered over—where Marion fell—till finally beside this shore I could see the place where that

open channel ran, near which she had fallen

for the last time my arms and there, too, but in some till I found the cottage. At strongest effort I must have been ncess of resolution to have carried In comparison all the rest and common

Rousing my abstraction in and looked at

She was st hands hung in another; her ward; her eyes steadfastly up we might have her face such all-absorbed interest in this there was more that in her faculties of that fore her mind that old expression, and full of itself on my n—the face of

She did not her, and devoted eyes wandered the shore. I and saw a su her, and her more tightly came to that

for the last time, when I had raised her in my arms and borne her back to life. And there, too, below us, was the steep bank-up which I had borne her—how I knew not, but in some way or other most certainly—till I found refuge for her in the hospitable cottage. At this last I looked with the strongest emotion. What strength must have been mine! what a frenzied, frantic effort I must have put forth! what a madness of resolve must have nerved my limbs to have carried her up such a place as that! In comparison with this last supreme effort all the rest of that journey seemed weak and commonplace.

Rousing myself at last from the profound abstraction into which I had fallen, I turned and looked at my companion.

She was standing close beside me; her hands hung in front of her, elosed over one another; her head was slightly bent forward; her eyes were opened wide, and fixed steadfastly upon the river at the line which we might have traversed; and there was in her face such rapt attention, such deep and all-absorbed meditation, that I saw her interest in this scene was equal to mine. But there was more than interest. There was that in her face which showed that the incidents of that journey were now passing before her mind; her face even now assumed that old expression which it had borne when first I saw her—it was white, horror-stricken, and full of fear—the face that had fixed itself on my memory after that day of days—the face of my Lady of the Ice.

She did not know that I was looking at her, and devouring her with my gaze. Her eyes wandered over the water and toward the shore. I heard her quick breathing, and saw a sudden shudder pass through her, and her hands clutch one another more tightly in a nervous clasp, as she came to that place where she had fallen

last. She looked at that spot on the dark water for a long time, and in visible agitation. What had taken place after she had fallen she well knew, for I had told it all on my first visit to her house, but it was only from my account that she knew it. Yet here were the visible illustrations of my story—the dark river, the high, precipitous bank. In all these, as in all around, she could see what I had done for her.

Suddenly, with a start, she raised her head, and, turning, looked full upon me. It was a wild, eager, wistful, questioning look—her large, lustreless eyes thrilled me through with their old power; I saw in her face something that set my heart throbbing with feverish madness. It was a mute appeal—a face turned toward me as though to find out by that one eager, piercing, penetrating glance, something that she longed to know. At the same time there was visible in her face the sign of another feeling contending with this—that same constraint, and shy apprehension, and timidity, which had so long marked her manner toward me.

And now, in that moment, as her face thus revealed itself, and as this glance thrilled through me, there flashed upon my mind in a moment the meaning of it all. There was but an instant in which she thus looked at me—the next instant a flush passed over her face, and her eyes fell, but that very instant I snatched her hand in both of mine and held it.

She did not withdraw it. She raised her eyes again, and again their strange questioning thrilled through me.

"Marion," said I, and I drew her toward me. Her head fell forward. I felt her hand tremble in mine.

"Marion," said I—lingering fondly on the name by which I now called her for



the first time—"if I ask you to be mine—will you turn away?"

She did not turn away.

She raised her face again for a moment, and again for a moment the thrilling glance flashed from her deep, dark eyes, and a faint smile of heavenly sweetness beamed across the glory of her solemn face.

There!

I let the curtain drop.

I'm not good at describing love-scenes, and all that sort of thing, you know.

What's more, I don't want to be either good or great at that.

For, if a fellow feels like a fool, you know, when he's talking spooney, how much more like a fool must he feel when he sits down and deliberately writes spooney! You mustn't expect that sort of thing from me at any rate—not from Macrorie. I can feel as much as any fellow, but that's no reason why I should write it all out.

Another point.

I'm very well aware that, in the story of my love, I've gone full and fair against the practice of the novelist. For instance, now, no novelist would take a hero and make him fall in love with a girl, no matter how deucedly pretty she might be, who had been in love with another fellow, and tried to run off with him. Of course not. Very well. Now, you see, my dear fellow, all I've got to say is this, that I'm not a novelist. I'm an historian, an autobiographer, or any thing else you choose. I've no imagination whatever. I rely on facts. I can't distort them. And, what's more, if I could do so, I wouldn't, no matter what the taste or fashion of the day might be.

There's a lot of miserable, carping sneaks about, whose business it is to find fault with every thing, and it just occurs to me that some of this lot may take it into their

heads—notwithstanding the *facts*, mind you—may take it into their heads; I say, to make the objection that it is unnatural, when a girl has already been so madly in love, for another fellow to win her affections in so short a time. Such fellows are beneath notice, of course; but, for the benefit of the world at large, and humanity in general, I beg leave to suggest a few important points which serve to account for the above-mentioned change of affection, and all that sort of thing:

I. The mutability of humanity.

II. The crushing effects of outrage and neglect on the strongest love.

III. My own overwhelming claims.

IV. The daily spectacle of my love and devotion.

V. My personal beauty.

VI. The uniform of the Bobtails.

The above, I think, will suffice.

The drive back was very different from the drive down. On the way I heard from Marion's own lips a full explanation of many of those things which had been puzzling me for the last two months. She explained all about the crossing of the river, though not without some hesitation, for it was connected with her infatuation about Jack. Still, she had got over that utterly, and, as I knew all about it, and as she had nothing but indifference toward him, I was able to get an explanation from her without much difficulty.

It seems, then, that O'Halloran had forbidden Marion to see Jack, but she was infatuated about him, and anxious to see him. She had met him several times at the house of a friend at Point Levi, and a few days before that eventful journey O'Halloran had gone to Montreal. At the same time Jack had written her, telling her that he would be over there. So she took advantage of

her father's hoping also was not there dared, and finished home before the day of the culty in finding eceeded by me followed her Her departure was owing to before her father succeeded in a ful to me, but steps to show would hear of Nora knew a from O'Halloran came my arrival oguized me at my story Nora lon's mysterio

They held e the room, and, me, they thoug They saw, too, tation, but h They judged and so Nora v lady so as to burst of indign on her if her dience. This, ra's assumptio told some pl which satisfied her peculiar fr her incapable also led to my its consequenc

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her father's absence to go over on a visit, hoping also to meet with Jack. But Jack was not there. She stayed as long as she dared, and finally had to return so as to be home before her father got back. This was the day of the storm. She had much difficulty in finding a driver, but at length succeeded by means of a heavy bribe. Then followed her momentous meeting with me. Her departure from the cottage so abruptly was owing to her intense desire to get home before her father should arrive. This she succeeded in doing. She felt deeply grateful to me, but did not dare to take any steps to show gratitude, for fear her father would hear of her journey to Point Levi. Nora knew about it, and kept her secret from O'Halloran most faithfully. Then came my arrival upon the scene. She recognized me at once, and as soon as I told my story Nora recognized me, too, as Marion's mysterious deliverer.

They held counsel together after leaving the room, and, seeing O'Halloran's fancy for me, they thought I might often come again. They saw, too, that I had noticed their agitation, but had not recognized Marion. They judged that I would suspect them, and so Nora volunteered to personate the lady so as to save Marion from that outburst of indignation which was sure to fall on her if her father knew of her disobedience. This, then, was the cause of Nora's assumption of a false part. She had told some plausible story to O'Halloran which satisfied him and saved Marion; but her peculiar frank and open nature made her incapable of maintaining her part, and also led to my absurd proposal to her, and its consequences.

Meanwhile Marion had her troubles. She had not seen Jack, but on her return got his frantic letter, proposing an elopement, and threatening to blow his brains out.

She answered this as we have seen. After this, she heard all about Jack's love-affairs, and wrote to him on the subject. He answered by another proposal to elope, and reproached her with being the cause of his ruin. This reproach stung her, and filled her with remorse. It was not so much love as the desperation of self-reproach which had led to her foolish consent. So at the appointed time she was at the place; but instead of Jack—there was quite another person.

Of course, I did not get all the above from her at that time. Some of it she told; but the rest came out long afterward. Long afterward I learned from her own dear lips how her feelings changed toward me, especially on that night when I saved her and brought her home. Jack became first an object of contempt, then of indifference. Then she feared that I would despise her, and tried to hold aloof. Despise her!—!!!!

All this, and a thousand other things, came out afterward, in the days of our closer association, when all was explained, and Marion had no more secrets to keep from me, and I had none from her.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

GRAND CONCLUSION.—WEDDING-RINGS AND BALL-RINGS.—ST. MALACHI'S.—OLD FLETCHER IN HIS GLORY.—NO HUMBÚG THIS TIME.—MESSAGES SENT EVERYWHERE.—ALL THE TOWN AOG.—QUEBEC ON THE RAMPAGE.—ST. MALACHI'S CRAMMED.—GALLERIES CROWDED.—WHITE FAVORS EVERYWHERE.—THE WIDOW HAPPY WITH THE CHAPLAIN.—THE DOUBLE WEDDING.—FIRST COUPLE—JACK AND LOUIE!—SECOND DITTO—MACRORE AND MARION!—COLONEL BERTON AND O'HALLORAN GIVING AWAY THE

## THE LADY OF THE LEE.

BRIDES.—STRANGE ASSOCIATION OF THE  
 BRITISH OFFICER AND THE FENIAN.—JACK  
 AND MARGARET, LOUIE AND MARION.—BRIDES  
 AND BRIDESMAID.—EPITHALAMIUM.—WED-  
 DING IN WOOD LIFE.—SIX OF THE BEST CLER-  
 GYMEN.—ALL THE ELITE OF THE TOWN TAKE  
 PART.—ALL THE CLENGY, ALL THE MILITARY,  
 AND EVERYBODY WHO AMOUNTS TO ANY  
 THING.—THE BAND OF THE ROYAL ARMS.

COURSING SWEET MUSIC, AND ALL THAT SORT  
 OF THING, YOU KNOW.

On reading over the above heading, I find  
 it so very comprehensive that it leaves nothing  
 more for me to say. I will therefore  
 make me bow, and retire from the scene,  
 with my warmest congratulations to the  
 reader at reaching

THE END.

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COMEDY OF TERRORS.

BY

JAMES DEMILLE,

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



BOSTON:

JAMES R. OSOGOOD AND COMPANY,

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# A COMEDY OF TERRORS.

## I.

### THE MAN WITH THE CHIGNON.

THE elegant residence of Mrs. Lovell, at Montreal, stood just where Blank Street terminated 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 shalt 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."

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"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

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"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 did n'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 I could not be."

"And then, O Maudie dear, he was so cut up. He asked me if his 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 didn'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

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"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."

"Only 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 Comte du Potiron, and a very suitable name it is for such a man."

"The Comte du Potiron!"

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"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 *galanteries* 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 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, I've told Mrs. Lovell that I shall like to know the letter, so she'll show the thing in the paper. 'A' you know want to get I only want to get in with the thing you did you say."

"Well, I and civil first I thought person, but better to do him that I ten to me in there had relations to a proposal hoped that pointed."

"And the 'No.'"

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"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 Compté,' 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 California, then pursuin' my windin' way per steamer over the briary 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."

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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 dear-in' 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 know 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 she jumped after it—"

"What!" interrupted Carr, "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 instituted 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 hunted 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.

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"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!"

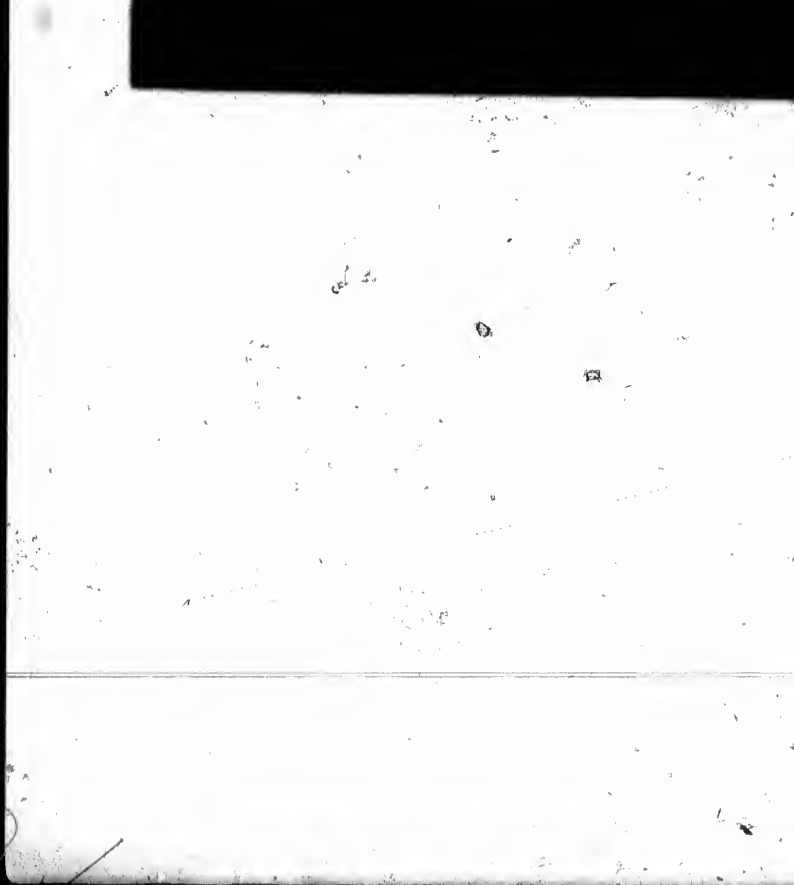
"Well, I don't exactly see how I could have been jilted by anybody else," said Carrol, with a short laugh.

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."

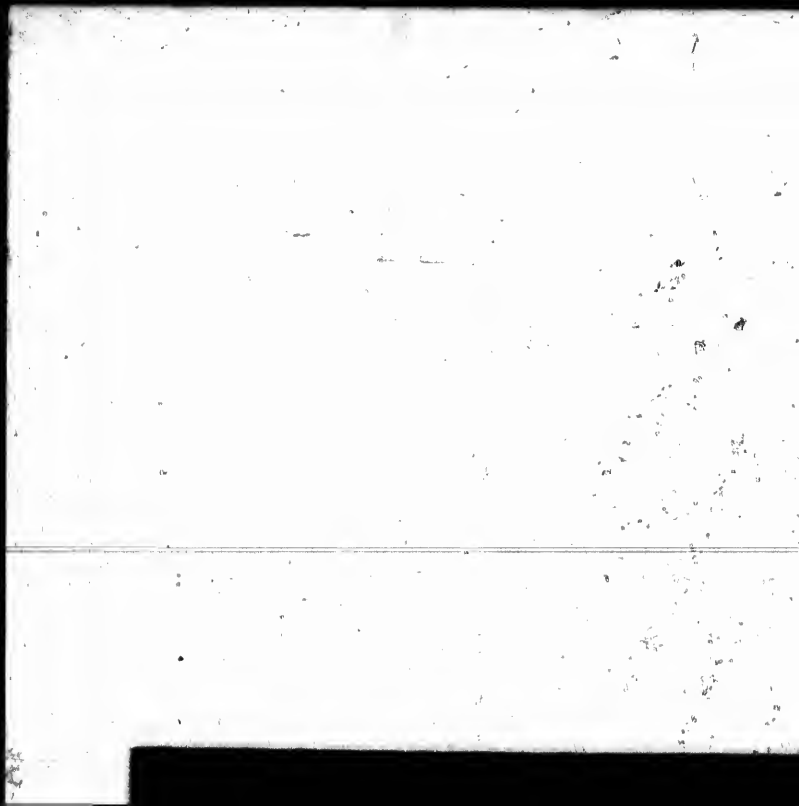
"In spite of all these advantages," said Carrol, quietly, "I've got my own particular mitten in my own possession. I've got it in the shape of a beautiful little note, written in the most elegant lady's hand imaginable."

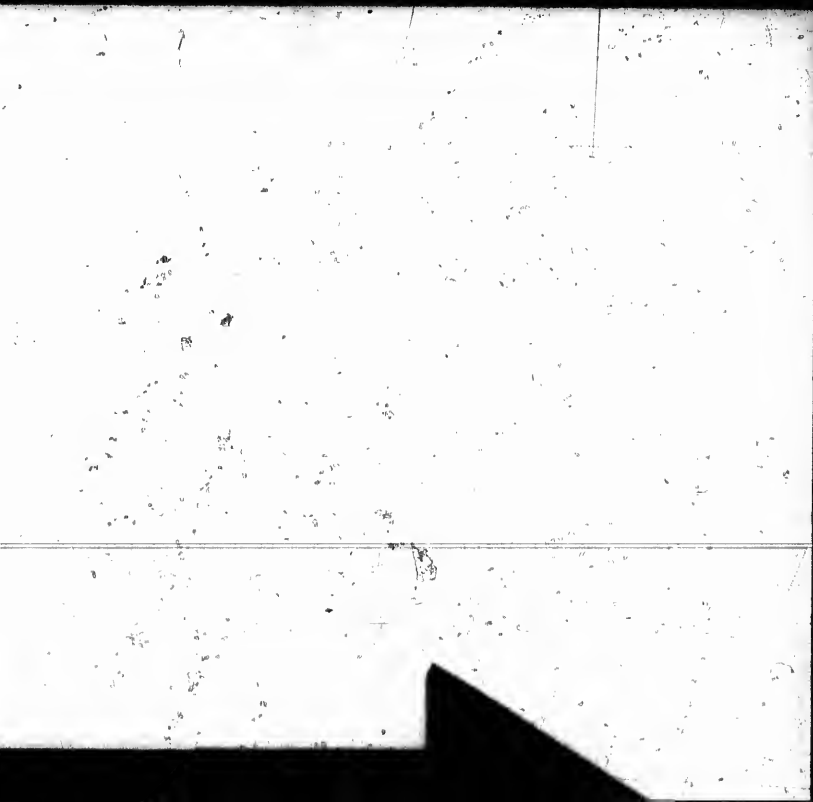
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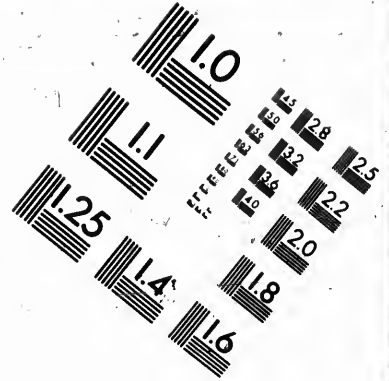
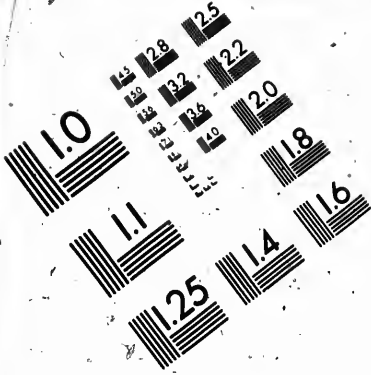




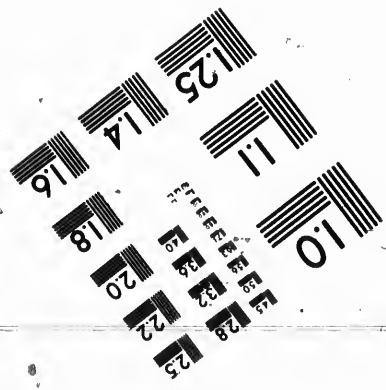
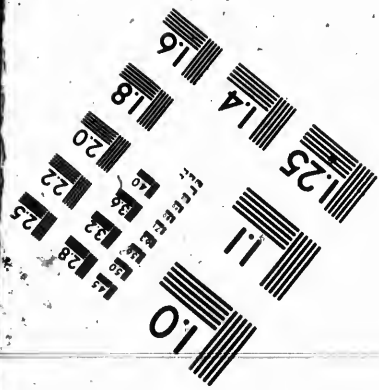
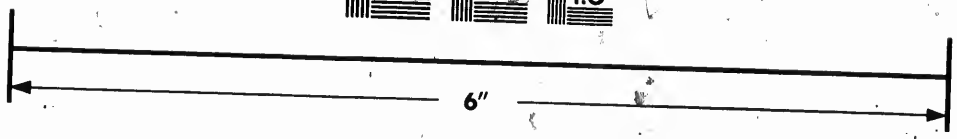
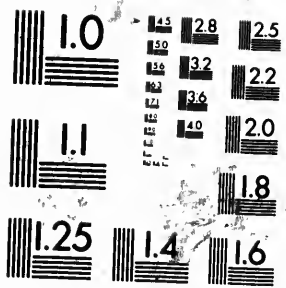








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"O, nothing; my affair, as it happened, was done up in writing."

"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

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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 is n'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 merest 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 ressort*. 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 insinuations 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

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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 personne 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 Tarry. 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

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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

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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 embittered 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.

"That," 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 miauling 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 actily 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,

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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 stoopenous trees; I dilated upon the Yosem-

ite; 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 redooed 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 Carrol, 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 —" Carrol 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 "Moosooos." 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.

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## 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-fending 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."

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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 good. 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 would not 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.

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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 Chima 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

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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

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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

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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 in a 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 *bonhommie* 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

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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.



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 discompos'd, Maudie dear?"

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

"Well, I really felt so, you know, — as embarrassed as possible; quite like some 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 Maudie, 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 Maudie. "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 Maudie. "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-

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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 Maudie, 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 Maudie, 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."

Maudie 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 wouldn'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.

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"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 'o 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's 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 idea is that women as a general thing have a precious hard time of it on this planet, and if one of them does 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. 'T ain'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

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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,

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Carrol gave nothing.

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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 tittle; 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 first

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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 myself, I mean myself 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 miserabel 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 staid 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.

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"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-negation. 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 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-

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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

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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 is n'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?"

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"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.

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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 for 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

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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? Metthink. 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 proceedings and in the general row that's goin' on as either you or I. Yea, more. I don't believe any earthly indoecment 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

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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 didn't 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

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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 Mrs. 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 most 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 gentle-mannered 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 apologize 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 offrir 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 enfeeblement, cette je ne sais quoi du mal de

mer haf quite all ze taimé 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 présent," 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 victorr. Ze République Française ees invincible! Eh bien. So you sall stay. Eh? Ver well. Zen you sall see ze triomphe, ze exultation, ze enthousiasme irrepresible! 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 dis-tracte 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 meés — ze meés —"

"The what?"

"Ze charmante meés."

"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.

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"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 didn't 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 congratulate 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 eet sal haf ze honneur of to see ze charante Mo —"

"If you mean Miss Heathcote, sir," said Mrs. Lovell, loftily, "I have to

inform you."

"Quo Du Potiron — la Madame — "If you said Mrs. Lovell myself."

"Mais — vain s see Mo."

"Yo Mrs. Lovell."

"Mais — Not a taken. You stand the

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inform you that she declines seeing you."

"Quoi! Grand ciel!" ejaculated Du Potiron. "Declines? Mo! Mo! 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."

"Mo! 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 empression. 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 hat 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 nôtin 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 request 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."

"Mals, madame, I moos see her. I haf come to take her on daire 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."

"Zè gouvernement?" said Du Potiron; "but ze gouvernement 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-

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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'Etat*, 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,

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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 irrepresible 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-

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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 halfway 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

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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.

"Isn'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 'em 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

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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."

"Ho, 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."

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"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 dependant," 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 dependency 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 haven'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 admiration courage w tender ser distress. trivial or him the n her situati ones which were shut mention D that the m be of no s to long an involving M she consider confined he She express difficulties t language to t Guimarin, a tion. The t the Reds se natural unde that danger all his enth Republic, he existence of thirsty elem people with w meant little e and bloodshe had no perso Republic, yet tected lady h and he was fu And so it pathetic appea rejoinder so f and zealous o nothing more t him plainly t wish was 'to ese the city she Safety seemed To this Grimes promise that he in some way or Grimes walk back to her lodg When Mrs. Lov she found Maud had not been would have no



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 blood-thirsty 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 *quene* 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 to the country in London that part can eagle of chickens of and Minister had to officiate benevolent b

Grimes went of his manner. His different from on a former the Minister sought it for errand would successful, for the fight, but not away.

The Minister away all the Grimes had inhibited to him his case. The escape possible no matter who long to. The stringent to be being whatever fluence sufficient rigor of those

Of course, a this, Grimes had say. It was there was no of any argument Paris was as a world as though in the midst of ships and unknown

This is about marked to Grimes time he alluded only communication had been communication of the Parisians sufficiently des the air and fly

The suggestion al way, but the sank deep into the attracted all his

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, and quite preposterous. But a second thought made it much less so, and a third and a fourth made it seem rather promising.

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

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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 could 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 no execution. Lovell had and very p Her allusion made with a band, and h ture to appr but still, thou er intelligibl very pleasur

There wer in the way prevent its ac was, the poss Lovell to ma other was, th rol to have ar Each of thes to be encount trusted very of persuasion ell's prejudice merely idle fe dissipated, if her how simp able, and deli elling was, an her to put im As to Carrol persuade him not bestow n The great diffi be to persuade enough, in all any difficulty This arose fro so in the habi her sister, th only consent to follow, as a Maud would g

#### A TERR

OF course s which Grimes volving from tions could no one who was t part in it as t the plan mean

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 was a blight to learn it, understand to this, shall reject myself to I must stay keep away

Grimes on the foot on Mrs. what true propriety With his For Grimes had only his reject tirades and impressions, reduced, and that the had been ately and Carrol's bitter the consolation, as the friend in been able harsher v character; been made so persisted as much possible for tain towards was that M and had e intentions her own a listed, she lowance for ture was s and that owing rather ity than t cruelty.

With su ter, he nat would not ion to her; emergency, refuse to go

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 prosing 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 a carriage? Why, I'm sure I can sit anywhere, so

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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, and, 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 another's throats. Madame Guimarin had gone through 1848, and the *Red Spectre*; and the *Red Spectre* was a very real and a very terrible thing indeed. The good lady then begged Mrs. Lovell to seek the protection of some friends if she had any, and to 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

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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 nonneur 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 agreeable 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 presently 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 unreasonable, 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 sovereign 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 me," 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 overthrown,"—and he made a flourish with his right hand,—"*ze people 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 zejr 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 sports, 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,—"*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-

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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 sprung 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 stilted 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 for something about "Vengeance — salt soiffaire — 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, —

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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 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 *boulevercement* 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

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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,

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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 hairy 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! one 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 some thing 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 to-morrow; 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."

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"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 done. 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 shair' 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.

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## 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

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.



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.

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The crowd stared, and various murmurs arose. But the man who had seized Grimes turned with a shrug and called out, "Citizen, 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 Rhadamantuses. 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.

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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 Carol 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 Carol, 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 Carol 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 idealism, which made him chafe under them, and move restlessly to and fro as 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 three or four 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 for examination, or made to appear as 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 Carol 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-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.

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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 spics. You and ze madame, I haf denounce you bot to ze Central Committee of ze section, in ze nom sacré and august de la liberté. You haf been ze slaves of Bismarck, and conspire against ze security of la gr-r-r-r-rande République. I haf set ze loyal citoizens to watch, and you are 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 wisl’ 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 zè 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 bot sall so-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.

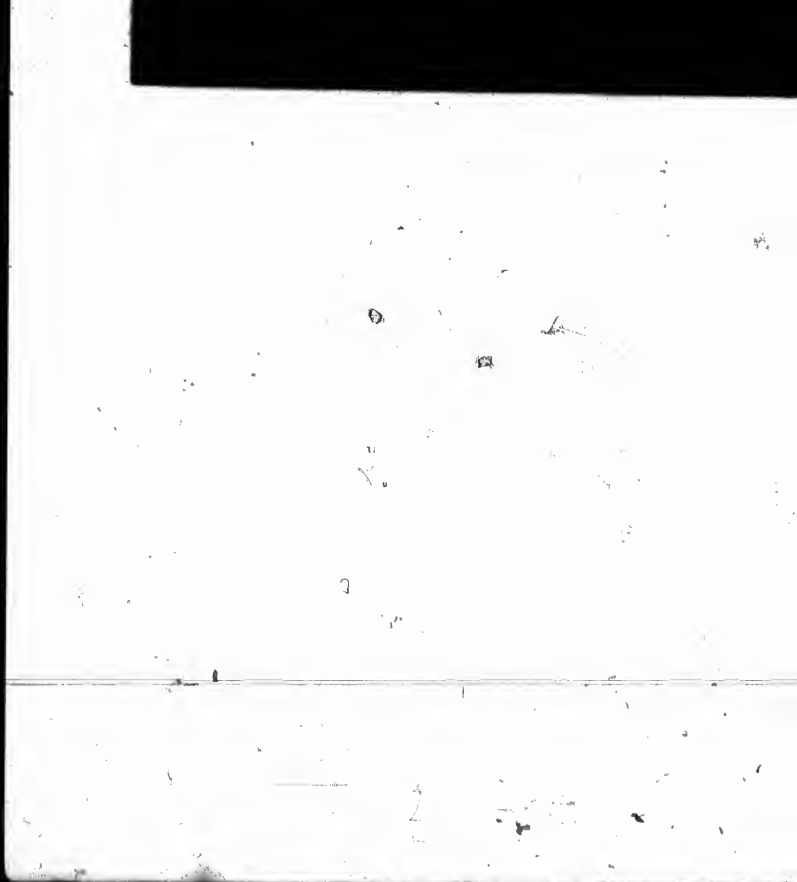
“Now put them on this man,” said Grimes. “If you don’t, I’ll blow your brains out.”

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.”

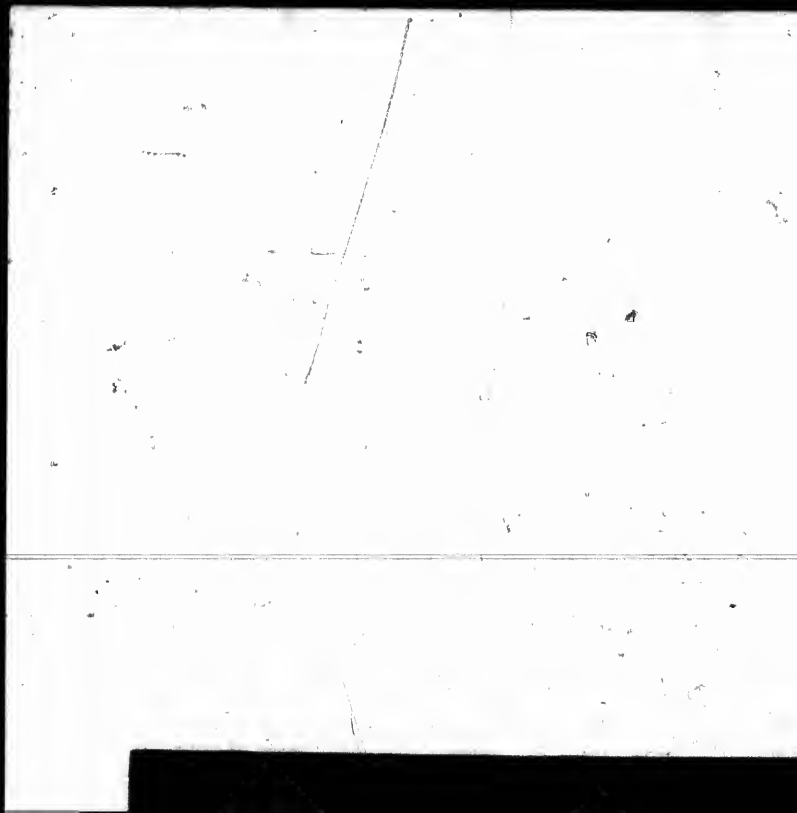
The man obeyed. The cravat was large enough to serve the purpose of a gag; and while the man was tying it on, Grimes tested it from time to time, making him tie it tighter, till at length it seemed to him to be safe enough.

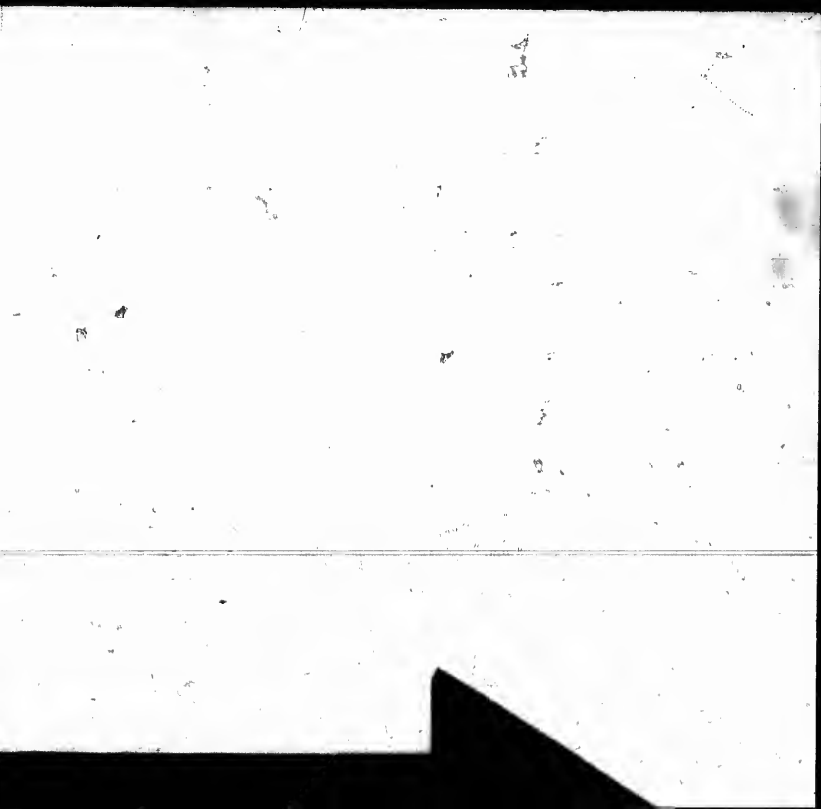
Now Grimes seized a piece of rope, and warning Du Potiron not to move for his life, he made the other man turn

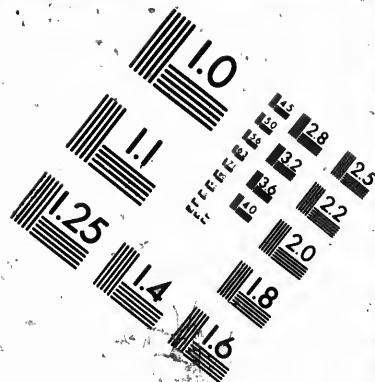
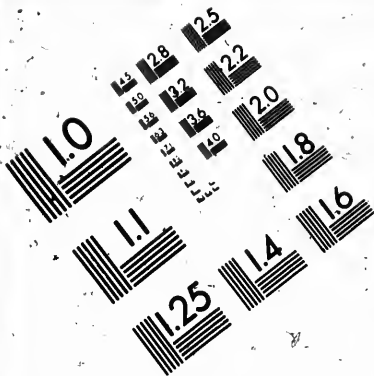




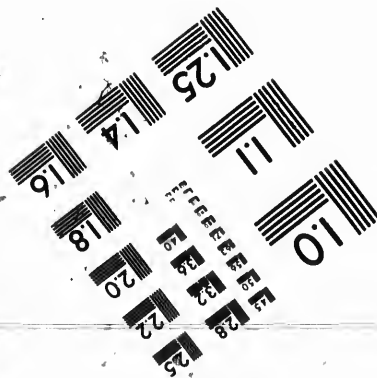
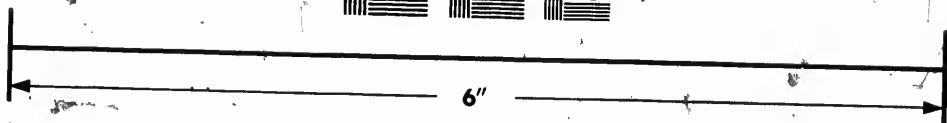
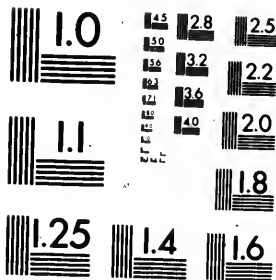








**IMAGE EVALUATION  
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23 WEST MAIN STREET  
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580  
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round, and then he secured his hands tightly behind his back. After this he took his cravat, and gagged him in the same way that Du 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

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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 *conciergerie*, 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 pushed 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."

"Shè'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 endeavored 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

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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 heightened 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 considerably 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. Oh, 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.

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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 awake?"

"Yes," said Carrol in a low voice, scarce able to speak in the intensity of his excitement.

"S-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 save 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 s'all 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 s'all 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 s'all 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 s'all do for de present," he said. "And now we s'all 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 s'all lead you to the lady, and den we s'all 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-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

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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 overtaxed energies.

He had but one thought, that of knowing the truth at once. On this he acted instantaneously.

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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 lady 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 *conciierge* 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?"

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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 n't 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

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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 droye 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

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did not require any very extraordinary elevation to render a balloon indistinct or even invisible, and the height of a mile 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 Phaeton 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

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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 Carol, 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.

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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 loft-

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

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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

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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 Carroll. 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

was 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, driving all the dark aside and transforming the moment all that impended darkness to one universal glow, there came a sudden flash of light 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

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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 abyss 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 abyss, 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

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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, ~~he~~ 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 not think of anything. He did not try to account for anything. He did not wonder where Mrs. Lovell really was. He did not 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 perhaps, 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.

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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 ill admiral."

"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 *guerre* 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.

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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

Just outside the overhung by lofty little streamlet ran, which there was a Carrol persuaded. Before them the distance were beyond these, the et sky. In this ulation about got the inn was not ularly; but they t very far away, edge of the little

Carrol the events ourney, and that referred to their in Norway ined. The peas the balloon, and ed a conveyance nia. Here they out to leave for rked in it. Their ed a great sensa- and Grimes had ermanent by pre- to the Museum. ondon the day be-'s rest, had come which they had o'clock. Grimes iage, but without available one was had waited for arate state of im- an hour ago he as going to walk tion in which the So he was on r returning tri- age, or else toil- foot.

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parts that they had been in false, humili- ating, and excessively silly posi- tions.

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 doesn'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.

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## 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

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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 getting 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 isn'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 isn'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 consequential 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! *clack!*

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, ddddering, 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.

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On the return of Carol 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 Carol 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.



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