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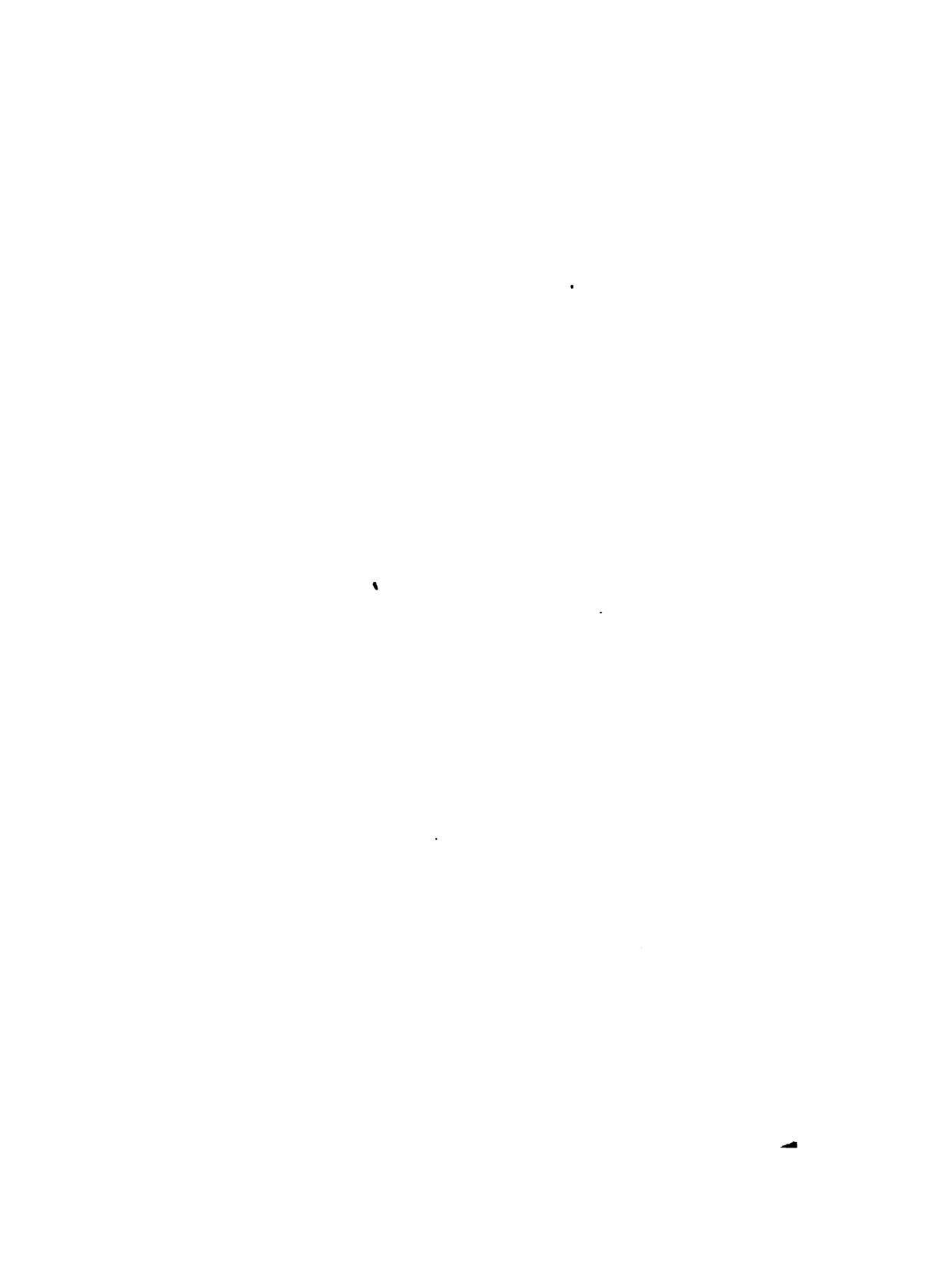
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PILGRIMS OF FASHION.



PILGRIMS OF FASHION.

A NOVEL.

By K. C.

LONDON:

TRÜBNER & CO., 60 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1862.

250. L. 38.



1

“ What from this barren being do we reap.
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weighed in custom’s falsest scale,
Opinion, an Omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale,
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.”

“ Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert, whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes;
Flowers, whose wild odours breathe but agonies.

“ Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep, for here
There is such matter for all feeling.”

—*Childe Harold.*



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CHAPTER I.

LOVE AND BEAUTY.

READER,—The first character appointed to figure in this history is Mr. Henry Perceval. If you had sought an interview with him at his residence, Myrtle House, Grove Road, Cheltenham, in the year 1779—the date is likely much older than yourself, but you can imagine that you are somebody else for the moment—you would have found him a portly, ruddy-faced gentleman of about fifty-six winters, with a general aspect more agricultural than refined, and a stern off-hand manner, open, perhaps, to the charge of abruptness, but free of dissimulation.

Mr. Perceval had been a thorough business man, and a London merchant in his day, and by his speculations on the Corn Exchange had amassed a considerable fortune, upon which he retired from the cares of trade seven years prior to this time. A few months later he was left a widower with an only child—a daughter, who was now in her nineteenth year, and the sole sharer of his home.

Since his leaving London, he had lost all interest in Mincing Lane prices—in Pomeranian wheat, Irish oats, and malting barley, and turned his attention to books—books of all kinds, which he read with serious avidity, as if to make up for lost time, literature having been very much neglected by him during the former part of his life.

Mr. Perceval was of very retired habits, one who had formed no friendships, and cared so little for society that he seldom or never entertained any. His daughter—Madeline—was a handsome girl of active temperament and fervid mind, with bright hazel-colored eyes and flowing chestnut hair, worn in ringlets, a clear complexion, and a tall slender form full of womanly beauty. She had a merry, ringing laugh, that it was always pleasant to hear, and every thought and word she uttered sparkled more or less with the hopeful, buoyant vivacity of her nature.

It is not, therefore, a matter for surprise that she, now on the verge of womanhood, began to feel her home solitary and her mode of existence monotonous, for her father, as he advanced in life, had become gradually a recluse, even in his own house, where he closeted himself in his library during the greater part of the day, leaving Madeline entirely dependent upon her own resources for occupation and amusement.

He, however, sanctioned her occasionally attending the assemblies of that then delightful

watering-place, when duly *chaperoned* by one of her few married friends, and at rare intervals, he was prevailed upon to accompany her himself.

It was at one of those gatherings that she, in the year referred to, made the acquaintance of a third person with whom we are concerned—Mr. Alfred Coke, a young gentleman with a tall graceful figure, blue eyes, light brown hair of almost feminine fineness, fresh complexion, regular features, good voice, and the most winning smile and happy manner imaginable.

It may not surprise you to hear that this acquaintance grew with tropical rapidity into friendship, and that from friendship it deepened into love, a result of which was that they found occasion and opportunity for meeting in various places and at various times, where and when none but lovers would have been ingenious enough to devise. But love conquers difficulties, as many of us know by experience. I will not profane all the fond words and fonder looks which these two young people with loving souls exchanged, by making them the subject of photographic description. I will trace only the ripples on the sunny surface of that stream whose course, the proverb tells us, never did run smooth. It was the first love of each, and its existence had ushered them into a mental elysium. The sole earthly idol of Alfred was Madeline, of Madeline, Alfred. Well might the poet have sung :

PILGRIMS OF FASHION ;

“ New hopes may bloom and days may come
 Of calmer, milder beam,
But there’s nothing half so sweet in life
 As young love’s dream.

Tho’ the bard to purer fame may soar
When wild youth’s past ;
Tho’ he win the wise who frown’d before
To smile at last,
He’ll never meet a joy so sweet,
In all his noon of fame,
As when first he sung to woman’s ear
His soul-felt flame,
And at every close she blushed to hear
The one loved name.

Oh, that fairy form is ne’er forgot
 Which first love traced ;
Still it, lingering, haunts the greenest spot
 On memory’s waste.

“ Twas odour fled as soon as shed,
 ‘Twas morning’s winged dream,
“ Twas light that ne’er can shine again
 On life’s dull stream.”

It was such love as these lines have reference to that gladdened the hearts of the lovers in question, and when I have said this, I have said enough.

Their courtship was for a time kept secret, but at length it was arranged between them that “dear Alfred” should call upon Mr. Perceval and introduce himself as a suitor for his daughter’s hand. Accordingly, Mr. Coke presented himself at the house and was admitted to an interview.

Mr. Perceval had been made familiar with his

name by having heard Madeline mention him on several occasions.

" You know, papa," she once said, " that fine-looking young man you spoke to at the last assembly you were at—Mr. Coke."

" Yes," replied the father.

" Well, he was there again to-night, oh, he's such a beautiful dancer, and has such agreeable conversation. I danced four dances with him."

" Too many—too many," Mr. Perceval would have said, had he expressed his thoughts at the moment, but he remained silent. When, however, he had listened to the first few words of his visitor on the present occasion, he began to perceive what he called the result of his handsome face, good dancing, and agreeable conversation upon the mind of Madeline.

" I see, I see ;" were his words after Mr. Coke had asked his pardon for the abruptness of his proposal for the hand of his daughter.

" I felt that it was the best and most proper course open to me," said the young man, " to seek this interview. I am aware that it is a delicate subject to introduce so hastily, but I had no choice."

" I see, I see;" repeated Mr. Perceval, dryly and deliberately, at the end of this sentence, at the same time eying the lover with a scrutiny the reverse of polite. He then said, " You ask too much—too much, sir. You're a stranger to me—an entire stranger. I might—I don't know

—it's possible I might, after the lapse of sufficient time, and my becoming more acquainted with you and your circumstances, entertain what you say But at present I should not be doing my duty, as a father, to countenance anything so hasty—no, sir, I should not. You may be everything that's pleasant and satisfactory, but she's my only child, and I must be careful ; besides, she's too young to marry—much too young —no woman ought to marry till she's twenty-five ; and you're too young too. How old are you—twenty?"

"A little more than that, sir," replied the other, somewhat haughtily, "I was twenty-one last March."

"Oh ! twenty-one. Ah ! much too young. Take my advice, sir—I've lived longer than you have—don't get married. You'll lose more than you'll gain by it. It's all idle fancy what young men think about love. Why, bless my soul, sir, I never knew what love was ! You'll find no sickly sentimentality about me, although I've been a married man. No, sir. Think better of it. Settle it in some way It's a bad thing is falling in love—it's weakness—nothing else than weakness."

There was something stern and determined about Mr. Perceval in his refusal to entertain the proposal which impressed his visitor with the belief that he could never obtain his consent. It was evident that the father attached great importance to the circumstances of any suitor

for the hand of his daughter, and Alfred Coke knew that *his* circumstances, if disclosed, would prove anything but satisfactory. However, the old gentleman asked no questions about money, and was seemingly content with the mere remark of his visitor to the effect that he was of good family. The fact was, that Mr. Perceval felt no curiosity on the subject, as he had secretly made up his mind that his daughter should never marry him, at any rate, not with his consent, or yet any one whose acquaintance she had made in a public ball-room, without, to use his own words, knowing who or what he was.

Mr. Coke left the house with a somewhat downcast look ; but the gloom was soon dissipated, for in youth and health we are sanguine, and hope, that delightful source of human happiness, never fails us. *Nil desperandum* was the motto of the disappointed man, and he was true to it.

“ Hope lives eternal in the human breast,
Man never is, but always to be, blest.”

Hope is the life-spring of enterprise—the jewel-casket of ambition. True, its visions may often be as the mirage of the fruitless desert, but are they not pleasant to contemplate ? Do they not buoy up the soul, and urge men to the achievement of those things which otherwise would never have been ? Poets have sung of its pleasures, and I have long experienced its promptings and delights, and though its pro-

phetic impulses and promised joys have been sometimes as empty of result as is the floating bubble of solidity, I am still sustained by its latent and holy fire, and allured by the smiling prospects of futurity which it ever newly discloses for the beguilement of mankind. Hope is the paradise of earth, in it all find a refuge.

CHAPTER II.

A SURPRISE.

WHEN the lovers next met it was in a quiet lane, lined on either side with green and flourishing hedgerows, where the blackberry-bush grew up, side by side, with the stunted hawthorn, and the dog-rose and the deadly nightshade interlaced their branches ; it was at the pensive hour of twilight, when the herds had been driven home from pasture, and when the wood-notes wild of thrush and nightingale were just beginning to be heard : it was the hour of midsummer indolence, when all was hushed and tranquil, placid and sublime. The sun had just gone down in the west, and floods of mellow light, varied as the rainbow in its tints, still proclaimed the departed grandeur of his setting. It was the hour most fit of all for lovers, when the passions are most refined and the thoughts most holy : and Madeline and Alfred felt the influence of that hour, and became lost in calm but passionate admiration of each other and of nature, and their heaven would have been complete but for one thing, and that was the fear of having to brave the wrath of an angry father ;

for neither was contented to wait his pleasure, and it was doubtful whether his consent could ever be obtained, owing, as before hinted, to the circumstances of Mr. Coke not being at this time of a character sufficiently promising to satisfy the views of the young lady's father ; and he admitted this, but *she* would have him, whether he were rich or poor. It was a genuine, improvident love-match. Two virgin loves had wedded themselves together. "Dearest Alfred, my will is yours," said Madeline in answer to his suggestions bearing upon an elopement.

I will not, I repeat, insult the generation by attempting to describe, and so writing a parody on, all the fond words and looks which passed between them, and how—

" Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again ;"

for I consider that the true, pure passion of love, as existing between two immortal beings, is in itself sufficiently sacred to, at certain times, enjoin the novelist's silence. They parted with a tacit understanding that their only refuge was in flight, and that in flight they would both seek it. *He* was ardent and impetuous ; *she* was a rash, giddy girl, so the moral obstacles to an elopement were small.

On the tenth evening following, they again met in the same spot, at the same tranquil hour, and when the same air of quiet and repose reigned around. It was in the ripe and mellow month of August, and the branches that filled

the orchards were heavy with clustering fruit and foliage, and the yellow corn was ready for the sickle, and every breeze was laden with the scent of wild flowers.

It was then and there that Alfred pressed and Madeline yielded—to flight.

“I have written you a serenade,” he said. “When you read it on Wednesday morning, imagine that I am singing it to a guitar accompaniment under your chamber window.”

It ran thus :

We, love, in flight must seek
Safety from angry eyes.
The day of travel o'er, love,
And thou, my cherished prize,
Wilt be forever mine.
Dearest on earth, arise !
Thou life of my life, let us on !
For, lo ! the skies
Show by their dusky tints
That soon the sun will rise.
Let not the future trouble thee :
Oh, give not way to sighs.
Love whispers “bliss and peace,”
And hope “ten thousand joys.”

When they parted, it was fully arranged that the rash step was to be taken on the second morning following, and they sealed their resolutions with, in the language of Byron,

“A long, long kiss—the emblem of their love.”

Elopements are not very common in the days that *we* live in, but there are romantic attachments occasionally made known to us through

newspaper paragraphs, where the parties have resorted to such means in order to gratify their own inclinations and secure as they imagine their own happiness. It may, therefore, not be uninteresting to learn a few particulars as to how the couple under our consideration succeeded in accomplishing their part of the undertaking. In the first place, the young lady transferred the greater part of her wardrobe from her own bedroom to a retired nook at the bottom of the garden, and this she did by her own hand and in perfect secrecy. In passing from the house to the garden, her way lay immediately in front of the library window where her father, according to custom, spent the greater part of the day. Nevertheless, she risked carrying the various things she wanted ; and although thus plotting under his very eye, she did not arouse suspicion enough to lead to her detection. At the bottom of the garden, there was a door which opened upon a patch of waste meadow land. The arrangement between the lovers was, that on the appointed morning, Wednesday, at daylight, the anxious swain should be in waiting with a dog-cart ready equipped, in the immediate vicinity of this door at the back of the garden wall.

He was punctually there with the dawn, and every moment to him was as an hour, as with eager anxiety he awaited the opening of the door and the first glance of the girl he loved.

But it was not until the sun had risen, and

suffused the eastern horizon with a beautiful effulgence

"And tipp'd the hills with gold,"

that the door opened and the longed-for being came. Then leapt their hearts with joy, and they embraced in all the fondness of a fervent love. But lo ! the passionate greeting was hardly over when a man suddenly rounded one corner of the garden wall and advanced towards them. As may be readily imagined,

"Twas unto them a most unwelcome sight,
At such a moment, and in such a place.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

BEFORE proceeding further with this history, I will briefly trace the career of Mr. Alfred Coke. There is nothing extraordinary or eventful about it. But it will be satisfactory to the reader to know something more concerning his antecedents than has been yet stated.

His father was the son of a baronet, residing with his wife and daughter at Hastings, and there was a possibility of his some day succeeding to the title, as his elder and only brother, who had been married more than ten years, was childless. Meanwhile, his only income was that derived from his wife's property, amounting to four hundred pounds a year. This was a small sum upon which to support his extravagant tastes ; but by successful play and good management, he was enabled to live in a style which indicated much larger means than he actually possessed. He was a barrister by profession, but nothing by pursuit, although possessing a highly cultivated mind and superior talents ; for not being endowed with sufficient energy of character to induce the desire of rising by merit, he contented himself with the prospect of ulti-

mately rising by heritage, and led a somewhat happy and indolent existence, waiting till the manna was rained down to him where he could gather without toil.

He had given his son and heir, Alfred, the means of a liberal education, but the latter, either through a spirit of mental indolence inherent in him, or an overpowering preference for the sports of his university companions, left Oxford a "plucked" man ; having excelled more in the art of getting into debt, horsemanship, boating, and pugilism, than the more sterling endowments incidental to *Alma Mater*.

Six months before our meeting with him at Cheltenham, a violent rupture had occurred between the father and son, which had its rise in the unjustly extravagant propensities of the latter, who, brooking no words of remonstrance, actually exasperated his father to use personal chastisement, which being actively returned by the other, to the disfigurement of the elder countenance, nothing remained but to banish the offender, who was forthwith forbidden the paternal roof, and that "forever."

CHAPTER IV.

FROM CHELTENHAM TO LONDON.

READER,—I will not keep you longer in suspense as to the issue of the proceedings in elopement.

When the man, whom we left advancing towards the lovers, and who was recognized by Madeline as a gardener in the service of a nurseryman of the place, had reached the spot where the dog-cart was standing, he turned round and coming to a full stop, watched the movements of the loving pair. He knew that it must be something very irregular to occasion the presence of Miss Perceval at such an hour and in such a place with a single handsome young gentleman only for her companion. He thought the whole affair looked very suspicious, and he had curiosity enough to wish to explore and see whether his suspicions were not correct.

His presence was a sad damper upon the young lovers, but he appeared to be quite unconcerned about that. He had never studied politeness it was evident, or he would not have lingered in the staring attitude he did. But to him, his ignorance was bliss.

Meanwhile, Alfred was actively occupied in transferring the bundles containing Madeline's personal effects from the garden to the trap of the dog-cart. This was soon done, and then he went up to the stranger and accosted him :

" Well, my man," said he, " a fine morning."

" Yea, zur," was the reply, " foine mornin'."

" Do you mind taking a ride with us on the dog-cart, I want some one to lift these things out of the trap at the end of the journey ?"

" I'n gotten my work to get to," replied the gardener.

" Oh, nonsense," continued the other ; " come along with me, and I'll give you half a guinea."

" That be moore than a week's wage, but I munna take it. I'n got to set seeds in Mester Black's gerden, and to rake th' beds, an' clip th' hedges."

" Oh, but never mind that, you'll have plenty of time for those things when you come back. Come along—get up." And the hero of the elopement actually led him by the arm to the step of the vehicle, and assisted him up to the back seat.

" I mustna go," said the man when he found himself on the cushion, and he made a movement indicative of his intention to descend.

" Stop—stop—hold hard !" cried Mr. Coke, " don't get down. The fact of the matter, my good man, is that you *must* go. If you won't go willingly, I must compel you ;" and after assisting Madeline to her seat next to his, in front, he

himself mounted, having previously locked the garden door and thrown the key over the wall.

Before the man could offer any more expostulations the dog-cart was in motion, and, awed by the earnest, determined manner of its driver, the old gardener kept his seat. There he remained during a drive of twenty-eight miles, when he was dismissed with the promised reward and sufficient in addition to pay his fare back by coach to Cheltenham, while the fugitives took post-chaise towards London.

The obvious object of taking the old gardener away from the place where he committed the voluntary indiscretion of looking on, was to prevent his spreading the intelligence of the lovers' flight before they were well clear of the wood ; and perhaps it was the best possible arrangement that Alfred could have consummated for insuring the possession of his prize, for the sower of seeds and clipper of hedges did not arrive at Cheltenham till the following day, when pursuit would have been hopeless.

Oh, love ! love ! it is the ruling passion of young lives.

That night the two put up at a road-side inn, while the hours of darkness rolled by. The ensuing day ushered them into the metropolis, and they were happy in each other. For the first week after their arrival in London, they resided as brother and sister at a private hotel in Dover Street, and at the expiration of that time, they presented themselves before the altar

at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, and were married. It may surprise some that this event should not have taken place sooner, but such was found impossible ; honor, however, on *his* part, and virtue on *hers*, made matters none the worse for the delay. It was a glad moment for both when the irrevocable "*I will,*" put an end to their fears and anxieties. Madeline gave way to her emotion in a flood of tears, while sorrow and joy alternately struggled for the mastery over her feelings as a daughter and a wife. If her father could have seen her at that moment, he would have clasped her to his breast and forgiven all.

In the mean time, no communication had taken place between the fugitives and the worthy widower at Cheltenham, who remained in a high state of indignation and excitement consequent on such an outrageous proceeding, on the part of his daughter, as that of elopement.

Mr. Alfred Coke, on the other hand, was not afflicted with the smallest shadow of remorse, and his bride was equally happy in mind with himself. True, she wondered and wondered again as to what her father would think of her running away from him. But then she consoled herself with the belief that the claims of her husband were closer even, and more to be respected and obeyed, than those of her parent.

"I really do wonder what papa will say," were words that she repeated over and over

again. With all her wondering, however, she was as much in darkness as on the first night following her flight.

She was a creature of impulse, and she had linked herself with one who was equally a creature of impulse. His was a nature which only valued money as a means to an end, and was indifferent to reputation. He was reckless of consequences, and his career was as uncertain as it was likely to be marked with many vicissitudes. Still, in his very heedlessness and rashness, there was a dauntless heroism which had its fascination ; while in the boldness and self-dependence of his ever-soaring spirit there was that which more commanded admiration than excited contempt. He had been cast adrift on the sea of life, and he felt it, but he had faith in his unprotected bark ; and having spread his sail, he trusted to the guiding gale of fortune to waft him swiftly, merrily on in safety to some, by him yet undiscovered land, where wealth and glory could be reaped as the drooping corn before the sickle. Alas, that experience, with rueful visage, should ever dispel such mirage of the mind, and leave only a ghastly wreck, in mockery of the pictured magnificence which youth and folly build unto themselves. But even experience, however bitter, does not kill ardor or destroy hope ; and the heart, even when torn and cankered by care and disappointment, still goes on, hoping and yearning, and beats its feeble way against the opposing blasts

of life, as a dismasted ship still buffets with the elements, and seems as though struggling towards the promised shore.

After their marriage the happy pair proceeded to Brighton.

"We had better write to your father, I think, love," said Alfred, one morning, soon after their arrival.

"Oh yes, dear, I think we had," replied Madeline, eagerly seconding the proposal; "or he will be angry."

Alfred smiled, and said, "I should think he was that already; he is getting over it a little by this time." Madeline smiled with him, and they embraced each other in their fondness; after which they resolved on writing that very day; and they did write.

Months elapsed, but no answer was returned to their united epistles by the morose and irascible father at Cheltenham. This did not much affect them, for their joy in each other was still undiminished, and the money which Madeline had brought from home with her, together with the pecuniary resources of Alfred were not yet exhausted.

They remained more than eight months at Brighton, and then took passage by one of the packets sailing from London to Aberdeen, intending to visit the maternal and widowed aunt of Madeline, who had honored them with a pressing invitation, and promised that all the resources of Elgin—where she resided—should be placed at their disposal.

CHAPTER V.

“Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise.”

READER,—The first scene of the second act of my novel opens in the county of Wicklow and the kingdom of Ireland—that gem of the sea which the Milesians of old were wont to call Inisalga, Inisfail, and Erin—whose glory is the shamrock, and whose weapon is the shillaly.

You may never have been in that land of the lake and mountain, so famous for its wit and whisky ; but I will take you there in thought—transport you as in a dream, and put you down at the foot of Lug na quilla—the lord of its mountain range—five miles from Rathangan Castle.

* * * * *

By the light of the stars you may suppose yourself to have traveled there. It was a calm evening in April when you set out on your journey ; but now, at daybreak, as you descend from the car of imagination, you find that the tempest's breath prevails. You hear the angry billows lashing the defying breakers on the coast, about a mile off, and you instinctively recall what you remember having read of the dangers of the seas. You hurry along towards the castle, with

the wind moaning wildly around you, as if determined to sweep away every obstacle, while every obstacle is just as firmly bent on resisting the attempt.

Unless you are very fond of a long constitutional walk before breakfast, you will wish yourself in any other spot than where you at present stand, for your course lies over a rough and lonely tract of country offering but little shelter to the traveler beyond an occasional patch of gorse bush, or a rocky cave. As you advance, however, the storm gradually subsides, and by the time you reach the castle grounds the rain has ceased, and the wind, as if repenting of its former wrath, has sunk into low, sobbing murmurs.

You must not be surprised if you meet, on your way, a peasant clad in a ragged frieze coat of the *dress* cut, with waistcoat and knee-breeches to match, and stockings of gray worsted (which if they be not variegated with holes you may remark as a local wonder), and an old battered felt hat, and likely a blackthorn shillaly supporting a bundle across his shoulder ; you must not, I say, be surprised to meet such a character, and hear him salute you with—

“The top of the morning to you, yer honor.”

If an old woman attired in a picturesque collection of rags should pursue you as you near the castle gates, and shower more blessings on your head than you ever had the vanity to wish for, be sure, for your own peace, to turn round and

give her whatever copper you may have about you, as the blessings of Irish beggars areavery often succeeded by just as fervent anathemas.

The birds are, by this time, warbling around you, a few sheep and deer are cropping the sweet herbage, and a profusion of evergreens, upon whose glossy leaves the rain-drops still glisten, diamond-like, and from which they fall in showers at every gust of wind that shakes the branches, line your path, beyond which beds of spring flowers give fragrance to the air.

The castle is an old crumbling pile, inhabited only by a lady and her domestics. The lady in question, who lost both her parents when a child, was left a widow five years ago, and a widow she still remains, and that no doubt to her great dissatisfaction, for Irish widows are the people above all others in the world most willing to marry again. She is now in her thirtieth year, and comely, but very mournful. Since the death of her husband, whom she warmly loved, and who, at the time of his decease, was Attorney General for Ireland, she, absorbed in her own sorrows, has shut herself out from society, and scarcely acknowledged the claims of kindred or of friendship. Indeed, she has led the life of a recluse, and this is not owing to the want of means, for she has a secured income of nearly two thousand pounds a year, and, being childless, has no one to support but herself.

I will usher you into the presence of this un-

protected lady—who was once a fair votary of fashion—at the moment that her housekeeper is announcing the melancholy circumstance of a wreck having taken place during the night on a neighboring part of the coast. There is much excitement of tone and manner about the servant as she asks permission to go down to visit the scene of the disaster, where, among other bodies washed ashore, is that of a young lady who has just given birth to a child, but whose own life is despaired of.

The lady of the castle, on hearing this intelligence, is quite as earnest to do good as the poor housekeeper at whose disposal she places everything likely to benefit the shipwrecked, and she concludes, by ordering the carriage, so that she can herself accompany her on the mission of mercy.

A drive of a mile and a half brings them to the edge of the cliff overlooking the Irish Sea. The long and narrow beach, usually smooth and level, is now covered with fragments of rock and heaps of sea-weed, with here and there pieces of rigging, spars, and sails, together with the remains of various packages and ship's fittings that have been cast ashore from the vessel, whose broken hull lies stranded on a reef about three hundred yards below the water-line, opposite.

Emerging from the carriage, its two occupants hastily descend the steep, irregular stairs which lead from the cliffs to the beach where a

few small hovels, inhabited by fishermen, are built almost under the dark and rugged rocks.

On inquiry, the good widow ascertains that the only living body washed ashore is that of the female who has since become a mother, and who is lying in one of the hovels alluded to. Thither the two proceed. They are met at the door of the cheerless habitation, whose walls are of mud, and whose straw-thatched roof is black with age, by its tenant, the fisherman, who has the felicity of living free of all rent and taxes. It is so unusual an event to see the lady from the castle there, that Pat Byrne recoils in wonder on seeing her :

"Och, an' is it yer ladyship I see ? May Heaven bless you !" he ejaculates, touching a lock of his hair in token of respect. "Here's a poor woman, peace to her soul, as is after dyin'."

Pat's wife makes a low courtesy as Mrs. Parsons, such is her name, crosses the threshold, and two or three half-naked little children suddenly become silent under the awe-inspiring influence of her presence.

The hovel has only one apartment, and on a small stretcher-bed in the furthest corner is extended the form of one, young and beautiful, whose expanded eyelids alone give signs of life. Her large dilated eyes, on which the film of death is fast gathering, are fixed on a woman who has come from the neighboring village, where she has long practiced as a midwife. Near her, wrapped in a petticoat and piece of frieze, and

with a heap of rags for a bed, lies the new-born infant. It is a male child, and very small, but its perfect proportions, healthful look, and active limbs give promise of long surviving the shock that threatens death to the mother, and its helpless state and desolate condition call forth all the pent-up tenderness and benevolence of the warm-hearted widow of the Irish Attorney General.

I will change the tense.

CHAPTER VI.

WHO IS SHE ?

THE visitors had entered unperceived by the sick lady ; but after standing a few moments in solemn silence, looking at her compassionately, she turned her gaze full upon them. At first, all other thoughts than those of joy seemed banished from her mind, for her eye lighted up with pleasure and sudden animation. She was cheered by the sight of those who could help her and succor her child. The prospect of relief in the hour of distress raised the anxious soul above despair, and was hailed with rapture as intense as ever the shipwrecked mariner hailed the bark of his rescue. Gradually, however, a full sense of her approaching end and her child's destitute condition seemed to overwhelm her. She started up on her pallet, and made an effort at speech, but speech had failed her ; then she glanced wildly round the hovel, as if in search of an interpreter of her feelings. Her pleading glance rested on the widow, and at the same time she pointed, with a skeleton finger, towards her offspring. Mrs. Parsons did not fail to understand the appeal thus made to her, and she felt it to be irresistible. She men-

tally resolved to adopt the child, and she gave a promise to that effect. This the dying lady evidently comprehended, for when speech fails, and reason yet remains, the power of intuition becomes stronger, especially with females.

For some moments her steadfast gaze rested on the features of her child's promised benefactor, as if she was reading her inmost thoughts. The scrutiny appeared to afford her consolation and satisfaction, for, with a temporary accession of strength, she threw herself forward and motioned for the babe to be brought to her. But the exertion and excitement overcame her feeble strength. She uttered an hysterical exclamation, made a sudden and last endeavor to rise, as if to embrace her new-found friend, and then fell back unconscious. Alas, she was lifeless ; the emancipated spirit had burst its earthly bonds.

"She is no more!" ejaculated the widow, with emotion, and she knelt down by the side of the humble bed and gave utterance to a brief prayer. Then, while still kneeling and fixing her eyes on all that was mortal of the shipwrecked woman, she solemnly vowed to do unto the helpless child as she would have done to her own had it lived. She would adopt it, and guard it through infancy to manhood.

All ye who have thus knelt by the bedside of death have had a painful opportunity of witnessing what Byron has attempted so beautifully in description, and will not fail to recognize its truth :

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),
And mark'd the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there;
The fixed, yet tender, traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,
And—but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,
Where cold Obstruction's apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these, and these alone,
Some moments, ay, one treach'rous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly seal'd,
The first, last look by death reveal'd!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.
Her's is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of feeling pass'd away!
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherish'd earth."

"Well, Byrne," said Mrs. Parsons, as she left the cottage, "the poor lady is dead."

"Is she, yer ladyship? It's sorry I am to hear it. May the holy angels guard her," said he.

"I want you to acquaint me with the particulars of the wreck," continued the widow.

"Ah, then yer ladyship it's little I know

about it, more than it was blowing a gale of wind last night here, and I saw signals of distress, as they calls 'em, and the ship as was distressed struck, at two in the mornin', on the reef and broke up. It was too dark and windy, and the waves were too high for us to go off to her. But wait a bit, says I to Tim Burke, may-be she'll come nearer; but she did'nt. And then we heard some one crying in the water, and says I, It's a woman, and here goes, for it was close to us, and just as I was running nearly up to the neck, what did I see but the young lady that's now in the cottage beyond, and I seized and dragged her ashore, and saved her, and its not my fault she's dead now, your ladyship, an' may heaven bless you."

I may here remark that there was another collection of hovels on a small headland about a quarter of a mile lower down the coast, and these were tenanted by a number of desperate and adventurous fellows, who were either fishermen, wreckers, smugglers, or whiteboys, as necessity urged them and interest suggested. They seldom associated with the people of the hovels under the cliffs, whom from their proximity they appeared to look upon as enemies. These men had already ransacked the wreck, and removed to their caves whatever they considered valuable and were strong enough to remove. But it was considered by Pat Byrne impossible to ascertain what articles they had thus obtained.

Their animosity was so great that they would not have allowed him or any of his fellows to

enter their places of resort, and it would have been as much as his life was worth to endeavor to force a passage.

Before leaving, Mrs. Parsons arranged that Pat Byrne's wife, who was then eligible in such respect, should act as wet-nurse to the child till another was provided.

Pat also was commissioned to use his best exertions in ascertaining whether anything relating to the lady had been taken, or was still recoverable from the wreck.

Mrs. Parsons reascended the cliff alone, having left the housekeeper to preside over the well-being of the child, and watch over the lifeless body of its mother.

The sad and lonely life, consequent on her husband's death, which Mrs. Parsons had been leading for the past five years threatened to alienate her feelings from the rest of mankind, and chill a heart naturally warm. Nevertheless, accustomed from her childhood to affection, it was as necessary to her healthy existence as the air she breathed. It was not therefore surprising to see the fibres of her heart entwining round this new object—this helpless babe. She already pictured to herself years of delightful occupation in which she might watch its growth, and direct the expanding powers of its youthful mind to wisdom and virtue. And she resolved that, instead of renewing her intercourse with the world, as she had intended, she would devote herself entirely to this one object, and still continue her residence at the castle.

On the next morning she again took her way to the cottage of the fisherman, Byrne, where, after affectionately fondling the baby—a being whom she felt was born to call forth all the warmest feelings of her nature—she approached the bed of death, and with a trembling hand drew aside the cambric handkerchief that screened from vulgar gaze the face of its young but hapless mother. In silent awe and admiration she traced every lineament of that perfect, placid face. A smile of sweetness, such as women call angelic, so illumined the cold alabaster skin, that the widow, after the lapse of a few moments, shrank back in agitation, so living looked the corpse. It seemed as if she were gazing upon one lost in some delightful trance, rather than upon the inanimate features of the dead. The hands, one finger of which bore a golden circlet—the pledge of wedlock—were white and delicately formed ; and from this, as also the superior quality of her under-linen, which was all that she wore when rescued, it was inferred that she was of gentle blood, or had belonged to the higher order of society. But beyond this there was no room for further supposition. Who she was, or what she was, remained a mystery.

In the course of the morning the body of the dead mother, and that of the living child were removed from the fisherman's hut to the castle. Two days later she was interred in an adjacent burial-ground, and the widow, and the doctor, and the priest followed her to the grave.

CHAPTER VII.

SUSPENSE.

AT Elgin, Mrs. Sinclair, the aunt of Madeline Coke, was in daily expectation of the arrival from London of the wedded pair. But no wedded pair came.

"Where can they have got to?" said the lady over and over again as the days went by, but still no answer came.

At last the intelligence reached her that one of the Aberdeen packets from London was missing, and supposed to be lost. This aroused her fears; could it be that they were on board, and lost too? It was a dreadful apprehension that took possession of her; but, alas, she was under the painful conviction of its being only too true. Still, hope told a flattering tale. It might not be that the vessel was lost, and it might not be that they were on board the missing packet.

Those were not the days of penny postage, and abundant correspondence. Those things of emptiness, signed, sealed, and delivered, which the ladies of the present day have such frequent opportunity of perusing, were then exchanged, even between women, with comparative rareness, so that the circumstance of

Madeline's not having informed her aunt of the vessel by which she and her husband intended to embark was not a matter of surprise. In her letter to Elgin, in which she accepted the invitation to come and stay a few months there, she had merely mentioned that they would leave "by the next packet, or the one next after." The "next packet," that is the one which left London the earliest subsequent to the date of that letter, was the one now supposed to be lost, and the packet next following had duly arrived at Aberdeen. In the mean time, nothing had been heard from Madeline, or any one referring to her. There was, consequently, but one hope left. Had they yet left England? Even that was a very feeble source of consolation to the aunt; for the chances were, that, if that had been the case, Madeline would have written, apprising her of the postponement of their departure.

"Surely, the girl would have written to say so," were her words often and often, as the painful thought which she strove to banish, but strove in vain, recurred to her again and again. Nevertheless, she could only wait and hope. Perhaps the next packet—the third after the date of her letter—would bring them. But as the day drew near when the vessel was expected to arrive her hopes of seeing Madeline grew less and less, for she knew of the maternal condition of her niece, and judged that the time of her *accouchement* must be either past or closely approaching. A

letter was, therefore, all that she now hoped for.
Her words were—

“ Only let me know that they’re safe, and I
shall be satisfied.”

Meanwhile, her suspense was great, and in
that suspense we will, for the moment, leave
her.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MOURNERS.

THE painful suspense in which we left Mrs. Sinclair at Elgin gave way to despair, when the expected packet from London arrived at Aberdeen, and brought neither Madeline nor any intelligence of her ; but a confirmation of the mournful truth of the loss of the vessel by which the wedded pair were supposed to have taken passage. It had been ascertained that the packet was wrecked on the Irish coast during a heavy gale on the tenth night after her leaving port, and the only way of accounting for her being driven so far out of her course, as she must have been, was in the supposition that she had been previously disabled, and left at the mercy of the wild sea waves, for not one of those on board survived her destruction to tell the melancholy tale.

After this Mrs. Sinclair yielded, sadly, reluctantly, to the conviction that the two were lost. She felt that it must be so, and that there was no use in entertaining vain hopes of their safety. She would now only deplore the event that had hurried those young and loving souls into eternity ; there was no power on earth to alter the result.

She proceeded to Aberdeen, and instituted inquiries at the London Packet Office, in that town, concerning the passengers who had embarked on board the lost vessel. She had hoped that there she would have been able to ascertain the names of all who had, on that last voyage, linked their fate with that of the craft which was to have borne them to the land of flood and mountain. But she was disappointed. Only an imperfect list of the passengers' names had been taken in London ; so that, although a copy of such had by this time arrived, and Mrs. Sinclair was allowed to peruse and re-peruse it, there was no "Mr." or "Mrs." "Coke" traced thereon to sadden her anxious eyes as she read. As yet, therefore, there was a doubt ; she had no confirmation of her niece and Mr. Coke having perished. They might not have embarked in that ocean cradle which had hurried so many others to a watery grave. She would not despair until she was certain of the fate that had befallen them. She would resist the force of conviction, and hope for the best.

Meanwhile, however, she wrote to Mr. Perceval, informing him of the particulars concerning his daughter's intended visit, in company with her husband, to Scotland, and her suspicions of their having been on board the Aberdeen packet, which had been lost two months previously. This was startling intelligence to the old gentleman at Cheltenham, and the first he had read having reference to his daughter for the previous four

months. He had heard nothing about her intended visit to Scotland, nor about the loss of the vessel in question. For the first time since her elopement, he felt towards her the true, warm feelings of a loving father, and in the depth of his grief, shed the bitter tears of an aching sorrow. He uttered words of forgiveness. He prayed to Heaven for her preservation. To lose his only daughter—his only child, undutiful though that child had been, was to him a terrible affliction, the mere thought of which distracted him from the sober equanimity of his usual every-day life. For the first two nights after the receipt of Mrs. Sinclair's letter he remained restless and sleepless. He was recalling every incident of his child's young life, her rash love, her flight ; and these again awoke a train of other recollections, many of them relating to her departed mother. He was impatient to learn more about the calamity in which his daughter and son-in-law were supposed to be so fatally involved. Had they really left London in the packet that was wrecked ? Was there not a survivor to tell the tale of the disaster ? He would know the worst. He would set out for London without delay, and himself make every inquiry and ascertain the truth, agonizing though it might be. But, after all, even a confirmation of the mournful supposition would be better than the dreadful torture and oppressive anxiety of SUSPENSE.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SEARCH FOR TIDINGS.

MR. PERCEVAL left Cheltenham for London on the second day following the receipt of Mrs. Sinclair's letter from Elgin. On his arrival in the metropolis, his first act, after leaving the stage-coach, was to hire a cab to convey him to the Aberdeen Packet Office, in Leadenhall Street.

His first words to one of the clerks, who came forward to speak to him, were—

“I have come, sir, to inquire about my daughter and her husband. I believe—I’m afraid that they embarked in one of your packets—the one that was lost. Can you give me any information?”

And, as he spoke, his countenance betrayed marked anxiety and emotion.

“Yes, sir; what name?” said the clerk.

“Name—name!” ejaculated Mr. Perceval, as if suddenly surprised; “I suppose you mean their name, not mine?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Coke—Coke—Mr. and Mrs. Coke.”

The clerk raised his eyes for a moment, as if in consultation with his memory, and then turned to a neighboring desk and carefully looked over

a list of names. He returned to the inquirer, after a lapse of five minutes, saying,

"I see no such name, sir."

"No *Coke*?" exclaimed the stranger, with emphasis and excitement, which called off the eyes of all the other clerks from the figures in pen and ink to look at the figure of the stranger.

"Have you the names of all the passengers by that packet?" he then asked sternly.

"No, sir," answered the clerk; "there may have been some who took their tickets on board that are not down here;" and he pointed to the list.

"Is there any one, then, that I can see, who was on board the packet the last thing before she started?"

"Yes, sir; would you like to see the manifest clerk?"

"I should—very much—very much," was the eager reply; and Mr. Perceval became every moment more impatient to learn all that was to be learned.

"Mr. Jones!" cried the clerk, calling another from the extreme end of the office, and Mr. Jones, the manifest clerk, came forward.

"This young man saw the packet off," spoke the elder clerk introducing him.

"Oh, I want to ask you, sir," said Mr. Perceval, "about a Mr. and Mrs. Coke, who, I have reason to believe, were lost in that packet of yours. Did you hear that name spoken, or see it written anywhere on the day of the vessel's

departure ?" and the questioner fixed on the other a keen, anxious, penetrating glance.

"I don't remember the name, sir," answered the clerk, after a moment's consideration.

"Well, sir," continued Mr. Perceval, "did you see a young lady, of the middle size, between eighteen and nineteen, with brown hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion, and a tall, slight young gentleman with her ?"

"I think I did," said the clerk.

"But are you sure that you did ?" asked the father earnestly. "Describe them to me," he commanded, and his eyes flashed.

"Well, just as you say, sir. Had the lady ringlets ?" Mr. Perceval turned white in the face, and his lips quivered, on hearing this question.

"She had," he muttered.

He was evidently overcome by his own painful feelings. He felt convinced that they were gone. He would renew his inquiries on the morrow. But, now, he could bear to do so no longer ; he was giddy and sick and faint. In this condition he staggered out of the office in silence, and entered the cab again, almost paralyzed with grief and emotion.

CHAPTER X.

WHO IS HE?

It was about noon on a beautiful day in July, and nearly three months after the wreck, when a portly, respectable-looking man of about fifty-five years, with whom we are concerned, was being driven on a jaunting car along the Dublin road, in the vicinity of Rathangan Castle. This personage, who was a stranger to the neighbourhood, had just come from Dublin.

"I want to go as near where the wreck took place as you can take me," said the passenger, addressing the carman.

"Yes, yer honor ; it's myself that'll drive you there," was the ready reply ; and the speaker urged on his jaded horse with a slight stroke of the whip.

"Where is it, yer honor ?" asked the latter a moment afterwards.

"I don't know. You'd better inquire ?"

"Halloo, my hearty !" shouted the driver, a minute or so later, and addressing a passing pedestrian ; "where's the wrack ?"

"What wrack ?"

"How am I to know ? Sure, I wouldn't have asked you if I had. Where is it ?"

"The wreck of the *Swallow*," observed the passenger.

"It's not me that knows, sir, more than there was one a couple of months or more ago, down on the rocks, in front of Pat Byrne's house, beyant ;" and, as he spoke, he pointed over a patch of stony land leading to the sea-coast.

When the car had arrived near the edge of the cliffs, and within a hundred yards of the spot where Mrs. Parsons' carriage had stopped on the morning when they first heard of the wreck and the condition of the hapless lady in the fisherman's hovel, the passenger alighted from his seat, and then stood for a few moments looking down on the sea beyond. He could only see one or two small fishing boats floating on its broad expanse, but a line of white foam, about a quarter of a mile on his right, attracted his attention.

"There lies the reef!" he exclaimed aloud to himself, as he fixed his gaze upon the spot.

"Wait there," he then said to the carman ; and slowly he followed the footpath down the cliffs towards the hovels that I have before alluded to, and in front of which, on the shore, a group of men were gathered round a boat that lay high and dry on the beach.

The appearance of the stranger, as might be supposed, was, in such a neighborhood, of sufficient novelty to attract all eyes and arouse curiosity. The visitor was, therefore, "the observed of all observers," as he wound his way down

the cliff, and advanced towards the idle group on the beach.

There was a look of irresolution and uncertainty about our elderly friend as he approached the men in question, whom he eyed with suspicious glances, while he muttered within himself, "These fellows are not good for much, I can see." However, he turned to them.

"Do you know anything about the wreck?" he asked.

"Is it about the boat that was broken up on the reef, yer honor?"

"Well, I believe so—the Swallow was her name."

"That's it; to be sure we do, Pat Byrne's the boy that can tell you all about it." Then calling upon that individual, who occupied a standing position in front of his own cottage, he said, "Pat, come here, and tell the gentleman about the wrack."

"Good-day to you, yer honor," said Pat, advancing towards him, and at the same time giving one of his forelocks a tug, in token of respect.

"I want to know if any lives or valuables were saved from the vessel after she stranded," said the stranger, with surprising brevity.

"Only one," replied Pat, "and a little one."

"That's two you mean then," remarked the inquirer.

"Bedad it is, sir, but only one came ashore."

" Only one came ashore!" repeated the stranger.

" Then how did the other come?"

" The same way as myself, yer honor," answered Pat with a smile, which was shared by all the rest, while the visitor looked from one to the other in mingled wonder and displeasure, for he was one of the *touchy* order of mankind, and by no means relished the idea of being laughed at, and he thought that the men were now having a joke at *his* expense.

The stranger was not an Irishman, and he felt his dignity hurt by the evasive reply of the fisherman.

" And how did you come?" inquired the gentleman. This question had the effect of renewing the smile all round.

" Ah, sir," said Pat, " it's yourself that knows right well. Sure, yer honor, there was a young lady washed ashore, and then had a child in the cottage beyant, an' it's myself that closed her eyes whin she died, an' pace to her soul."

" What was her name? Do you know?"

" Never a bit could we tell, an' it's not us that knows."

" Were there any other bodies washed ashore?" asked the stranger, who evidently felt a deep interest in the subject.

" Never a one living besides, but more than six dead."

After a few other such questions and answers the stranger reverted to the young lady.

"What was the young lady like?" he inquired.

"Oh, a sweet thing," replied Pat; "fine bright eyes, and beautiful long hair and white skin."

"Is it the good lady that died?" asked Pat's wife, who at the moment came forward from the threshold of her own door, where she had been standing since the arrival of the stranger.

"Yes to be sure," answered Pat.

"Ah! then, yer honor," said the woman, "she was a darlin' craytur—her boy's with Mrs. Parsons—the lady at the castle."

She then proceeded to give particulars of the birth—the death scene—the burial—the adoption of the child, and such other matters concerning the same as she was acquainted with, all of which absorbed the attention of the listener. Indeed, his interest appeared to increase with every word of her recital.

After this he reascended the cliff, again took his place on the car, and drove direct to Rathangan Castle, there to seek an interview with the adoptress of the child of the wreck.

CHAPTER XI.

THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

MR. PERCEVAL brooded sadly over the bitterness of the calamity which he believed had overtaken his daughter, as he sat in his private sitting-room in a west end hotel, on the first night after his arrival in London. He felt convinced from what the clerk at the packet office had told him, that she must have traveled by that vessel, and consequently perished with it. However, he would go to Ireland, and visit the scene of the wreck, and ascertain all the particulars known concerning the disaster, from the peasantry and others in the neighborhood.

He accordingly traveled thither, and there the reader has already seen him, for the portly, respectable-looking man of the jaunting car was no other than Mr. Perceval.

When he arrived at the castle he sent in his name to Mrs. Parsons, coupled with the remark that his visit had reference to the wreck, and the deceased lady whose child she had adopted. Under these circumstances, Mrs. Parsons, of course, consented to see him, and he was at once admitted into her presence.

Mr. Perceval was agreeably surprised to find

the widow so young, and with much of her original beauty still untarnished. He had been little accustomed to ladies' society beyond his own family at any time, and since the hasty withdrawal of his daughter he had led the life of a recluse. This may, perhaps, account for a certain timidity which he manifested at the commencement of the interview.

Before his admission into the apartment, his thoughts were wholly occupied by his daughter, the wreck, and the child ; but, now, the lady of the castle was the central figure of the group, and he felt that he was unable to resist the tendency which this one figure had to eclipse the others, and distract his thoughts. He had experienced a surprise at the most unlooked-for place and time, and he could not help giving way to it. However, he summoned resolution enough to speak deliberately on the subject of his call :

"I am sorry to trouble you," he began ; "but I am deeply interested in a lady—my daughter and her husband—who, I fear, were on board the Aberdeen packet—the Swallow, that was wrecked on your coast, and from what the people on the shore tell me of the lady, who died, in one of the cottages, I am afraid that it was her. You have her child, I believe ?"

"Yes. I promised the mother to adopt and cherish it," replied Mrs. Parsons ; "and it has been nursed ever since under my own roof and superintendence."

" You are very good," replied Mr. Perceval ; " and if it is my grandchild, I am grateful to you, and ever shall be."

Mrs. Parsons felt in danger of losing her young charge, a prospect by no means pleasant to her.

" I have only done what my conscience told me was right," she observed.

" You have a good conscience, and the Lord will reward you," said the visitor. " But is there nothing by which you can trace its mother's connections—no name or anything found ?"

" Nothing has been found beyond the linen she had on when washed ashore," was the reply.

" What was your daughter's name, may I ask ?"

" Her own name was *Madeline*—her husband's, *Coke*."

" Madeline," repeated the lady.

" Yes ; were there any marks on her clothes ?" he asked, anxiously.

" One letter only—the letter *M*, and that was on her chemise," answered the widow.

" Ah ! then it must be her—that is conclusive—poor girl—poor girl !" and a tear trickled from the father's eye.

" But it may not be the same, after all," suggested the widow, " *M* is such a common initial."

" Yes, madam, it may not be ; but something tells me that it is ;" and Mr. Perceval bent down his head, and in the cold majesty of his solitary woe, uttered a deep sigh.

"I have been a father," said he, after a moment's pause, and raising his eyes from the ground ; "but I now feel myself a father no longer. I am grieved and distressed beyond measure. I am made unhappy in the evening of my life, and all through the rash conduct of her whose death I now deplore. Ah ! mine is a sad case."

Mrs. Parsons found it hard, under the circumstances, to resist a feeling of sympathy, and she felt with the widower in his distress.

"Was there something the matter, then, before she——anything that she did wrong?" asked the widow.

"Wrong!" exclaimed Mr. Perceval, in excitement. "Yes, madam, very wrong. She eloped from under my own roof, and this calamity that has overtaken her and him seems like a visitation of God for their misconduct."

Mr. Perceval then proceeded to detail the history of his own and his daughter's life.

"What a painful affliction it must have been to you," remarked Mrs. Parsons, in allusion to Madeline's flight.

"Would you let me see the things she had on?" he asked, after a little further conversation.

"Yes ; the housekeeper will show you them," and Mrs. Parsons called that female functionary by name, and she appeared.

Mr. Perceval was led into an adjoining room to inspect the chemise, the petticoat, the stays,

the stockings, and the wedding ring of the deceased.

When he returned to the sitting-room, and was asked whether he could identify any of the articles of apparel, he answered in the negative. There was nothing there that he remembered having seen before. But that did not shake his belief that they had belonged to his daughter. He was not likely to have recognized anything of the kind belonging to her. He might, by chance, have seen her stays or stockings at the time they were purchased, but never after, that he remembered. Besides, she might have bought new things entirely since her marriage. What was to hinder her? She had saved a couple of hundred pounds of her pocket-money, and her husband must have the credit of having had something. He thought of asking leave to take the articles to Cheltenham, and submitting them to the tradesmen with whom she had dealt there; but on consideration, he thought it useless. They might only, in their ignorance or forgetfulness, mislead him. He had now reconciled himself to the worst. He believed her dead, and anything that tended to shake that belief troubled him sorely.

"Can I see the child?" he next asked.

"Oh yes, certainly, the nurse will bring him. Tell the nurse, Mrs. Duffy."

It is evident that Mrs. Parsons wished, if possible, to leave a doubt on the mind of her visitor as to the infant being his grandchild, for

she studiously avoided making any mention of a lock of hair which she had herself cut off the head of the deceased two days prior to the interment.

Mr. Perceval cast wistful glances at the widow in the interval which elapsed between the dispatch of the housekeeper and her return in company with the nurse and child.

There it lay in the arms of a brawny, face-freckled young Irish woman, and Mr. Perceval eyed it earnestly from the moment of its appearance.

"It's hard to tell," he said, after the scrutiny was over.

"All children at that age appear to me to be pretty much alike. I can not recognize a likeness, but that, of course, signifies nothing."

"Do you wish to keep the infant?" asked Mr. Perceval, after the nurse and her charge had left the room. "It will be a heavy task and tie upon you I am afraid."

"Oh no," replied Mrs. Parsons. "I feel that it will be a pleasure to me. I shall certainly like it to remain with me, now that I have become attached to it."

Mr. Perceval thought and hesitated for a moment, and then said: "It is very good of you, and I am grateful, but if it is my grandchild I should have liked to take it under my own roof."

"Still it may not be your daughter's child," suggested Mrs. Parsons.

"If I had any doubt of it, madam, I should

have an exhumation of the body of the mother."

"But even then, after being buried nearly three months, and the change which her illness made, you might not be able to recognize her."

"Well, I shall think the matter over," he observed. "But, at any rate, I suppose you would not object to write to me if anything is the matter with the child at any time, or you should hear anything more?"

"Oh, certainly not!" replied the widow.

"And while I'm here," continued Mr. Perceval, "I may as well pay a visit to those smugglers on the coast. Will it be safe, do you think? They may have things from the wreck belonging to those who were on board, and I might have fresh proof in that way, by giving them a reward; if not, perhaps it would be better that the body should be disinterred."

Mrs. Parsons remarked that he would require, for his own safety, to be careful in whatever he did with reference to the smugglers, as they were a desperate gang of men. "But," she observed, "you are justified in taking every measure you think likely to afford proof of the fate of your daughter and son-in-law."

Mr. Perceval then gave her his address at Cheltenham, and asked for leave to call on the day following, which was granted, and so the interview terminated.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW DISCOVERY.

MR. PERCEVAL took his seat on the jaunting car, which had remained in waiting for him in front of the castle, and drove direct to the sea-coast again with the intention of visiting the smugglers. After he had proceeded about a mile, he stopped to inquire of a peasant if he would act as a guide to those forbidden regions where they dwelt. But, no—the peasant said that it would be as much as his life was worth. He, however, offered to point out the nearest way to their caves, after which his honor would be able to find the place without further assistance, but caution was necessary in descending the winding footpaths down the cliffs, as they were very uneven, narrow, and intricate, and there was also danger of being shot by the smugglers if the latter had any suspicion of hostile intentions on the part of the visitor.

This information had the effect of making Mr. Perceval feel a little uncomfortable, and he hesitated as to whether it would be wiser to trust himself into the smugglers' camp, as he had intended, or to wait till such time as he could communicate with them by some other means.

In the mean time, the car wheels were rolling towards the spot now imbued with so much interest.

When they had reached a certain point, beyond which the car could not have proceeded, owing to the irregular and rocky surface of the ground, the guide alighted and pointed out the course to be taken in order to gain the beach. This course, he gave the stranger to understand, was open to the smugglers' fire over nearly its entire length. But Mr. Perceval had felt new courage the nearer he approached the locality, and he now, after telling the peasant and the carman to wait till his return, whenever that might be, strode manfully forward, and in the course of a few minutes was out of their sight.

" May the Holy Virgin guard and bring him back safe !" said the peasant, after he had thus disappeared ; " for he never gave me the shilling he promised."

Mr. Perceval continued his almost perpendicular descent of the cliff, often at considerable peril to himself, for he might have been precipitated headlong to the bottom, and alighted a mangled corpse on the rugged and rocky shore. However, he arrived in safety on the beach, within half an hour after his leaving the car, and strange to say without having been perceived by the denizens of the shades below, for during the time most of them were congregated together at their afternoon meal.

The surprise was general throughout the camp

or village as the stranger made his appearance in the spot which its members considered sacred to themselves, and there were many cries such as "holy murther," expressive of their feelings on the occasion.

"Don't let me disturb you," said Mr. Perceval, as several men, whose looks were by no means pleasant or assuring, gathered round him. "I have only come to know if you have saved any thing from the wreck that took place yonder. I had a daughter on board, and I want to see if there was anything washed ashore that belonged to her, as, if so, I shall be glad to buy it of you."

"What is that he wants?" asked a withered old woman, who advanced from a hovel a hundred yards or so off, and who was evidently no better pleased than the men at the sight of the stranger.

Mr. Perceval allowed the men to answer her question.

"Is there ne'er a one at all wid you?" she inquired of our friend.

"No," he answered; "I have come to Ireland alone for the purpose of finding out all that I could about her, and I am prepared to reward you if you can restore to me anything that belonged to her."

The stranger was then questioned as to who sent him there, to which he answered that nobody sent him; but that, as he heard there were two fishing villages in the vicinity of the reef on

which the vessel was wrecked, he had resolved to visit both of them.

His answers appeared to satisfy them, for the old woman I have alluded to conducted him into the hovel from which she had emerged, and pulled out of a dark recess in one corner of the same what she called "a box," but what Mr. Perceval at once recognized as a dressing-case, or rather the remains of one, for, save a few fittings, it was empty, moreover, the top was much broken, and in a manner that showed force to have been used in opening it. On the upper brass-work there was engraved the letters M. P., and Mr. Perceval at once recognized it as a present that he had made to his daughter a year before she left him. Thus, at every step, proof was added to proof in the establishment of the one painful fact of her melancholy fate.

"Where are the things that were found in it?" he asked.

"Och, an' is it them you want?" said the woman, "Sure I don't know where they are, but Mike can tell." She then went outside and shouted "Mike, come here. Where are the things out of the box?"

"Is it the small box in the corner?" he asked.

"To be sure, what else?"

"Ah, then, it's myself that has them," said the man, "they're in the hole in the wall there," and he forthwith entered the hovel, and from the dark recess referred to produced a variety of

odds and ends, among which were some of the remaining fittings of the broken dressing-case, a card-case, and two or three papers, upon unfolding which Mr. Perceval found the marriage certificate of Madeline Perceval and Alfred Coke.

The visitor felt a thrill of melancholy interest on reading these names. His breast heaved, and he sighed heavily.

"Have you anything else marked *M*?" asked Mr. Perceval.

It was some time before he could make these people understand what he meant.

"Ah, then, yer honor," said the man, Mike, "sure it's not the likes of us that can rade. But if it's a mark like that on the top of the box I'll look out to see if there's any more like it."

"How much do you want for these?" inquired the visitor.

"Whatever yer honor likes to give me," was the answer.

"Half a sovereign?" suggested the buyer.

Upon this, Michael looked at the ground, then at the old woman, and after removing from his head a battered covering, half hat, half cap, for the purpose apparently of scratching his head, he turned cunningly to the stranger, and while eying him with a side glance said, "Suppose you make it a whole one, yer honor!"

"Well, they're not worth it," replied the other; "but I'll give it you if you'll carry the case up to the top of the cliffs."

"Bedad I will," said Michael, "every bit of the way. Come here, Bridget, an' help me to pick up the things."

In a few minutes after this the smuggler and the bereaved father might have been seen hurrying up the steep footpath leading to the summit of the cliffs.

When they had nearly reached the top the former said, "Here, yer honor, take them now and give me the money," at the same time coming to a full stop. The other promptly complied, and, taking possession of the broken dressing-case and its contents, bade the smuggler good evening, and was soon within sight of the jaunting car and the two men, one of whom ran forward to relieve him of his burden.

"Now take me to some inn where I can stay the night. Where is there one?"

"Och, there's none nearer than two miles or more from here," said the peasant.

"Well, take me there," said Mr. Perceval to the carman.

"I will," said the latter.

"An' if yer honor plazes, I'll lave you here," said the peasant touching one of his forelocks.

This was a hint for his hirer to pay him, and the hint was taken; after which the driver and the passenger were left alone to continue their journey.

"It's a fine evenin', sir," remarked the man. There was no response, and on turning round he saw the face of his passenger buried in his

handkerchief like one suffering bitterly under some deep affliction.

"Poor gentleman," said the man to himself, "he's taking something very hard," and by-and-by the weary horse reached the hostelry to which the peasant had directed them.

CHAPTER XIII.

DESTRUCTION.

ON the day following, Mr. Perceval called at the castle and had another interview with Mrs. Parsons, when he made her acquainted with the result of his adventure among the smugglers.

"And you were not killed!" she remarked.

"No, I was not killed."

Mr. Perceval had recovered somewhat from the effects of his grief by this time, and again the widow absorbed his thoughts and made him feel twenty years younger than when he had been driven to the inn on the previous evening. He even thought how happy they might be together. It was wasting sweetness on the desert air for her to live alone in that big lonely wilderness of a castle. They might live very comfortably there together, or better still at Cheltenham, but for a lady to have that place all to herself was too much.

These were Mr. Perceval's thoughts, the utterance of which would have shocked even himself.

After leaving the castle he repaired to the respective houses of the midwife, the priest, and the doctor, who had visited the young mother before her death, and afterwards followed her to

the grave. To these he introduced himself as the father of the lady in question, and detailed the circumstances relating to his inquiries in London and at the fishing village and the castle, together with his adventure among the smugglers, and its results. He produced the marriage certificate, and was so firm in the belief that the mother of the child adopted by Mrs. Parsons was his daughter, that an examination of the body, which he at one time had intended, was, he now considered, unnecessary.

"Now," he said, addressing the doctor, "I propose to make a will, bequeathing my property to this child, and I shall be glad if you will witness it."

"Oh certainly—certainly—anything you like, sir," replied the ready scion of Juverna.

"And perhaps you will come and dine with me at the inn?"

"I shall be most happy," was the doctor's response, and accordingly the two dined together; and Mr. Perceval having drawn up a will bequeathing a hundred and fifty thousand pounds of his property to Albert, the child of the wreck, he signed and sealed it in the presence of his guest and the landlord, both of whom also signed and sealed it, as witnesses of the deed.

This seemed a hasty proceeding, but Mr. Perceval liked things done at the moment he wished; and being aware of the uncertainty of human life, he lost no time about executing what he considered a duty.

Some years previously he had made a similar will in his daughter's favor. But, soon after her elopement, he inserted a codicil which had the effect of entirely revoking it. As he advanced in life he had become more hasty and impatient of delay of any kind. He had no law but his own will—no master but his own temper.

This transaction at the inn was, therefore, quite in keeping with his usual character. He felt sure that the child alluded to was his grandson, and having no other relations he was anxious to make him his heir, and the sooner he did so the better; "for," to use his own quotation, "in the midst of life we are in death."

The will being thus executed, Mr. Perceval folded it and placed it, together with the marriage certificate, in his pocketbook, which he invariably carried in an inner breast-pocket of his coat. After this Mr. Perceval had to entertain his guest after the custom of the country, and in so doing he drank more whisky-punch than was good for him. They parted, and the widower passed a second night at the inn, and on the next morning resolved to again visit the smugglers. It was a fine day, and he might as well, he thought, enjoy the walk as ride. Accordingly he set out on foot, and in less than a hour from the time of his starting had reached the edge of the cliffs overlooking the Irish Sea. He stood for a few moments admiring the view—the dancing wavelets shining in the sunlight—the bold and rocky coast—and the distant mountains crowning

the curving shore—he admired the patches of cultivation that diversified their sweeping sides, and the occasional clump of trees, or acre of meadow land, that filled up the picture—and he looked down, far down and across that sparkling and tranquil tide, and upon the line of foam that denoted the rocks on which the fated Swallow had foundered—and he felt once more a deep but calm sadness steal over him. Of what avail was it now that the sea was so calm and the sunlight so bright? The ship had perished in the dead of night and the fury of the storm. For her, and all on board, the calm and the light had come too late—too late.

These were his thoughts as he commenced descending the cliffs, not, however, by the footpath he had before trodden, but by another, still narrower and less frequented, which eventually, like a tributary stream, joined the larger one. He soon found, however, that the dangers of the way were greater than he anticipated, and that he was in momentary peril at every step he took of slipping, or missing his foothold, or otherwise losing his balance ; and it seemed very probable that, if this occurred, the worst consequences would result. He, therefore, resolved to turn back. But this intention he was, after a few ineffectual efforts, compelled to abandon. He found that he had not sufficient agility to climb such steep and perplexing heights. There was consequently no other alternative for him than that of making the best of his way down. But the

power of doing even this seemed now to have deserted him ; he sat down on a narrow ledge of rock almost overhanging an abyss, and while clinging to the stem of a stunted shrub with one hand, and to the hard cliff with the other, he reflected for a moment upon his critical position—the narrow span that separated him from eternity, and all his previous thoughts became lost in the contemplation of his own imminent danger.

“ O God,” he ejaculated, as the full sense of his perilous position struck terror into his frame. Again and again he repeated the ejaculation, accompanied with a call for mercy. His presence of mind had evidently failed him. He felt a swimming sensation in his head, and a strange fascination almost tempted him in his distress to leap over into the abyss that yawned beneath him—just such a sensation as some people feel when they ascend a great eminence and then look over the brink upon the scene below. With a violent effort he mustered resolution sufficient to steady for a moment his trembling limbs and enable him to glance around and observe the pathway, which here ended abruptly, but was resumed again at the depth of a few yards. To gain that, however, and so triumph over the difficulty, necessitated a violent spring forward, and he felt sure his strength and courage would not allow him to attempt it, even if it were to save his life ; he would be sure, he thought, to miss the spot and then be rolled to the bottom, the result of which would be certain death, and

death—oh, death—he now looked upon with a sensation of intense horror and dismay. He wished that he had never been born—never had a daughter—never come to Ireland—never heard of the smugglers. Every moment his agitation increased, and he uttered prayers, incoherent though they were, such as ever spring from the livid lips of timid desperate men in their moments of sudden anguish, that he had never uttered before. All that was holy did he call upon, in nervous, hurried accents, and as he spoke his voice grew thicker and thicker, till at length his emotions almost choked his utterance, and he once more gazed with a look of horror into the yawning gulf here made by the cliffs. Then he felt his brain reel and burn, and he released his hand from the rock and lifted his hat in the hope of relief, but as he did so it fell from his hand, and down and down he saw it fall from crag to crag, till it reached the huge sharp rocks hundreds of feet below. This was ominous, and he felt it; a horrible yearning to plunge down the same abyss again took possession of him, and as he strove to resist it his face grew blanched, and the big cold drops of his agony gathered on his brow and nearly blinded him as they trickled down over his eyes.

Again his ejaculations might have been heard, and the twitching motions of his limbs and muscles were almost convulsive.

Three quarters of an hour had elapsed since, finding his progress barred, he took his seat on

the ledge of the rock—only three quarters of an hour, yet hours and days and years seemed to have been crowded into that short time in the mind of the sufferer. Language cannot paint the misery he felt ; no tongue could describe the distressing thoughts that racked his brain, and sent a tremor through his frame. No ; he was alone in his agony, unseen by mortal eye save his own. He was doomed—doomed, and he felt it. He had himself rushed into the death-trap.

Suddenly his eyes rolled wildly, and with the desperation of a drowning man—for his case was similar—or of a maniac, he resolved to attempt the leap, and with this object in view he was about to rise, when the ledge of rock on which he was seated gave way under him ; at the same moment, in his fright, he released his hold of the shrub, and with a wild and fearful shriek rolled over the cliff, and fell from crag to crag, till his lifeless and lacerated body was dashed to pieces on the huge and pointed rocks that bottomed the abyss.

Thus was calamity added to calamity.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MISSING MAN.

THE dead body was not discovered till the second day following the catastrophe, and then by one of the smugglers. Meanwhile, the deceased had been missed at the inn, and inquiries had been made at the castle and throughout the neighborhood respecting him. It was at first thought that he had been murdered, and suspicion was at once directed to the smugglers, whom he was known to have visited, though his intentions on leaving the hostelry on the morning of his death were unknown.

The smugglers were by no means pleased on finding the corpse. It was a bad omen for them, and a circumstance calculated to make them appear more in the character of murderers than anything else. Had their reputation been good it would not have been a matter of much importance, as people would have believed them when they told the truth; but, having a very bad name, the chances were, if they announced their discovery, that every one would give them the credit of having made away with the old gentleman for the sake of whatever money he had on his person. They wished that he had fallen and broken his neck anywhere else than on their

domain ; and they uttered lamentations accordingly—not over the fate of the dead man, but for themselves.

“ Och wirrastrue—wirrastrue,” said the women of their party, and they poured out, in concert with the men, a torrent of native Irish.

The result of their deliberations was that they resolved to say nothing about the finding of the body, and to leave it as they had found it on the rocks. Years might pass over before any one else made the discovery, for it lay hidden in a chasm-like recess of the cliffs, which was but seldom frequented, even by the smugglers themselves.

Mr. Perceval, as I have before intimated, at the time of his death, was not blessed, or the reverse, as the reader chooses, with a single living relation, and Mrs. Sinclair, of Elgin—the sister of his late wife—was his only connection with whom he was personally acquainted. His own housekeeper was therefore the first person likely to feel interested in the cause of his long absence from home. Since leaving Cheltenham he had never written her a line intimating his position, condition, or intentions. She was, consequently, not aware that he had left London for Ireland. When week followed week, therefore, and month succeeded month, and there came no intelligence of, or letter from, the still absent Mr. Perceval, the old woman’s fears were aroused. She felt that something must have happened to him of an unfavorable nature.

"I'm sure there's something gone wrong with him to keep him away all this time," she repeated over and over again every day to the few neighbors and tradespeople with whom she was acquainted.

At length the thought struck her that she had better write to Mrs. Sinclair, at Elgin, informing her of the circumstance, and upon this she acted. Mr. Perceval had very few acquaintances and no companions, so that nobody felt any particular interest in his welfare, although those who had known him, of course, talked and wondered about his mysterious disappearance. "The father has taken after the daughter, and run away too," was the remark of one, and there was an abundance of such remarks current.

The housekeeper next wrote to Mr. Perceval's solicitor in London, and who had long been in the habit of drawing that gentleman's dividends at the Bank of England, by virtue of a power of attorney executed in his favor. The solicitor, however, in reply, only wrote a letter acknowledging the receipt of her communication, and, after expressing his surprise, concluding by hoping that he would soon return, of which, or the reverse, he should be glad to be informed. It was not till a month had elapsed after the receipt of this that the housekeeper wrote again ; and in the mean time the news of the missing man's fate had not traveled beyond the smugglers' village.

The result of the letter to Mrs. Sinclair, at

Elgin, was that she proceeded to London by the Aberdeen packet next following its receipt. The prospect of a legacy from Mr. Perceval was vividly before her mental vision as she set out on her voyage, so that she braved the dangers of navigation without much feeling of awe, or dread arising from the memory of the past disaster in which her niece had been so fatally involved.

From London she traveled by stage-coach to Cheltenham, where she arrived to find that matters remained, so far as Mr. Perceval was concerned, in exactly the same state as they were when the housekeeper wrote to her the letter of appraisal.

From the latter she ascertained all that Mr. Perceval had said as to his future intentions before leaving home, and, guided by this information, she returned to London and called at the Aberdeen packet office, where she instituted inquiries both concerning her niece and the missing father. She so obtained a knowledge of all that transpired on the occasion of Mr. Perceval's visit. But as regarded the hotel at which he had stayed, or any other particulars, she was left in ignorance.

A visit which she made to his solicitor failed to enlighten her further on the subject, as Mr. Perceval had not communicated in any way with him, either while in London, on that occasion, or subsequently.

After this, her resolve was to proceed to Dub-

lin, and so on to Wicklow—the scene of the wreck—where she hoped to either see him or obtain satisfactory information of his death or existence.

Previous to setting out on this voyage of discovery, however, she went to Brighton, and called upon the landlady of the house where the young couple had resided when Madeline last wrote to her, accepting the invitation.

Strange to say the father had known nothing of this address, as Mrs. Sinclair had accidentally omitted to communicate it in her letter, and, so, that lady was the first inquirer after the Cokes at their old lodgings.

Mrs. Sinclair knocked at the door of the house at Brighton with a slight trace of eagerness, anxiety, and excitement visible in her countenance, for she felt herself on the brink of a discovery. It was possible that she might find both Madeline and Mr. Coke sitting in the drawing-room, or that she might hear of the illness, or death of the former, or of some other event than the wreck of the Aberdeen packet, that had broken the chain of communication between them. All these hopes, however, vanished in the first few moments following the opening of the door. Mr. and Mrs. Coke were not there. They had gone to Scotland months before. Nothing further was known of them, as nothing had been heard. Even the wreck of the Aberdeen packet was a thing unknown to those in the house, for they were not very constant newspaper readers, and

newspapers were not very common at that time.

The landlady manifested much concern in the supposed fate of her old lodgers, and especially Madeline, owing to her peculiar condition. She described them as having lived together very happily, and was sure they were fond of each other.

"What a pity! what a dreadful thing!" she ejaculated, and joined in lamentations with the aunt.

At the invitation of the landlady Mrs. Sinclair remained a night at the house, and so, had ample opportunity afforded her of talking over the subject of the Cokes, the wreck, and the missing father. Two days afterwards she left London, by the Dublin packet, and after a stormy passage, was landed in the Irish metropolis.

It is unnecessary for me to say more than that guided by the information given her at the Aberdeen packet office in London, she proceeded to Wicklow, and the scene of the wreck, and there ascertained all that was known by both Mrs. Parsons and the villagers—the smugglers excepted, who were still the only persons acquainted with the fate of the missing gentleman.

"It's very strange," said she to everybody with whom she spoke on the subject, and every one in their turn agreed with her, that it was very strange. "Where could he have gone to?" she asked herself, and in the midst of her wondering she thought of Enoch and Elias, and kid-

napping, and press-gangs, and highway robbery, and murder, and many other things, but to none of which could she attribute the cause of the good Mr. Perceval's mysterious disappearance.

She visited the castle, and told her tale to Mrs. Parsons, and was made a guest there for a few days, and employed herself in diligent inquiries and conversations respecting the wreck and its consequences. She did not visit the smugglers' village, as the approach to it was too perilous for her to undertake the descent, and she did not see that any good could result from such an enterprise.

After a stay of three days at the castle, during which she bestowed several hundred kisses on the child of the wreck, and assured its adoptress that it was the picture of its mother, she prepared to leave ; but, before going, she suggested that it would be better for Mrs. Parsons to resign her charge into the care of herself, as its mother's relative ; to which, however, the hostess of the castle replied, that she could not think of doing so, till some stronger claim was advanced. After this, the desolate Mrs. Sinclair took her leave, and returned to London, where she made daily calls on Mr. Perceval's solicitor, with a view to obtaining possession of the deceased's estate. But failing to establish a claim to this, she returned to Elgin, feeling, to use her own words, quite low spirited, and with empty pockets. She would have called upon the family of her niece's husband, had she known who they were,

and where they lived. This fact, however, had neither been communicated to Mr. Perceval, nor herself, and the landlady she had spoken to at Brighton lived in equal ignorance, although without feeling any curiosity on the subject.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ONUS PROPANDI.

YEARS elapsed, and matters remained in pretty much the same condition as last recorded. Mr. Perceval's solicitor had adopted formal measures, having in view the discovery of his missing client, such as issuing police notices and advertisements, describing his appearance, and the locality in Wicklow, where he was last seen, but all these efforts as may be supposed were fruitless, for there was no definite reward offered, such as would have been likely to induce the smugglers to tell their tale ; and, secondly, there was but little chance in favor of their hearing of such inquiries. There were no police in those days in the rocky wilds of Wicklow.

The solicitor had, of course, been informed by Mrs. Sinclair of the existence of the child of the wreck, which Mr. Perceval was reported to have satisfied himself was his grandchild, and in which belief she herself was convinced, not only by the family likeness it bore, but by all that she had heard from those who had seen the young mother prior to her death. Nevertheless, the case not having been legally proven by a show of documents or formal evidence, he ignored

it. Mrs. Sinclair, in several letters which she wrote on the subject from Elgin, urged him to communicate with the child's adoptress, but for the reasons just stated he declined, and so it was allowed to remain in peaceful neglect, under the hospitable roof of Rathangan Castle.

Mrs. Sinclair, however, wrote numerous letters to Mrs. Parsons, inquiring after the welfare of the child, and as to whether anything had been heard of the missing Mr. Perceval, to which she had received replies, always answering the latter in the negative. As the boy grew up, his adoptress treated him with unabated kindness, but at the same time did not fail to acquaint him with the circumstances which led to his finding a home at the castle. The mysterious disappearance of his supposed grandfather was also alluded to. But in childhood incidents such as these, however stirring to the mature mind, excite only a vague feeling of wonder. Even death itself is never comprehended by a child, although that child may be bordering upon puberty, and intelligent enough in other respects. The sight of a corpse produces on such an one no deeper effect than that of a sleeping person, when the first moment of passionless surprise has passed away. In childhood, our moral feelings are so far undeveloped as to be without influence on our conduct ; in youth, they are keenest and most intense ; at maturity, strongest, but less easily called into play ; and in old age, more or less blunted, so that we become

at the last as unemotional as we were in childhood.

The housekeeper at Cheltenham remained undisturbed in possession of the residence and household effects of Mr. Perceval, and there being no proof of the death of the latter, his solicitor made her an allowance sufficient for its maintenance.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTAINING SOMETHING QUITE UNLOOKED FOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING Mrs. Parsons' expressed resolution of continuing to lead the same lonely life at Rathangan Castle as she had been doing since the death of her husband, now that she had found an object on which to centre her affections, she acted otherwise.

For the first eight years after adopting the child, she was true to her word, but after that, she wearied of the monotony of her existence, and thought about making a visit to the continent. She felt a longing for a change of scene, a change of life, and society. At the castle she was shut out from the world, and yet in that world she in her early youth had delighted to mingle.

"Albert, my dear," she said, one sultry afternoon in July, addressing her adopted boy, "how would you like to go with me abroad?"

"Abroad with you, mamma?" said the little fellow, in surprise at so unexpected a proposal.

"Yes, abroad with me," repeated the lady

"I don't know, ma, how I should like it. Are there any nice things there?"

"Oh yes, very—plenty of nice things for good little boys there."

"Oh ! then ma, I *should* like to go there.
Will you take me ?"

This question decided the one which Mrs. Parsons had put to herself, as to whether she would go, or would not go, but the child knew it not. She saw that the boy liked the idea of a change, and she accepted this as a good omen.

"Well, my dear, we'll see. Perhaps I will," she answered ; and the boy looked up at her curiously, and saw her large blue eyes fixed fondly upon him, with a melancholy tenderness of expression.

Within one month after this time, Mrs. Parsons and the child of her fosterage were on their way to France.

It was her intention to return within three or four months, and to then resume the old mode of life at the castle. But circumstances occurred, which prevented the carrying out of this intention.

Mrs. Parsons extended her travels as far as Bremen, where some friends of her late husband were resident, and with whom she was invited to take up her abode.

The invitation was accepted, and, in the course of her residence there, she became acquainted with a Mr. Thomas Sterling, a banker of that city, and moreover a Scotchman.

The banker was captivated by the charms of the widow, and the widow, although, perhaps, not equally enamoured, showed no disposition

to check his advances along the path of love. The consequence was that in the space of a very few weeks, Mr. Sterling, both by words and signs, avowed his passion to her.

The attachment of widows is rarely associated with much that is romantic, and there was no exception to the rule in the present case. The widow accepted ; a few weeks more elapsed, and the two were married.

This was certainly an unlooked-for result of the continental tour. But the most unlooked for incidents occasionally arise, and often when they are least expected, as our own experience of life may have already demonstrated to us.

Albert was at first somewhat puzzled to account for the new relationship, and to realize the idea of Mr. Sterling's true position. But in the course of a month after the lapse of the honeymoon, during which he had entirely lost sight of the newly wedded pair, he was quite at home with Mr. Sterling, whom he already called father.

Within a year after this marriage Mrs. Sterling gave birth to a son, and within another year to a daughter.

After this, she returned to Ireland, for the first time since her marriage, in company with her husband, her own children, and Albert.

The old housekeeper and butler who had presided over the castle during her absence, rejoiced at once more seeing their mistress, and still more, apparently, at finding her no longer

the melancholy widow, but the cheerful wife and the loving mother.

Albert was welcomed back by the old house-keeper with an almost maternal warmth, and the other domestics, and all those who had known him, offered their hearty congratulations, and were glad to see him return, for he had always been a favorite with them.

"It's glad I am to see yer honor back, and long life to ye," said Pat Byrne, in whose cottage, it will be remembered, the boy was born, and his mother died.

"And what did yer honor see at all in the furrin countries?" inquired Pat. "Were the places half as nice as this, with the beautiful mountains and everything as green as a garden beyant, and plenty of all the good things—barrin the potatoes, an' the more's the pity for that same? Were they, yer honor? for faix if they were I'd just like to go over there myself."

These questions Albert answered to the best of his ability, expressing, at the same time, a decided preference for Ireland and the Irish over all the other countries and people he had seen.

"Bedad, you're a fine boy—intirely all over," said Pat, warmed into admiration by all that the young traveller recounted.

"And what did they give you to eat?" asked the fisherman, anxious to know all particulars—"potatoes?"

"Oh! very few potatoes," answered Albert.

" What then ?" asked the other ; " HERRINGS ?"
" Oh no, we had no herrings."

" No herrings !" exclaimed Pat in astonishment " then, by the powers, what had you ? you must have been in the queerest country of all. Had you any bacon then ?" he continued, with emphasis.

" I don't think we had—no, I had no bacon," answered the boy.

" No bacon !" ejaculated Pat, half bewildered by these consecutive announcements ; and he opened his eyes wide, and stared at the boy, as if with a view of ascertaining whether he had eaten anything.

" Then did you eat at all ?" he asked.

When the boy came to mention *pâte gras*, among other things, Pat interrupted him, by saying, with a look of horrified astonishment,

" You don't mean to say that they ate the likes of us over there ? Bad cess to them, if they do. It's myself that'll go over and ate them."

When it was explained to him that the objectionable *pâte* consisted of the liver of geese, he said, with a show of contempt,

" And do the spalpeens eat the likes of that ? Faith it's the liver then I'd give them, and keep the rest myself."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

THE party remained a little more than two months only at the castle, and then, greatly to Albert's regret, returned to Bremen.

Three years after this, Mrs. Sterling died suddenly, and without having made a will. The consequence was that her youthful *protege* was left entirely dependent upon her husband's own generosity, and this circumstance even more than her marriage diverted the stream of fortune to his disadvantage.

Her death—the flight of that soul which had presided over him from the dawn of existence, to the present time, was the first great affliction of his youth, and he was old enough to feel it, and feel it keenly. She who had tended him with more than a mother's watchful care and affection, was now lost in the silent, solemn, and mysterious realm of death.

Albert would never more be able to listen to the pleasant music of her voice—never more feel the soft, warm pressure of her lips—never have her counsel as his guide. His court of appeal was gone, and for a few days after her decease, he felt as if with her death his own soul had

departed. He was in that peculiar state of mind and grief—utterly prostrate and hopeless—when the mere sense of existence is oppressive. Individuals under such circumstances may be almost said to

“Live without life, and, without dying, die.”

Had Albert been a little younger, or had his education been otherwise than what it was, or his nature less sensitive, he would not have given way to such bitter floods of feeling; but he was just of that constitution, and had just arrived at that age and knowledge, which enabled him to feel the weight of his loss; and all the associations of his youth rose up before him, and reminded him of her who had gone—never more to return—till his emotions overcame him, and tears only could afford relief. But in early youth even these moments of mental agony are soon forgotten. Hope obliterates disappointment, and sorrow passes, gourd-like, away, before the dancing beams of joy. But memory preserves the recollection of the great events of our early life, and in after years the impressions we then received are again brought vividly before us, whenever summoned by circumstances or reflection.

When the boy was admitted into the chamber of death he flung himself passionately upon the corpse, and kissed the cold lips of spiritless clay, with a fervor which it was painful to witness. Mr. Sterling, who accompanied him, felt

a shock of surprise that affected his nerves during the rest of the day, and it was with difficulty that he succeeded in leading him away again. "Leave me alone to pray," said the sobbing boy, with an imploring look, and clasped hands, a touching supplication which it was hard to resist.

After the funeral, Albert felt a dull, heavy sense of sorrow, but the first acute pangs had passed away, and his wearied spirit sought relief from its oppressive load of grief.

From that time forward he became himself again, save that an occasional sobriety of manner bordering on the melancholy distinguished him, and which always had the effect of leading him to seek solace in solitude. Solitude has its pleasures, and solace may be found in contemplating the beautiful, the magnificent, the sublime in nature, or in a book, when mere man can afford none.

There is often profound pleasure found in communing with one's own soul. The charms of retrospection are manifold ; and even melancholy itself affords a balm to the wearied and oppressed spirit, although I by no means think, with the poet Moore, that no great idea or conception ever rose in the human mind, without melancholy being somewhere present in that mind also.

Comparatively few men ever really think or yet are capable of thinking. They derive all their impressions from the outer and visible

world, and all their pleasures and pains are superficial ; their perceptive and susceptible faculties are less keen than those of others whose impressions take deeper root in the mind ; and as a consequence the height of their joy and the depth of their sorrow are less than is the case with individuals otherwise constituted. This, however, is a work-a-day world, and there is unfortunately much jostling among the crowd that people it, and the toughest and thickest skinned of the multitude make the quickest and surest progress. Your really thinking man is not usually your successful man, neither is your man of noble generous disposition. It is your petty schemer, your man of trivial thoughts and pursuits, that works his way best through the world, and with most ease and satisfaction to himself.

CHAPTER XVIII

SIGNS OF PROMISE.

I SHALL not make the minutiae of Albert Parsons' daily life at this period the subject of photographic descriptions, but a survey of the most important landmarks and milestones of his career must not be omitted.

He was now a tall handsome growing lad, with light brown hair, which was exceedingly fine, straight, and abundant. This he allowed to grow so long, as to cover his ears. The expression of his countenance was benign and spiritualized. His eyes were blue and eloquent—such eyes as are sometimes seen in great poets. His features were all regular, and when he smiled, they were lighted up with animation. There was an indefinable charm in his smile, which was irresistible. "What a sweet smile he has!" had often been said of him, and by nearly every one who had remarked upon his appearance. Beyond all this, he was nimble and graceful, and had a pleasing voice. Thus his own good looks promised to be his best letter of introduction in after-life.

His mode of life remained nearly the same after the death of her whose loss he so deeply

deplored as it had been previously. He attended a day school, and had his home in the house of the banker, where his own son and daughter remained, under the care of his housekeeper, and a supply of nurses.

As he grew up, he displayed a great partiality for theatricals, and drawing. Comedies, dramas, and tragedies were collected, and studied with eagerness, while the French stage, which was first put in operation at Bremen, about this time, enabled him to indulge his partiality for everything connected with the theatrical world. These tastes overcame in time the relish for other pursuits.

Subsequently his mind acquired a deeper glow and his imagination ran riot after subjects for the pencil and brush ; in other words, he conceived a predilection for painting, and wished to become an artist.

He had in him the elements of genius, but his genius was always checked by the remonstrances of Mr. Sterling, and Albert was easily wounded ; his pride of purpose—his ambition—often melted away at the first rude shock of reproof. It was Mr. Sterling's wish to make a man of business of him, and he discouraged all efforts that led the boy's mind away from or above the counting-house.

There is little doubt that he would have made a good artist, for as early as his eleventh year, and without having received any instruction in drawing, he made caricatures of everything

he saw which was in any way associated with the ludicrous, and for one so young, these were droll and clever enough to surprise and amuse his elders. When he had reached his seventeenth year, he was withdrawn from school, and assigned a place in the bank, where, however, he manifested his distaste for office duties by neglecting them. After a trial of some months, it was found that "nothing could be made of him," and the result was a very serious lecture from the lips of his guardian, who concluded by proposing that Albert should go where he would be under the control of strangers, and subject to proper discipline. To this he was at first averse, but the idea of novelty, and the disfavor into which he had fallen with Mr. Sterling, made him afterwards yield with little reluctance to the proposition of his becoming an apprenticed clerk in the house of a Leghorn merchant, personally known to the banker. To Leghorn, he therefore went. There was then going forward a movement destined to work a great change over the face of Europe. It was the invasion of Italy, under the first Napoleon, who, fresh from his victorious campaign in Lombardy, entered Leghorn at the head of a division of his army at the end of June, 1796. Albert Parsons—for the widow had bestowed upon him her name—had arrived a short time previously, and as the renowned Corsican entered the city he saw the Tuscan flag disappear from the top of the Castell Vecchio, and the French tri-color flutter in its

stead. He saw the British men-of-war under Commodore Nelson—the future hero of Trafalgar—sail out of the harbor, with the treasure of the British residents on board, and heard the boom of the French guns that were fired after them as they sped on their watery way; and he was a spectator of all the commotion inseparable from the entry of a foreign army into the streets of a quiet city, and especially the army of Napoleon Bonaparte. In that conquering hero, not then twenty-eight years of age, he saw, dressed in simple uniform, a small, youthful-looking man, with a pallid complexion, and long sleek and jet black hair that hung down over both ears. Around his mouth there played a constant smile, over which those around had evidently no influence, for the cold, unsympathizing glance of his eyes told that the mind was busied elsewhere.

Early in the year 1797, Albert's employer, who took a friendly interest in his welfare, owing in some measure to his knowledge of the peculiar circumstances attending his birth, as well as the unhappy fate of his parents, resolved to send his family into the country, and he invited Albert to accompany them. The vicinity of Florence was chosen, and there, in a villa adjoining the Grand Ducal Palace, which stood in the most lovely part of the village of San Leonardo, they went to reside.

Day after day, as he walked to and fro on the promenade, he saw one with whose appearance he was irresistibly smitten. It was the first

dawn of love upon his boyish imagination. His sensations were as much those of reverence as of fondness, and she was the object of his admiration and adoration before they had ever spoken in any other language than that of the eye. He felt, as much as he had the power of feeling, that they were born to live in each other's love. Intuition told him, as much as it told her, that the liking was mutual, and the more he thought of her the more he heightened her perfections, and wandered beyond the limits of common sense, in the contemplation of his enchantress. If love is a species of insanity, he was decidedly one of the insane. Before he had even made her acquaintance he had pictured all the events, probable and improbable, of their acquaintance and courtship, marriage and married life ; and he surrounded himself with so many floating bubbles and castles in the air, that the poor boy's brain must have been very much bewildered and excited by so severe an attack of the heart complaint. But, fortunately, such complaints are not always dangerous, especially at his time of life.

How it fared with the young lady during this time, I cannot so exactly say. The probability is that she was amused, and perhaps flattered, at being the object of unmistakably tender glances, on the part of a nice young man, and these, girl-like, she did not discard, although the strictly religious nature of her education had taught her to soar above the little vanities of life, and her

knowledge of the social proprieties told her that it was quite unorthodox to think of making a young gentleman's acquaintance on a public promenade without introduction. She was, indeed, a charming girl, in the first blush of maiden beauty, and sweet seventeen. Well might Albert have been fascinated by the grace and symmetry of her slender form, the deep blue of her brilliant eyes, the clustering brown of her glossy hair, the clear complexion, that would have been pale but for the slightest peach-tint, that gave a subdued warmth to the entire features—the ruby lips—which seemed ever ready to break into a smile, so expressive were they of mirthfulness—the serene and intellectual brow, and the unconscious dignity of her carriage. Of her voice he knew nothing, but he felt it must be music. He was almost wild with delight at the mere prospect—the bare possibility—of the events of which he dreamed ever coming to pass. He had never known what it was to love before, and he loved with all the intensity of a first passion and the ardour of his poetical nature. But, like many other people under somewhat similar circumstances, he loved the ideal more than the real, and the two were so intimately associated in his imagination as to be inseparable.

She was the daughter of an English gentleman, an attorney by profession, whose family, visitors only at Florence, were then residing in a villa not far removed from that in which Albert had his temporary home. That young lover,

at first joyous and hopeful in the anticipation of all his fond imaginings, gradually became very pensive, and even melancholy, under the influence of mental anxiety and disappointment, arising from his not having the necessary courage and opportunity to break the ice with the engrossing object of his thoughts. He had never yet spoken to her, although for whole days, aye, weeks, he had been plotting towards the desired end. He wanted to meet her when alone, and free from observation; but, somehow, he never saw her but in a crowd, or when accompanied by a relative or friend. He suffered the pangs of jealousy on one or two occasions when he saw her walking and conversing with a good-looking young English aristocrat. At last he succeeded in meeting her when alone, and in a retired spot near her own home. But this time *his* face had become so familiar to her, and *hers* to him, that an involuntary smile stole over their countenances as they approached.

Albert felt his bashfulness overcome his courage as he attempted to stop and speak to her. Had he been "raised" in "a house full of girls" his timidity would have been less, and his manner more self-possessed, for familiarity begets confidence. The momentary hesitation was followed by reassurance, as their eyes met. He bowed, halted, and boldly addressed her; then, walking by her side, gave utterance to as many honeyed words as he could summon. He spoke soft and tenderly, and with such magical effect

that the heart of his lady-love was soon in a flutter, and her features radiant with unusual warmth.

This was the formal commencement of a courtship that was conducted clandestinely, because an open avowal on either side would have at once put an end to it. For weeks the two, with seemingly increasing attachment, found themselves often alone in each other's company, and no doubt their lovers' talk was a source of mutual felicity, and they lived more or less in a dream of love. Happy boy! Happy girl! It was a pity to break the spell of their enjoyment, but there is no pleasure without an alloy, no rose without a thorn.

There was so much natural refinement about both, and himself especially, that their delight was of the most chastened character. Neither by speech nor action, on either side, was there anything that would have offended the most delicate susceptibilities of even the fastidious. Yet their love proved unfortunate for both, and it would have been better for their mutual happiness had they never met—had they never vowed to each other their affection, nor built those airy castles that were so soon to melt away. And why? Because no sooner did it come to light—and everything kept in the dark inevitably tends to come to light—than both the mother of Jane, for such was her name, and the wife of the Leghorn merchant quietly terminated “the acquaintance.” Moreover, they

were "o'er young to marry," and people who do such rash things as falling in love, in the face of circumstances such as theirs, must rely upon their philosophy to soften the asperities and relieve the gloom of the way when they suddenly find themselves cut adrift from the object which enthralled them. It is hard that devotion should meet with such ill reward, but it is not to those who most merit a good reward, that a good reward is given. We are all, more or less, slaves to custom, and Albert and Jane had to bow, like the rest, to the yoke. Had they been primitive inhabitants of the Palm Islands, or New Zealand, there would have been no obstacle to their marriage ; for, in the state of life in which the primitive inhabitants of the Palm Islands and New Zealand live, their wants are few and easily satisfied. But in civilized society the case is reversed, and the higher you go in that society, the more serious does the undertaking of marriage become, the more are you beset by a variety of complications, and the greater are the pecuniary means required.

It is enough for me to state the, to them, sorrowful fact that their courtship was broken off, and that they were left to mourn each other's loss, without a soul to sympathize. All their childish hopes of happiness were blighted, and their affection was left to droop and wither, as a flower that is plucked from the parent stem. Many were the fond regrets, and many the silent hours passed in melancholy retrospection, and

many too were the bitter tears shed by the disconsolate pair.

A few days after the veto upon their acquaintance, Albert received instructions from his employer, to return to the counting-house at Leghorn, and with a heavy heart he obeyed the summons. "Shall we ever meet again?" was the mental query he put to himself, as he took his departure from the beautiful city. He hoped so. He would write to her, and try to keep her in view till opportunity occurred for renewing his suit. But he doubted his ability to do this, for her family were only transient residents at Florence, and, after leaving there, it was uncertain whether they would return to London immediately. He had his misgivings about absence making the heart of Jane grow fonder, when she could have little or no hope of ever meeting him again. But he would cherish his love for her, come what might, and trust to fortune for the reward of his devotion.

If first love be the purest and most intense, it is nevertheless often the most rash, or what the world calls misplaced, and easily effaced. The mere circumstance of its being first love does not make it so; but it is the childish folly with which it is frequently accompanied, arising from the youth and inexperience of the parties concerned. Still, it is always a beautiful dream to look back upon, whatever its results. If blighted in the bud, and unfortunately it often is, it predisposes its votary to gloomy despond-

ency, or to seek the excitement of the outer world in the endeavor to escape that gloom. In the case of Albert, his melancholy was succeeded by an intense desire to plunge for relief into the exciting vanities of life. The form of Jane haunted his imagination shadow-like, whether alone or in the crowd, and, by change of scene, he strove to palliate the pain and sorrow of his disappointment. He wished that he were older and richer, so as to be in a position to go back to Florence to claim the hand of her for whom he was suffering all this misery, but what use was there in wishing so vainly? He would reconcile himself to his lot, and hope for the best.

I am afraid that it was owing to this heart-sickness that Albert lost all relish for his duties in the office of the Leghorn merchant, and as a consequence gave dissatisfaction to that gentleman. "Here," said he, "you're riding about on horses, and spending your time at theatres, instead of attending to your business. I shall acquaint Mr. Sterling of your conduct, and, if it continues, have you sent back to Bremen."

This remonstrance, to sum up a long story, was disregarded, and the day soon came when Albert was told to go home; and he returned to Bremen accordingly.

He was a daring, high-spirited lad, but he dreaded to meet the cold searching eye of the banker, and to listen to his solemn and reproving voice.

The admonitions of Mr. Sterling were followed by his again assigning him a place in the bank. The inclination of Albert leaned towards a university education, but the cost of such was too formidable an item in the estimation of the banker to be entertained, and he thought it better to bring the boy up in a manner calculated to make him useful, rather than ornamental. Albert now resolved to devote his attention steadily to business, and to this resolution he remained true, conducting himself with such zeal and diligence, that at the end of the first year he was promoted to a responsible position in the establishment.

The year 1799, a disastrous one for Bremen, had now come, and commerce was so prostrated, that, in the space of six weeks, no less than a hundred and thirty-six mercantile failures took place. During this convulsive state of the Bremen Bourse, the London Exchange raised a cash remittance in silver, of more than a million pounds sterling, which was shipped in an English frigate that sailed for the Texel. The anxiety with which the arrival of this ship was looked forward to by Mr. Sterling, who had a large consignment of the coin, and others involved in the financial affairs of the place, was very great. The disappointment, therefore, that followed the mournful news that the ship and all hands save one had been lost, when only a short distance from port, may be well imagined.

The shock which the bank in which Mr. Sterling's fortunes were involved sustained during the long panic proved too much for it, and the final result, after a year or two's struggle for existence, was that its affairs were wound up, and its assets distributed among the creditors. Two of Mr. Sterling's numerous friends, however, placed a sum at his disposal, which enabled him to recommence business as a discount and bullion broker.

There was now less concord between him and Albert. Whatever the latter ventured to suggest, Mr. Sterling rejected, as the idle talk of a presumptuous boy, who cared only for amusement. Albert's pride was by no means flattered in consequence of this contemptuous treatment; he therefore awaited his opportunity of doing something for himself elsewhere, and it was not long before an opening presented itself in the house of a large commercial firm at Ostend, for an English and German correspondent. For this appointment, he made application, and the application was successful. He had now nothing to do but formally submit his proposition to Mr. Sterling, to separate from him, and go in search of fortune to Ostend.

"You have my consent," said that gentleman, "to do whatever you like. I still think that you will be better under any other roof than mine, and therefore I say, with all my heart, go. But by all means be careful in what you do. Steady attention to business will alone serve you.

Attend to your religion, and avoid bad company. Religion will give you confidence through life, and in the hour of death it will be your greatest consolation. Be choice in the selection of your acquaintances ; you will find very few friends. You may find a friend in your wife, and your wife's father, but you will find few real friends besides."

CHAPTER XIX.

AT HASTINGS.

THE father of the unfortunate Alfred Coke succeeded, by the decease of his brother, to the title and estates of his ancestors five years after the final departure of the prodigal from the parental threshold at Hastings. In the mean time, Alfred's mother had received one letter from him, which had been written a few days after his marriage, and in which he gave a few particulars concerning that event, thus : “ *Her name is Madeline, and she is the only daughter of Mr. Henry Perceval, of Cheltenham, a man of no family, but a retired London merchant, and wealthy.* ”

Nothing, however, had since been heard of him. The mother, at last wearied of waiting, had even visited Cheltenham for the purpose of finding out and making inquiry of Mr. Perceval, but that gentleman had eight years previously gone in search of his missing daughter, and the only person there to represent him was the housekeeper. But from her the mother obtained information of the elopement, the loss of the Aberdeen packet, in which the young husband and the young wife had met their death, and of

the mysterious disappearance of Mr. Perceval himself. She also heard of the child adopted by Mrs. Parsons, at the castle, and manifested much interest in its behalf.

Soon after this she wrote to the latter lady concerning these matters, but, Mrs. Parsons being then on the Continent, the letter did not reach her for more than half a year afterwards, and even then she neglected to answer it, as also several others from the same source, so that Mrs. Coke grew tired of writing, and abandoned the attempt as useless. The reason of this neglect was Mrs. Parsons' jealousy of any encroachment upon what she now almost believed to be her rights. She had adopted and cherished the boy from the day of his birth and she, under all the circumstances of the case, considered that she had a right to keep him, and a better right than any other living claimant could have. The sister of Alfred had since he left home been married to a solicitor practicing in London, and had given birth to a son and daughter; but beyond this no other important change, save the succession, and such as is inseparable from time, had occurred in the household of the elder Coke.

When the mother returned from her visit of inquiry to Cheltenham, the family went into mourning, and there was sincere grief felt, and bitter tears shed in regret for the fate of the recreant son, whose return had been often looked forward to, notwithstanding the father's

veto of perpetual banishment, but which was now never to occur, for Alfred Coke had surrendered his life on that awful night when the savage billows of the Irish Sea held their revels over the wreck of the Aberdeen packet.

The time for the son's repentance, and his acceptance of forgiveness, had now gone by. The rich man was left without an heir to his title and estates, but his sorrow eradicated every trace of anger, and he sought solace in the belief that all was for the best, and that it was the will of Providence that these things had come to pass.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE SCENE CHANGES.

ALBERT lost no time in traveling to Ostend, by way of Bremen, and on his arrival, he was duly installed as foreign correspondent in the house of Van Deusen & Knapp, with whom he had concluded the engagement. Here he seriously devoted himself to business, and felt for the first time that he was independent of the assistance of Mr. Sterling, for whom he entertained no particular affection. The feeling was therefore a welcome one. The idea of renewing the acquaintance of his first love prompted him now for the first time to write to her. But he knew of no other address than the old one at Florence, and the improbability of her being still there, or of a letter so directed ever reaching her, made him almost despair of his effort to communicate with her being successful. He wrote and wrote again, but, like a voice to the dead, there came no reply. He therefore gave up the attempt to find her by letter as useless, but with the hope that the day would come when they might meet once more ; aye, and perhaps to part no more.

Self-reliance imparted to Albert an energy of

character and industry of habits before unknown to him, and he gave such satisfaction to his employers, and inspired them with such confidence, that, within a year of his coming to Ostend, they made proposals to him to go out to the United States, and represent the firm there. This was an entirely new enterprise on the part of the house, and one requiring considerable ability on the part of whoever was intrusted with its execution. Albert therefore felt flattered, and too glad of such an opportunity of seeing the New World, which was then, compared with the present day, almost a *terra incognita* to the great mass of Europeans, not to avail himself of it. He accordingly, one fine morning in May, embarked at Havre, on a Boston packet, for the promised land.

The departure from the Old World for the New naturally aroused a train of reflections in his mind. He might never live to return—never live to solve the mystery of his ancestry, or clasp again the hand of the girl he loved, but loved in vain. He lay down in his berth on the first night of the voyage with a sad and lonely feeling, and a weariness which insensibly transported him into dreamland. He dreamt that he was again at Wicklow—that the bones of Mr. Perceval, his grandfather, lay bleaching under the cliffs beneath the silent heaven unknown to any, but the smugglers—that the pockets of the deceased had been rifled of their contents, and the money so found had been

spent, and the jewelry sold. One thing only remained of the property belonging to the deceased, and that was a pocket-book, which was stored with a variety of odds and ends, in a hole in the wall in the cabin of Michael, one of the smugglers. (The reader will remember it was from this exact spot that the marriage certificate of Madeline and Alfred was produced, when Mr. Perceval made his inquiries in the village.) The contents of that pocket-book were still preserved, and moreover known to be of value by Michael, who lived in the hope of seeing Albert return, in order that he might put him in possession of the same. The priest had read the will to him, and by it, he hoped to make something handsome, if ever he "put eyes on the young gentleman" again. But there was no chance of that, unless Albert came back to Wicklow.

Here the dream dissolved, and left the slumberer at rest ; but, on awaking, he had a dim but accurate remembrance of it all. He was philosopher enough to know that it had been induced by his imaginings before he went to sleep, and that dreams were no more to be accepted as signs of coming events, omens of good or evil, or revelations of fact, than the tea leaves at the bottom of a cup, or many other things in which the superstitious have implicit faith ; but he could not help revolving the circumstances in his mind, more particularly as these were so easily within the range of possibility, and he

resolved to visit Wicklow again, if ever he had the opportunity, and make his presence known in the smugglers' village.

Albert's mission took him to New Orleans, where, soon after his arrival, he was attacked with yellow fever. A burning headache, which produced a sensation, as of his brain being on fire, accompanied with violent pains in the back, were the first symptoms of the disorder. A French physician attended him during his illness, and treated him so successfully, that, on the third day, he was pronounced out of danger, although greatly weakened and unnerved.

The image of his first love was never absent from his imagination, as he lay fevered and friendless on his couch. It was the only remembrance that afforded him solace, and inspired him with hope. He resolved to live for her sake. They might meet again.

In the course of this third day, the cashier of the Louisiana bank came to him, and anxiously inquired whether he had made his will.

"No," answered, Mr. Parsons; "Why?"

"Now, I need not tell you," said the cashier, "that you have the yellow fever, and it is more than probable you will die to-morrow."

Albert opened his eyes wider, and raised his head to listen more attentively.

"For," resumed the Job's comforter, "the fourth day is the critical one, which, by that dark rim under your eyes, I don't think you'll survive."

I may here mention that some boxes of silver specie had a few days previously arrived to his order, from his employers.

" You have," continued the visitor, " treasure in the bank, and if you were to die, this would fall into very unsafe hands, for the administrators of the property of foreigners are a set of shameless rascals. Now, if you'll make your will, I'll look after your funeral, and bury you in first-rate style."

It was evident to the sick man that this cashier was about as shameless as he represented the administrators of the property of foreigners to be, for he wanted to get the money into his own hands ; and after that, he would probably have taken measures to ensure the death of Mr. Albert Parsons.

" I do not feel at all like dying," replied the latter, to the cashier's disappointment ; " and I don't see the use of distracting my head with will-making."

The cashier favored him with a searching, unsympathizing look ; and then, as if he saw that all further talk about the matter was useless, turned on his heel, and said, " Well, from what you say, I guess it's not very likely. But, if you should, you know where to send for me." Upon this, the cashier disappeared. Mr. Parsons survived the fourth day, and was quite well in a week afterwards.

CHAPTER XXI.

ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS.

THERE resided in Hanover Square, London, at the period of which I have been writing, a solicitor, in extensive practice, named Morley. He was married, and had one child, a daughter, and so flourishing were his circumstances that he lived at the rate of £3000 a year. He enjoyed the entire confidence of his numerous clients, and never neglected to attend twice with his family at church on Sundays, unless prevented by illness, and he was looked up to generally, as a most worthy and exemplary member of society. He was in the habit of advocating meekness, Christian charity, and self-denial. He was not only esteemed a highly moral man—which is the best kind of man in the world—but a very religious one, ready to suffer martyrdom, if required, in the cause of the church, and to sacrifice all earthly gain, rather than violate a single right or duty, or in any way endanger his own soul. He occasionally quoted Scripture at the crisis of an argument, by way of a clincher, and he otherwise led the world to understand that he was a very righteous man indeed.

Such another Scripture-quoting attorney it would have been hard to find in all London, therefore his virtues became noised abroad, and wealthy old gentlemen brought their money to him for investment ; for, besides being a godly man, he was reported to be a clever one—one with a vast amount of good common sense, such as lawyers are popularly supposed to so largely possess. Thus this wise and good man flourished like a green bay-tree, and every one was proud of his acquaintance. Here was a living refutation of the alleged fact that “ all lawyers are rogues.” There is wheel within wheel, as will be hereafter shown, concerning this gentleman, and his appearance in this history.

CHAPTER XXII.

A TASTE OF THE GULF STREAM.

THE mission upon which Mr. Albert Parsons had been employed, did not answer the expectations of his employers and he was therefore released from his engagement, with the privilege of returning to resume his former duties at Ostend. It was in the month of August, 1807, when he arrived at New York from the Crescent City. There he made the acquaintance of Robert Fulton, who was then on the point of giving to the world, the first example of steam navigation, and the world was anxiously awaiting the result. The Clermont, which he had constructed at his own expense, was looked upon with even greater wonder than Stephenson's first locomotive engine was a few years afterwards in England. She was a hundred and thirty feet in length, by sixteen and a half feet breadth of beam, with a depth of hold of seven feet, and a burden power of a hundred and sixty tons.

On the day appointed for her trial trip, thousands assembled on both sides of the Hudson, and when at noon she moved away from the wharf into the middle of the river, and there described a circle three times in succession, after which,

defying both wind and current, she dashed swiftly away on her voyage to Albany, a vociferous cheer arose on both banks of the beautiful river, which was repeated again and again, and this cheer was echoed gayly back by the four hundred and fifty passengers on board the gliding craft, among whom was the Child of the Wreck.

Mr. Parsons had not been many days in New York before he received unexpected instructions, by letter from his employers, to proceed to Jamaica, and conduct certain transactions there, the details of which would be more fitted for a ledger than a novel. To Jamaica he accordingly sailed; and after a voyage of the most ordinary character, a half-caste pilot, in scanty garb, navigated the vessel through the intricate channel leading into the harbor of Kingston. It was with no great regret that, a month afterwards, he took his departure on board a schooner bound for Mobile, with vivid recollections of the characteristics of the spot he was leaving behind —the hot weather, the yellow fever, the dusty streets, the green and English-looking hedge-rows, the Blue Mountains overlooking the town, the turtle-soup, the sugar planters and their sugar, and their rum, the slaves and the soldiers in British red, and the sailors in British blue.

On the morning following their departure they encountered a heavy gale from the east, and the towering billows of the Gulf Stream washed the schooner's decks, and made matters

on board anything but comfortable. As the day waned, it became necessary to clear the decks, and set a double-reefed topsail, and as night overtook them the vessel had to be hove to. It was shortly afterwards discovered that she was leaking considerably, and the circumstance of her shipping a heavy sea, which capsized and stove in the long boat, only tended to make their condition the more critical. All hands were put to the pumps, while occasional showers of hail and rain were driven furiously down on the storm-tossed craft. Between these showers, the pale and fitful beams of the wan moon pierced the tissue of fleecy clouds that drifted across the wild and watery sky, and tipped the crest foam of the raging billows with a wavy, tremulous light. A little before midnight the plunging vessel shipped another tremendous sea, which deluged her decks, and carried away the port bulwarks, the stanchions and the galley, and tore the remaining boat from the deck, where it had been lashed, then rushing further aft, bore off in triumph the steerage wheel. The men at the pumps jumped for their lives, and when the water cleared off, they found themselves jammed into corners about the decks, and one was only saved by being thrown against, and clutching, the rigging. The cabin and bread-room were flooded, and all that they contained more or less destroyed ; the cabin stairs were carried away, and everything was torn up that impeded the course of the angry

torrent. Soon after midnight the vessel struck a reef, and with such force that those on board were thrown from their feet. Then followed three violent concussions, and she fell broadside on. One of the sailors was fortunate enough to find an axe, and it was hoped that, by cutting away the masts, the ship would right again, but the axe proved useless. The constant creaking of the vessel's timbers warned them that the strain upon her was too great to be long resisted, and that in all probability she would soon break up. It was very dark and cold, and the howling of the tempest, coupled with the roar of the troubled sea, completely drowned the voices of all on board. Wave after wave, and shower after shower of spray flew over the crippled schooner as she lay beating on the surf-worn rocks. There was but one hope of escape, and that was in the construction of a raft. Desperate as the attempt seemed, they, nevertheless, succeeded in securing a couple of spars, and some oars together with tackle to bind them. The raft was about half completed, when suddenly the foremast went crashing over the side, carrying away in its fall the scanty timbers upon which the shipwrecked men had founded their last hope of deliverance. The vessel now sank deeper than before, and in such a position, that the starboard side was perpendicularly above that of the larboard, while little more than the iron railings of the quarter-deck, and the main-mast was left visible above water. In this deplorable

condition, all that they could do was to lash themselves to the railings referred to, where they had been clinging for hours with the energy of desperation, and there await the worst—face death with resignation. The watery grave which fate seemed to have in store for them was anxiously looked forward to, for to think of rescue now seemed folly. Yet the consoling voice of hope still whispered that they might be saved, and gave them renewed fortitude. That divine sensation which makes despair an empty name, who can describe? The billows, one after another, unceasingly dashed over the helpless fellows, as they crouched beneath the blast. Every minute seemed endless, as, in imminent danger and expectation of being torn from their hold and hurled into the raging sea, the shipwrecked men gasped for life and prayed for deliverance. For five long weary hours did they thus cling. Then the storm began to subside, and once more a ray of hope revived their half lifeless frames.

Eleven men were now clinging to the one frail railing, which at every roll of the billows was submerged. The reader may imagine the painful sensations with which they looked forward to their doom. Moments more elapsed—moments that seemed like hours. There, indeed, was now little room for further hope, and the few minutes of calm consciousness they could command in their half-stunned, nigh breathless condition were given up to gloomy reflections. Now and then a star shone faintly through the

dark mass of clouds that overhung them, but the moon was totally hidden. But even the sight of a star was cheering.

At length, and at about seven o'clock, the storm clouds parted, and they descried at the distance of eight or ten miles a dark and narrow streak on the horizon. This was land, and the exultation of those who beheld it was too deeply felt for the pen of the novelist to describe. It was an exultation the intensity of which was expressed in few words, but derived increased and passionate solemnity from that very circumstance. This exultation, however, this nameless feeling of delight which gave new warmth and vitality to each of the sufferers, was rapidly succeeded by a bitter sense of despondency as the impossibility of reaching the shore was forced upon their conviction. The fierce billows still beat over them; for, although the wind continued to moderate, the sea ran high. An hour or two after their first sighting the land, a sail was visible to them in the Gulf Stream. Hope again revived, and as the vessel neared them their hearts again beat quicker with delight. But their sensations experienced a painful reverse, as she suddenly tacked and receded from their gaze in an opposite direction. That the schooner had not broken up already, and that the slight railing still withstood the weight of eleven human beings, was a wonder, but one upon which they could not depend much longer; they therefore resolved to again attempt the construction of

a raft. This may appear to have been a vain resolution, but it was not so. They succeeded, during the intervals between the ebb and flow of every sea, in extricating from the wreck eight pieces of wood-work, namely, two loose spars and six oars, which they fastened together with a handful of rope-yarn. This, as may be supposed, was a miserable thing for eleven men to trust to for the preservation of their lives; but nothing better could be made, owing to no more wood-work being obtainable. The heavy beating sea prevented them from making the best of even this weak raft, for the pieces composing it were imperfectly and insecurely lashed, so that at the first wash of the waves they were liable to be scattered. It was ten o'clock when the men released themselves from the iron railing and took refuge on the raft in the hope of its bearing them to the shore. Most of them fastened themselves with their handkerchiefs or shirts, by the leg or arm, to some portion of the raft, for its rocking motion, caused by the violence of the billows, as it was tossed rudely to and fro, according as they rose or fell, would have otherwise placed them in imminent peril of being thrown off. As soon as the eleven had taken their places the whole raft was submerged to the extent of two feet, so that the party had much to do to keep their heads above water. The wind, fortunately, blew towards the land. Had this not been the case, all hope of ever reaching it would have been abandoned.

As the raft drifted towards the shore, its movement was such as it would be difficult to describe. Pitched about by every wave, it did not preserve its horizontal position for a moment, but sank to the right and to the left, as the seas swept it onward, while the spray washed over all. They could not in the least steer the raft, but had to go whithersoever wind and wave impelled. By-and-bye, however, Albert Parsons, who had fastened himself at one extremity of it, with his legs depending into the water, for which there was no alternative, unloosed a blanket which he had folded round himself after the manner of a scarf soon after the vessel had struck, and spread it out between his extended arms in such a way as was most likely to catch the wind. But this was not of much assistance for their progress was still very slow—so slow that at four o'clock in the afternoon they were only half way between the shore and the wreck.

Albert felt sick, weary, and exhausted, and would have yielded to the fatal misery of despair, but for one thought—one ray of light that illumined the darkness of his soul, and that was the remembrance of his first love, and the hope he had of meeting her again, if only his life was spared. Even that remote prospect was to him a very Gilead of balm and consolation in this the hour of his distress. He wondered whether she ever thought of him. He would, to use a popular expression, have given the world to know that she did think of him. Was not such

devotion and constancy worthy of the reward it sought ?

It was about five o'clock, when, as their eyes searched the horizon, they saw three small sail coming towards them from the extreme point of the land. But the distance which separated the raft from these was too great for much hope of rescue. However, the shipwrecked men shouted—shouted wildly, but more in despair than hope, and, at the greatest risk, loosened one of the oars forming the raft, and after tying to it the red neckcloth of one of their number held it aloft, but vainly, for neither their signal nor their cries attracted the attention of those on board the craft they hailed. They yearned for help, deliverance, rescue ; but no help, deliverance, rescue, came. During this time the raft was nearly three feet under water, and, although they were up to their breasts in it, their heads were not so often washed by the spray as they had been, for the sea had gradually become less and less agitated. By sundown, six o'clock—it was computed that they were still three miles and a half from the land. They supposed the latter to be the American mainland. The ebb-tide had now set in, and was running dead against them, while, to make matters worse, the wind suddenly shifted, and blew directly from the shore. They all expected to be driven out to sea again, and with heavy hearts took a last, long, lingering look at the setting sun.

The small vessels which they had seen were

still visible, and indeed appeared to have cast anchor in the vicinity of the abandoned wreck, but the raft was seemingly unnoticed by those on board. The heavy swell, which again began to rise, made every attempt to steer the raft with the loosened oar, which they had so applied, utterly useless, and the outspread blanket was rendered of no further aid to them, owing to the change of wind. Night darkened the prospect with her sombre pall, and their spirits drooped ; for, with the darkness, came fear, and, to some, despair. Several were troubled with cramp in their limbs, and others were completely exhausted by the exertions which their perilous position on the raft necessitated. Two or three hours after sundown, they were within a mile of a small island, which appeared to be uninhabited. They made several desperate attempts to reach it, but failed ; for the swell continually drove them back, and at length forced them down along the shore which they had supposed to be that of the continent. It proved, however, to be another island, and of larger dimensions than the other. Fortunately, for them, the western point of this larger island curved crescent-like towards the south, and received the flood of the sea, in a sort of bay, into which the raft was carried two hours before midnight. They were consequently not now far from land ; and, on measuring with the steering oar, it was found that the depth of water did not exceed four feet. As soon as this was ascertained, two of the least

exhausted sailors left their places, and, after jumping into the sea, drew the shattered raft to the shore, and so the party were enabled to land. A faint cheer broke through the air as the last of their number was pulled on to the beach ; and men who had never prayed before, returned sincere thanksgivings beneath the silent heaven on that lonely strand. Some of them were so exhausted, that, after being lifted from the raft, they lay still, and almost lifeless, and one of them died within ten minutes after the landing. The shore was rocky and sandy, with but few traces of vegetation, save some dry thistles, so that it offered a hard uninverting bed on which the weary were to rest. Yet it was LAND, although uninhabited, and even that knowledge, under the painful circumstances of their situation, was in itself comforting, so much so, indeed, that it overcame every other thought ; and, unable to resist the weight of their own fatigue, the survivors, utterly worn out, lay down in a heap for the sake of mutual warmth, and sank silently to slumber. During the night, some heavy rain clouds burst over them, and dispensed a shower which, had their bodies been less chilled, would have proved refreshing. As it was, however, they slaked their thirst by sucking their saturated clothes, and licking their wet hands.

The sun was just gilding the eastern horizon on the morning following, when, to the inexpressible delight of the castaways, they saw three

small wrecker boats at anchor, between the two islands. The distance was nearly a mile, yet they by no means seemed beyond the reach of the heroes of the raft. There was still another trial before them. Quickly, therefore, they set out on foot to see whether they could get nearer to the boats ; but the latter suddenly weighed anchor, and put to sea. In about an hour afterwards, however, two of them returned. Upon this seven of the ten survivors, Albert among them, the remaining three being too feeble to undertake the journey, resolved to lose no time, but push on until they reached a point opposite to these boats, from which they hoped to be able to hail those on board. They were brave enough to set out on this expedition, but so completely exhausted by hunger, thirst, and fatigue, that it was found necessary to rest every five minutes of their walk. The walk of three miles to the desired point was with great difficulty accomplished. On the strand opposite the boats there lay a stick of timber, and to this they fastened the red flannel shirt of one of their number. They then held it up heavenward, and eagerly awaited the relief which they felt sure those on board the boats would extend to them. They could plainly distinguish men on board, and see the smoke rising from their small galleys on deck, yet these men answered neither their signal or hallooing, but remained passive as they were. Meanwhile, three of the wrecked had been dispatched to scour the neighborhood

in search of water and bananas, but they returned without having found either. Hunger was gnawing at their vitals, and the fear of dying of starvation increased, and deadened every other feeling within them, than that of a craving for nourishment. They all felt that it would be a physical impossibility for them to survive another day in their present condition. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, when Albert Parsons volunteered to swim off to one of the vessels, and inform those on board of their condition. The distance was about three miles, and the longing anxiety with which the gaze of those on shore followed the daring fellow who had undertaken to deliver them, as he ploughed his way through the watery waste, that every moment seemed to cover him, was too intense for words to tell. They despaired more and more of his success, the further he receded from them, for they could see that the swell incessantly beat him back, and that he seemed to be tired out. As he advanced, his head, which had before been distinctly visible, was only seen at intervals as the waves lifted him, and then it appeared only as a small speck, and for an instant of time. At length, all trace of the speck was lost. Those on shore riveted their eyes upon the spot where it was last seen, but still no speck could be distinguished.

"Poor fellow! he is gone!" exclaimed one of the weary gazers; and nearly all answered, "yes," mournfully, and with a look more of gloomy sorrow than resignation.

A few moments afterwards, and while the mournful group on the island shore were still gazing across the water at the distant vessels, they were suddenly cheered by a visible commotion on the deck of one of these, in the midst of which a small boat was lowered and manned by two men, who rowed a few yards towards some object that had evidently attracted their attention. They then put aside their oars, and were seen to stoop, and lift something out of the water, after which they rowed back to the vessel. Those on shore were at once impressed with the conviction, that the bold fellow who had attempted their rescue was saved. Yes, they could now, as they gazed, see him standing on board. Their joy was deep indeed when they saw the boat again put off, and rowed quickly towards the shore. Nearer and nearer it came. How delightful to the eyes of those who awaited its coming! "Heaven be praised!" exclaimed one of them, as it approached within speaking distance. "Thank God!" said another, and all responded to the sentiment. Those only who have been placed in a similar position to these men, can realize the feelings that swelled their breasts as they were taken on board the skiff, which, small as it was, carried them all in a single journey to the vessel from which it had come—a craft of about eighteen tons burthen. There they rejoined their adventurous companion, and were provided with such nourishment as the resources of the crew would permit. The vessels, which were manned by English West

Indians, proved to be wrecker boats, belonging to one of the West India Islands, and they were lying off the American coast, in this direction, for the purpose of catching sea turtles, upon the flesh of which, and provisions found in the ships that stranded there from time to time, they chiefly subsisted. The master of the boat, on board of which the castaways now found themselves, confessed that he had seen them on shore quite distinctly during the whole morning, but that he had avoided a show of recognition under the impression that they were shipwrecked Spaniards, who, if rescued, would probably lay violent hands on his craft, and carry her away to Cuba, a circumstance that he represented as having occurred to several of his former comrades. Thus it was evident that if Albert had not swam off as he did to the vessel, and convinced those belonging to her that he and his fellow-sufferers were not Spaniards, they might have remained on the island, and left their bones to bleach within sight of those who had the power to help them, but would not. On the morning following, the third boat that had been seen returned, and the shipwrecked men were distributed in equal numbers on board each vessel. It was not till then that they thought of their three companions who had been left behind on the original camping-ground, because they were unable to undertake the journey across the country. They had been too much overcome by fatigue, and too much engrossed by their

own yearnings for deliverance, up to the time of rescue, to speak of their unfortunate comrades; and, after reaching the vessel, they had fallen asleep, and remained so the whole night, and during all this time the unhappy three were left uncared for on that barren shore, hungering, thirsting, and utterly desolate. A boat, however, was now sent off with a party of four, to search for the poor fellows; and the result was, that one of the unfortunates was found dead and cold in the place where his fellows had left him on the previous morning, and that another was discovered lying in a state of insensibility, nearly half way between that and the point from which Albert had swam off to the vessel. The third and remaining one was nowhere to be found, notwithstanding a close search that was made for him. He had likely perished in an attempt to reach the vessels on the raft, which latter had disappeared from the beach. Some rum and water was poured down the throat of the unconscious survivor, and he was carried to the boat, and thence on board one of the vessels, where he gradually recovered.

Contrary winds detained them cruising along the Florida coast, and among the islands, but at length the boats made for Barbadoes, and there, on the eleventh day following the wreck, they landed in the most wretched plight. They had to wait a fortnight for an opportunity to embark for the United States, the embargo in

American ports having broken off the usual means of communication with the West Indies. They were then taken on board a sloop, bound for Baltimore, where, after a favorable run of ten days, they arrived, thanking God for their deliverance.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GREAT EVENT

I SHALL not moralize over the narrow span which separated Albert Parsons from eternity as he clung during those long weary hours to the wreck, and swam for dear life, and not his own life only, but the lives of his despairing companions, from the island to the fishing-boat. The simple narrative tells its own eloquent tale. Having no further business in America he lost no time in returning to New York, and embarking for Europe, where in due time he arrived. He promptly presented himself at Ostend, and rendered a faithful account of his stewardship ; but, feeling a disinclination to buckle down to office work, and having the subject of his dream on the first night of his voyage to the New World fresh in his mind, and the mystery of his progenitors yet to unravel, as well as a certain maiden to discover, he gave up his situation, and immediately afterwards proceeded to Bremen, where Mr. Sterling, and his two children still resided. All the letters that had been addressed to his adoptress, concerning himself, were in the possession of this gentleman, and to obtain these, or particulars thereof, was the chief

object Albert had in view in the visit, although he was also actuated by that feeling, more or less common to us all, which makes it a pleasure to renew acquaintance with the familiar scenes of our childhood, after a long separation. Albert, up to this time, had never seriously thought about instituting a search after his relatives, and this was chiefly owing to the want of opportunity, for since his boyhood he, it will be remembered, had been so much immersed in active pursuits, and so little his own master, that he was prevented from any attempt of the kind.

"Ah, my dear boy!" exclaimed Mr. Sterling, eagerly shaking his hand when they met, "How are you? glad to see you back! How's your health? Looking very well—eh?"

"Oh yes, sir, very well thank you. How's your own, and James and Mary's?"

"Very good, Albert. They'll be glad to see you, very. They're staying with their aunt at Bremen at present, but I expect them home in a week or so. I'm sorry they're not here now."

"Well, how did you like America? Splendid country I hear."

"Yes, sir. It is a great country."

"You must make yourself at home with me, Albert, remember. I've a nice room ready for you," interrupted Mr. Sterling, hospitably.

"I have not told you yet, that I was shipwrecked," said Albert, after expressing his thanks.

"Shipwrecked!" ejaculated Mr. Sterling, with

emphasis ; "bless me, no. How was that? I must hear all about it. How many were drowned?"

" Well, it was not so much the drowning, as the hardships we endured, the peril, fatigue, and starvation."

" Where was this?" asked the old gentlemen, with interest.

" In the Gulf Stream, off the coast of Florida, on my return from the island of Jamaica, to Mobile." Albert then proceeded to detail the incidents of the memorable voyage, and he succeeded in giving such a graphic description of the horrors of his situation, that Mr. Sterling was almost moved to that pitch of wonder which borders upon incredulity.

" Dear me, what a terrible thing! You'll never have such a narrow escape again, Albert. Well, I hope you prayed earnestly to the Lord?"

" Oh yes, I prayed hard enough, I can assure you, especially for deliverance."

" Well, if a New York Dutchman had told me he'd been shipwrecked, like you, I wouldn't have believed him. It will be something for you to talk about for the rest of your life. How did you like New York?"

" Oh, I liked it very well. Nice place. Fine scenery. The fashionable resort of the city is on the Battery, overlooking the bay, and from that you have a beautiful view. The ladies bathe there on the beach in the morning, and

promenade in the afternoon. There are some handsome streets there too ; Broadway in particular. Wall Street and Pearl Street are a little way out of town, or up town, as they call it, but the wealthiest people live there. You see nothing but rows of neat private houses, and you are away from all the bustle of trade that you find lower down."

Those who know in what part of the city Wall Street and Pearl Street are now situated, and how many miles they are *down town*, will appreciate the changes that have taken place since Mr. Albert Parsons sunned himself in the fashionable precincts of the Battery, when the Bowling Green was the Fifth Avenue of the town.

The conversation then became more discursive, and at length when the subject of the letters, and other matters relating to himself, was broached by Albert, Mr. Sterling frankly said, " You are welcome to them, my boy, and to make any use of them you like ;" and on the same day, the papers and *souvenirs* were handed to him without hesitation. He was therefore now in possession, not only of the desired correspondence, but the articles worn by his mother at the time of her rescue, as also the lock of her hair which Mrs. Parsons had secured after her removal to the castle on the day following her decease.

He had, at the present time, nearly two thousand dollars of his earnings remaining at his

disposal, so that there was little danger, with proper care, of the want of money interfering with his search for a considerable time. He was irresolute as to which place and to whom he should go first, when, in perusing a shipping list, he saw a notice of a vessel at Bordeaux on the berth for Dublin. This decided him; and after a stay of three days with Mr. Sterling, at Bremen, he bade him an affectionate adieu, and proceeded to the port named, where he shortly afterwards embarked for Ireland. "Now," said he, "I shall soon learn whether there be truth in dreams."

The vessel arrived at her destination in safety; and, without delay, Albert took an outside place on the Wicklow coach, in order to secure a better supply of fresh air than he was likely to obtain inside, as also to enjoy the scenery by the way.

It was a beautiful day in April, just that season of the year when the Irish landscape is freshest and greenest, and most gladdening to the eye. Albert felt a mingled sense of exultation and despondency as he neared the mountain wilds of his native county. He felt himself alone in the world, and a wanderer. He wanted sympathy, but where was he to look for sympathy? She who had been to him a mother —she who had cherished him through infancy with tender regard and almost maternal love, had been the only friend he ever knew. But he had lost her long ago, and her place in his

affections would never be again filled. His first love had been nipped in the bud, and he had never since met with another being who inspired him with a second passion. He had very often recurred in thought to that lovely young English girl, at Florence, but what, he asked himself, was the use of thinking about her now? They were, after such a lapse of time, he began to think, never likely to meet again; yet, if they ever should, there was no one else in the world that he knew of whom he would like so well to marry. But, and perhaps fortunately, it is not always well for us to obtain what we most wish for. He felt himself a desolate bachelor—adrift in life—a pilgrim, ready to follow wherever the hand of fate might beckon, or events determine.

When the coach arrived at its destination he alighted, and hired a car to convey him the remaining portion of his journey, for he was still eight miles from that part of the coast with which we have been so much concerned. On his way, he stopped at the hostelry where Mr. Perceval was staying immediately prior to his death.

Whisky takes a long time to kill an Irishman, so that it was not surprising to find the same landlord who had witnessed the will still living, and dispensing the comforts of his hostelry.

The conversation that took place between Albert and the tavern-keeper was, so far as this history is concerned, of a very important character. No sooner had the guest introduced

himself, as the Child of the Wreck and Rathangan Castle, than mine host manifested intense astonishment.

"Ah! then, is it your honor's self?" were the first words he ejaculated after the introduction. It is a peculiarity of the Irish, the lower classes especially, to ask questions, the answer to which is palpably before them, and of which they are perfectly aware. They will often even answer one question by asking another. The note of interrogation with them is seldom absent in conversation. I have seen an Irish host at his own dinner-table, address to one of his guests, with whom he had shaken hands only a few minutes previously, the inquiry, "Are you there, Mr. Daly?" by way of preface to the further inquiry, "And what, then, Mr. Daly, shall I have the pleasure of helping you to?" Consequently, the first words of the landlord of the inn were quite in keeping with the national character.

"May be, then, yer honor's not heard of the old gintleman?"

"No; but I had a dream. What old gentleman—my grandfather?"

"Ah, how well you know!"

"No—tell me."

"Well, then, yer honor, he was lodgin' wid us in the room above, and the mornin' after we'd signed and saled the will, he went out o' this, an' never a bit did we hear of him from that same day, till, one mornin', a year ago now, Mike

Sweeney found him a dry skeleton, under the cliffs, an' bedad, wid the will safe and sound inside of a case-book in his pocket. An' if it's that you want, it's Mike Sweeney, there beyant, that'll give you that same."

From this, it will be seen that the smugglers had, since we last left them, made known their discovery of the body of the unfortunate Mr. Perceval. But the intelligence had not travelled beyond the neighborhood. The doctor, who had witnessed the document referred to, in company with the landlord, was dead at the time it was made known, and no one on the spot felt interest enough to institute inquiries as to the relatives or friends of the deceased, in order to communicate to them the melancholy fact. Education had not spread very far over the county of Wicklow at the time of which I am writing ; and pens, ink, paper, and postage stamps were not so easy of access to the poor as at the present day. Moreover, post-offices were few and far between, and calligraphy was a rare accomplishment in circles where now it is common to the majority.

"And what was done with the remains ?" asked the visitor.

"Oh, we buried them nicely in the grave-yard beyant."

"And was any tombstone erected?"

"Ne'er a one ; but it's aisy to find the spot."

"Then I'll go and look at it," said Albert, "and see about having a stone cut. But you must come with me, and show the place."

"Faith, an' I'll do that same," was the response.

"And who paid the expenses of the burial?"

"The parish gave the coffin, and that was all the expinse."

Albert hung down his head in sorrow, as he listened. How strange, he thought, that I should have dreamed all this. The finger of Providence seems to have led me to this discovery. I thought I never could be superstitious, but I am now. It may well be said, that truth is stranger than fiction.

The reader may imagine the eagerness with which Albert Parsons sought out Mr. Michael Sweeney, the possessor of the will. He remounted the car without delay, and, bidding the driver use good speed, abandoned himself to a train of reflections and the caprice of hope. All the ardor of his nature was now awakened, and he looked forward, across a troubled sea, to a mine of wealth, a landed estate, and much happiness. These, the airy fabrics of his brain, beguiled him as he went.

When Albert reached the cliffs he dismounted from the car, and commenced that perilous descent which hurried death upon his grandfather. But, nothing daunted, he proceeded, step by step, till he reached the bottom, treading, meanwhile, the most intricate passages, and balancing himself here and there over the brink of a precipice. The importance of his errand expunged, to use a Napoleonism, the word *impossible* from his dictionary, and made fear an

empty name. Risk is as nothing where the object sought for is held paramount ; and so danger sinks into insignificance, just as a small grief loses its influence and becomes merged in the presence of a greater one—a more recent and deeper calamity.

I will not follow him in detail into the cottage of the man Sweeney, upon whom rested all his hopes, nor yet describe the sensation which the appearance of a perfect stranger among the villagers created. It will be enough if I say that, in an hour and a half from the time of his leaving the jaunting car, Albert regained the summit of the cliffs, with the last will and testament of Mr. Perceval in his pocket. True, it was much worn and stained, and otherwise dilapidated and dirty, but still it was *the will* of his mother's father, and afforded him a clue by which he hoped to unravel the mystery in which his ancestry lay enshrouded. Yes, for ten guineas and a few pieces of silver, he had suddenly become possessed of that which made him heir to vast wealth. Joyous and elated with his good fortune, he remounted the car, which had remained in waiting for him during his absence, and drove back to the hostelry.

"Well, did yer honor get the papers ?" asked the host, whom he found in the act of peeling a mealy potato.

"I did," was the response ; and Albert flung himself on to one of the two benches provided for the accommodation of guests, and gazed in-

tently at the ground, as if in deliberation with himself. He broke the brief silence by asking, "Where is the burial-ground? let us go there before it gets dark."

"Whatever yer honor plazes," was the reply; and in a few minutes afterwards the two were seated on a rude wooden jaunting car, to which was harnessed a colt, that carried it along at the rate of about six miles an hour. The tavern-keeper drove and endeavored at the same time to keep up conversation, but Albert was meditative, and only replied to his companion's remarks in monosyllables. He was about to visit the resting-place of his grandfather, and the terrible mystery of his death haunted his imagination. He pictured murder, and shuddered at the thought. But, he reflected, dead men tell no tales, and the mystery must remain unsolved till the last great day of retribution. He had wisely forborne hinting at his suspicions to the smugglers, for the accusation of murder against them would have gone far towards provoking murder upon him, and he knew it. Had he known the facts of the case, his mind would have been less perturbed, and his impulses less fierce, for fierce they were when he gave way to suspicion; and he felt ready to spring upon the man who might have taken the life of him over whose ashes he was about to shed a tear of sorrow and desolation.

"Do you think they murdered him?" he suddenly asked, turning to his companion.

"Murdered him! By the Holy Virgin, I hope not! What would they murder him for?"

Albert relapsed into gloomy silence, which was soon afterwards interrupted by the old man saying, "Here we are," and at the same time pulling up in front of a wall at the roadside, formed of mud and stones, and covered with a thick growth of weeds and stunted shrubs. A country grave-yard in Ireland is a miserable destination for a Christian to look forward to. It is nearly always a repulsive, gloomy, neglected, solitary spot, overrun with rank vegetation, and little less than frightful to the living. None of the garden glimpses of Greenwood and Mount Auburn there meet the eye, and one feels more tenacious of life than ever, as he gazes on the spectacle of solemn wretchedness and decay. The two men alighted, and, passing through a gap in the wall, found themselves alone with the dead. Albert almost shuddered at the scene.

"Here's where they laid him," said the old man, when they came to a gnarled old hawthorn-tree, and he pointed towards the grave. Albert felt that he could resist his emotion no longer, and, leaning against the tree, he averted his face from the other, and, raising his handkerchief to his eyes, wept in silence. Not alone of his grandfather was he thinking, but his mother. She, also, lay buried in the same yard. He turned to the old man, who had walked away a short distance, and, in a mournful voice, said, "Where is the grave of my mother?"

"Ah! it was here she was buried, yer honor, and peace to her soul!" and he denoted the locality by pointing to a tombstone closely adjoining the grave of her father. Albert again averted his face, and leaning once more against the tree gave way to grief.

"Ah! yer honor's takin' it too hard," said the old man, in a tone of condolment. But Albert was not to be comforted.

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He slept that night at the hostelry, and early on the following morning set out on a one horse-shay towards Dublin, *en route* for England.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A TOUCHING SCENE.

THE first words of the will were "*I, Henry Perceval, of Myrtle House, Grove Road, Cheltenham, give and bequeath,*" etc. The clue was perfect, and Albert lost no time in making the best of his way to Myrtle House, Grove Road, Cheltenham, to institute further inquiries

When he arrived there a venerable woman, following a maid-servant, made her appearance at the door, in answer to his ring of the bell. She was none other than the old housekeeper, to whom I have before referred. No one had ever disturbed her, and the solicitor of Mr. Perceval had, during the whole of the time which had elapsed since that gentleman's last departure from home, supplied her with the necessary means for maintaining the establishment and herself. Her eyes, gray and watery, were very dim, her skin shrunk and withered, her back bent, her hair completely gray, and her teeth in some places wanting. But she was in the position of an annuitant, and annuitants proverbially live very long. Such people look upon death as a monster waiting an opportunity to cheat them of their annuities, and they are, con-

sequently, always guarding against so formidable an enemy by taking the greatest possible care of themselves ; and they are wise, for life only comes to us once, and it is well known that those who take care of themselves cheat death of his prey during a far longer time than do their neighbors who attend less carefully to their own bodily and mental health by overworking, overeating, or overdrinking themselves, as well as doing, without thought and deliberation, a variety of little things which the cautious annuitant either strictly avoids, or does only in the most safe, quiet, and, therefore, least dangerous manner.

The old woman eyed him curiously, as much as to say, "Pray who are you?" as he made the inquiry, "Is this Mr. Perceval's house?"

"Yes, it is ; who did you want?" she asked in a faint voice. "Are you from the lawyer?"

"I've called to see who lives here," answered the visitor, "and I've come a long way to do it."

"Who lives here," echoed the old woman, vacantly. "I live here," and she looked him full in the face ; but, to use a saying of the times, the look was full of emptiness, and he shrank from the cold, unmeaning stare.

"You've heard nothing of Mr. Perceval, I suppose," were his next words ; upon hearing which, she seemed to awake as from a dream, and her eyes were lighted up with a ray of animation.

"Why, no. Mr. Perceval, no. He's dead.
Have you?"

"Yes, I've just come from Ireland, where I
first heard of the discovery of his body."

"His body?" half shrieked the old domestic,
at the same time clasping her upraised hands.

"Yes, he fell over the cliffs and was killed."

"And who are *you*?"

There was a moment's hesitation shown by
the visitor when this question was put, and he
appeared irresolute as to his answer. He then
said—

"Well, I believe I'm his grandson. Do you
remember Miss Madeline, his daughter?"

"Miss Madeline! Oh yes; oh yes."

"Well, I'm her son."

"Poor fellow! You the child that was born
on the shore?"

"Yes, I am that very child."

The old creature fell upon him like a child,
buried her head in his breast, and commenced
sobbing, so overcome was she by the intelli-
gence.

"And where have you been all this time?"
she asked, after the lapse of a few seconds, at
the same time looking upward into his face.
"Nobody could find you."

"Oh, I've been living abroad. Who couldn't
find me? Who wanted me?"

"Why, your aunt, as the lawyer, Mr. Turner,
says is dead and gone, and Mrs. Coke, who said
she was your grandmother."

"Oh yes, I have their letters. I'm going to see them," he said, at the same time releasing himself from the old woman's affectionate clutch. "And so my aunt is dead and gone. What a pity!"

"Aye, it is a pity," rejoined the other.

To see in the flesh the child of her young mistress, to whom she had been always devotedly attached, was an event in her monotonous life that had an almost thrilling effect. She had been brooding over the fate of that child—that boy—since, from the lips of Mrs. Sinclair, she first heard of his birth, and long and long she had waited for the day to come when that boy would become a man, when she hoped he would explore and find out everything, both about his grandfather and his other relations. That time had now come, and she rejoiced.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HALL AT BEECHWORTH PARK.

FROM Cheltenham Albert proceeded to Hastings, where he called at the address given in the letters of Mrs. Coke to Mrs. Parsons. He was there informed that the gentleman he was in search of was no longer known as *Mister*, but Sir William Coke, and that he had changed his residence to Beechworth Park, his patrimonial estate, a little more than ten miles off. Thither he took his way, for the first five miles on foot, and the rest of the distance in an open fly, which he procured at the livery stable attached to a village inn.

The butler conveyed his name to Sir William, who at once politely admitted him to an interview, and without having sent any message of inquiry as to the nature of his business. His arrival in the fly had much to do with this, and was his best letter of introduction. So much do mankind judge of one by appearances that appearances are not to be disregarded with impunity. But it is a pity that unassuming talent, unobtrusive virtue, should be so often underrated as they are, and that the mere trumpeters, the social magpies, with their superficial information

and shallow minds, should, by reason of an attractive style or ostentation, obtain credit for the possession of what they really never did possess, while modest merit frequently passes unregarded.

Sir William, looking very venerable, was seated alone in the library when the visitor entered, upon which he rose, and, pointing to a chair, bade him be seated.

"I have just come from your former residence in Hastings, Sir William," begun Albert, at the same time producing a package of old letters from his coat pocket.

"I ought, perhaps," he continued, "to have asked for Mrs. —— or Lady Coke, for these letters, I believe, were written by her, and it is concerning them that I've come. But I had better explain to you. I am the one about whom she wrote to Mrs. Parsons, of Rathangan Castle, Wicklow, many years ago. My parents were shipwrecked in the Aberdeen packet."

"Oh! are you, indeed?" ejaculated Sir William; "let me shake hands and welcome you under my roof then. Are you indeed the same? Then where have you been, that you never came before?"

Albert then explained to him the circumstances of his career.

"Ah, poor fellow! I wish you'd come before my dear wife died."

"Then she's dead?"

"Yes, dead! She'd have been very glad to

see you--very glad indeed. How strange! Well you must stay and dine and tell me all about it, for I'm very much interested now that I've seen you. Who'd have thought it? If you are my grandson I should like to see it proved. Well, never mind yet," and he wandered away to another subject.

"Mrs. Morley, your aunt, will be extremely glad to see you, I'm sure," remarked the old baronet, in the course of their subsequent conversation. "It will surprise her too."

"Where is she?"

"She's residing in London."

The name struck him, and awoke some pleasant memories. Morley was the name of his first love, the young English lady at Florence, but he little thought he was so near the brink of a new discovery.

"I shall be glad to see her also," he observed.

"Her daughter is staying on a visit with me at present. She's out for a drive just now, but I expect her in soon;" and as he spoke he pulled a huge gold watch out of his fob, and said, "It's a quarter past four now; she'll not be later than five."

"Oh, here she comes, here she comes!" exclaimed the old man, a few minutes later, as he glanced through a window which afforded a view of the approach to the hall door; and he ran out of the door to meet her.

"I've news! I've news for you, Jane! That fabulous cousin of yours is here at last, looking

as real as life can make him ;" and, as he spoke, he led her quickly into the library and the visitor's presence. "Here he is ; allow me to introduce you."

As the eyes of the two met, the lady blushed, and Albert, with a thrilling sense of joy and surprise, recognized in her none other than his first, his only love.

He advanced and their hands met ; had they been alone their lips might have met also, for the one, even now, felt it hard to resist the impulse, and the other would have yielded.

Here, under extraordinary circumstances, the old lovers, both still unmarried and unlighted, after the lapse of years, were thrown together. Albert felt all his old feelings, and something more, return, as he gazed upon those features whose loveliness had first captivated his young heart. He was in his eighteenth year only, then, and she was even younger. They were each equally rash, and giddy, and thoughtless ; and although the parting cost them tears, it was better that it should have occurred. He had become a wiser and a better man since that time. He was now guided by judgment, as well as impulse, and they had both reached the years of discretion, in which they were before wanting.

In love affairs and passion Albert had likely inherited the feelings of his parents, and these feelings he at first gave way to, but afterwards controlled by habit. Education forms the man,

and habit is second nature. It is better that wild oats should be sown early than late, for timely experience is our best chart in journeying over the sea of life.

He was now on the verge of his twenty-eighth birthday. The twenty-seventh was the eventful date, and the twenty-sixth was now passing away. Nearly ten years, therefore, had elapsed since the beautiful Jane and he had been cast asunder. But she was still beautiful, and *his* feelings were still the same. Was it not strange, that, as the magnet to the steel, the two cousins, without any knowledge of their relationship, should have been attracted towards each other in the midst of the great crowd, and in a foreign land? These thoughts, or thoughts on these subjects, were occupying the minds of both, as they stood face to face in the presence of the old man, their grandfather. The recognition was mutual, so much so that for some moments not a word was said about their former acquaintance. This occasioned a little embarrassment, which was at length relieved by Albert observing—

“ You once, I think, Miss Morley, resided at Florence?”

“ Yes.”

“ Ah! your face is quite familiar to me, although it is a long time since I saw you there. I little thought, when I saw you walking through those picture galleries, and along the evening promenade, that we should ever meet again in England.”

"Ah! singular," ejaculated the baronet; "fact, they say, is often stranger than fiction."

"Nor I. But I'm very glad to have had that pleasure," was Jane's *naivete* reply; "I quite remember you."

"Why, you're old friends, dear me? Who'd have thought it?" said the old gentlemen. "The English at Florence all know each other."

"Here are some of your poor grandmother's letters, Jane," he observed, as he unfolded the contents of the packet, which Albert had placed on the table; and so the talk went on.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

It may not surprise the reader to learn that the old attachment between the parties to this suit was renewed under the favorable influence of the meeting at Beechworth Park. But it is likely that those who read this history—and who can say, although in the form of a novel, that it is not only founded on facts, but fact in its entire details?—will be curious to learn the particulars relating to the same. The mere announcement of an event is not always satisfactory, and when a writer undertakes to chronicle a series of connected facts, in the form of a book intended for public perusal, and that book a novel, he is expected to be entertaining, as well as faithful.

I, the historian, of course, know everything necessary to my subject, and I do not think that I can do better than admit my confidential friend, the reader, to a private interview between the cousins, held on the morning following Albert's arrival at the hall, where Sir William invited him to take up his residence, which invitation he had accepted with much willingness. It was past noon, and the baronet was

out for a drive, as far as the house of a neighboring squire, who was in a critical state of health, and for whom Sir William entertained, what is commonly called, a genuine friendship. He would therefore not neglect to call to see how he was on any account. His absence gave Albert the opportunity he wished for, yet dreaded, for he was uncertain as to its result. On the previous evening this opportunity had not occurred, for at no time had he found himself alone with her, who was now the great object of his thoughts. As well with the novelty of their meeting as the revived passion, and a train of old recollections and associations thereby induced, his mind was almost wholly absorbed, and he had passed a night of wakefulness, during which thought was busy in his brain.

Albert and Jane found themselves alone in the breakfast-room, the windows of which overlooked a tastefully kept flower-
rden, and the park beyond.

" Well, this is strange!" observed the former ; " it was only the other day that I was thinking about you, and wondering if we should ever meet again, and here the event is decided."

" Did you really think about me then?" said Jane.

" Yes, indeed, I did ; and long and fondly.'

" Albert! Albert! How can you say so?"
(Spoken banteringly, with a sweet smile.)

" But I did really, I can assure you, and often before that too."

" Well, I'm sure I ought to be proud of your devotion." (Another and a merry smile.)

" You are quizzing me, but what I say is sincere ; and, what is more, I have never been in love with another since I was in love with you."

" Oh ! Oh ! What will you say next, I wonder ? Come, tell me, have you never seen any pretty girl that you liked since ?"

" Never—not one. Life seemed to have lost its charm for me when I had to leave Florence. Since then I have busied myself only about the practical concerns of life. The poetry of existence has been lost to me. But now I yearn for it again. Tell me, you are not engaged, I suppose ?"

" What makes you ask such a question ?"

" Because, my dear, I should like to marry you," was the frank rejoinder ; and as he spoke, he advanced a step, and stooping towards the chair in which she sat (he himself had been standing, leaning against the mantelpiece), he took her hand tenderly, and raised it to his lips. A slight blush heightened her complexion at that moment, and she remained silent.

" Listen to me," he said, with a voice slightly tremulous with emotion. " Jane, will you have me ?" He awaited her reply in anxious silence.

It was impossible to doubt that he was serious in his proposal, and the fair cousin felt unable to answer the question in any other than a serious manner. Her natural fun forsook her, and her gay and jubilant spirits experienced a

sudden depression. To use a popular phrase, she grew quite sentimental, in spite of herself, so much so, that she was embarrassed as to what to answer. This was a good sign for Albert, and he felt it.

"Don't ask me that now," she said; "I can not answer you. At some other time, we'll speak."

"Why not now? Come, tell me, why not now?" he asked passionately, and as he spoke his head lowered, and their eyes met, flashing rays of light into each other.

A moment later their lips met also. Not another word was spoken for some minutes, but Albert felt that she was his; and Jane, in spirit, yielded what she had forborne to express in words.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

CHARACTER, AND NO CHARACTER.

It will be correctly surmised that Mr. Morley, the flourishing solicitor of Hanover Square, was the father of the heroine of Florence and Beechworth Park.

You are, perhaps, not a decided admirer of her character, from what little you have heard of it ; but I must make an apology for the present, on her behalf, by saying that the trifling indiscretion of her early girlhood, at Florence, was in part excusable, on account of her extreme youth, and the novelty of being temporarily freed from the strict restraint and supervision imposed by her father, who had remained behind, in England. Moreover, as I have before led the reader to understand, there was nothing to be severely reprobated in her conduct ; she remained as pure after her love and friendship with Albert had been cut asunder as she was before she knew him, and as she was on the day of their accidental meeting at Beechworth Park, where we have just left them ; she was as chaste as Diana, but her manner was light, and overruled by a bubbling gayety, and her mind was not of that profound cast which

would have enabled her to guard against the occasional utterance of frivolous expressions, or yet to resist strong temptations ; she took after her mother in this respect, and the disposition of the latter had always offered a remarkable contrast to that of her spouse. She was what is called a weak woman, one with little or no power of will, and without a spark of originality or individuality in her character, but she was a kind and indulgent parent. She was like many millions besides, without any character at all, no more than a steam ploughing machine has a character ; she never thought or acted for herself ; she always followed the crowd, or if the crowd failed to set the example before her, she took and acted upon advice ; she could never trust herself, never venture an opinion of her own ; she looked, like all people of low intellect and bad taste, upon eccentricity as a reproach, not knowing that GENIUS, ORIGINALITY, and INTELLECTUAL SUPREMACY, in a word, great INDIVIDUALITY, always does so far deviate from the conventional track as to become what is called eccentric, and that in proportion to the abundance of such eccentricity so will be the character and greatness of the country where it is found, for this eccentricity shows mental vitality, and without vitality in the individuals it can not exist in the nation, which those individuals compose.*

* See John Stewart Mill's Essay "ON LIBERTY."

The want of individuality—the fact that so few dare to be eccentric, is the most deplorable sign of the age. Every one, from the highest to the lowest, is now subjected to the censorship of the masses. We are all, more or less, slaves to popular opinion, and in many cases, that opinion is more potent and pernicious than law. Why should there be this blind following of custom, which in its effect disinclines us for everything that is not customary, so bowing the mind itself to the yoke? People, by not following the dictates of their own nature, have very soon no nature to follow. They dress, act, talk, and do all the business of life according to fashion. They become incapable of strong feelings, or true unartificial pleasures, and are destitute of either opinions, or wishes which they can properly call their own. I will ask if it is not insulting to one part of mankind for the other part to endeavor to cramp and dwarf its reason and its will to a barren uniformity? Our individuality ought to be cultivated in an atmosphere of perfect social freedom, within such limits as would guarantee us from interfering with the liberty and general well-being of others. If individuality were to be entirely suppressed, our beliefs and practices would become merely traditional, and civilization itself would die out, as it did in the Byzantine Empire.

Men and women of genius are invariably endowed with originality of character, and they have an innate aversion to being moulded ac-

cording to the prevailing types of society. If the genius is strong, it will resist the pernicious influences which beset it; but, by so doing, its possessor will become a mark for the finger to point at. And if the genius be such as society succeeds in reducing to common-place, then has society done an injury, not only to itself, but the individual. It is unfortunate that ordinary and unoriginal minds are incapable of appreciating originality. It is owing to this blindness that mediocrity has become the ascendant power throughout the world. We see a prominent instance of the homage paid to it in the election of Mr. _____ to the Presidency of the United States. It may be seen every day in Europe in the appointment of judges and bishops. The most talented are considered too dangerous for high places. There would be a risk of incurring reforms, and mediocrity is always suspicious, if not afraid, of innovation. Men are naturally disposed to repose confidence in men who think like themselves, rather than in those who occupy a higher position in the scale of intellect. But this is no reason why those who stand on the higher eminences of thought should not assert their individuality, and so give a counterpoise to the tendency of the age, to assign to merely average men the leading power. They would, by acting differently from the multitude—and the multitude is very frequently wrong—be doing a positive service to their race. Who can deny that even the example of non-conformity

is advantageous? If we are all to be alike, where is the use of aspiring to achieve something better than what we have? Out on such tyranny of opinion, that would convert men into machines. Have you and I no ideas of our own as guides to our conduct and beliefs, and have we no mental vigor and moral courage to protest against their being uprooted or supplanted by the despotism of custom—so opposed to the spirit of liberty, progress, and improvement. Let us remember the great fact, that in proportion to the absence of restraint upon the exercise of individuality in any age, so has that age been noteworthy to posterity. Having thus echoed the sentiments that lie, and mayhap dormant, in the minds of all men blessed with a comprehensive grasp of intellect—of all men who have the power to think for themselves, and the courage to speak what they think, I conclude this chapter, with the intention of resuming the thread of this history of the Child of the Wreck.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH TWO NEW CHARACTERS ARE INTRODUCED.

THREE days after Albert's arrival at Beechworth Park, Sir William wrote to his solicitor and son-in-law a letter, acquainting him of the unexpected event, and begging him to come at his earliest convenience to the Hall, in order to investigate the claims of the young man upon the estate of the late Mr. Perceval. Accordingly, after the lapse of a few days, Mr. Theophilus Morley, the devout man, presented himself at the Hall door, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the old gentleman, and a very affectionate one from his daughter. He was then introduced to his future client and family connection, whom he honored with a warm shake of the hand, after which they proceeded to business.

The will was the document which Mr. Morley was desirous of perusing first, it being the foundation upon which the claim rested.

"Very good," said he, "very good," after reading it. "Are the witnesses living, do you know?"

"One of them is; the other is dead," answered the heir.

"Ah! one of them is, the other is dead. Where is the survivor of the two living, do you know?"

Albert made answer that he had seen him a few days previously in Wicklow.

The law is a slow coach, and it often travels over a long road, so that it may not occasion the reader much surprise to learn that twelve months elapsed from this time before Albert entered into possession of the estate bequeathed to him by his grandfather, over whose grave he had not neglected to raise a fitting monument. But "better late than never," says the proverb.

During nearly the whole of this time Albert had remained the guest of Sir William, at the Hall, where Miss Morley had also been a frequent visitor.

* * * * *

Three years have passed away since Albert came into possession of the property of his grandfather. He has adopted his rightful name of Coke, in addition to and after that of Parsons, and been married in the interval to his first love, and they are living happily enough, to all appearances, in a comfortable London mansion of their own near Berkeley Square. Her father drew up the marriage settlements, by which Albert assigned her a life interest in fifteen thousand pounds, to revert, after her death, to her children, in the event of their being any; and if not, to himself. A smaller amount (five thousand pounds) was settled by Mr. Morley upon

his daughter, and so the matter rested. Sir William made costly presents to the bride on the grand occasion, and several other relatives and friends did likewise.

"I think we shall be happy, Jane," were Albert's words on the day prior to the wedding.

"Yes, I hope so, love; but what makes you speak so? Tell me, dear, you look gloomy."

"Do I," said he, awaking to a consciousness of the fact, but avoiding reference to her question.

"Well, I'm sure I ought not to be," he continued, "a man on the verge of what ought to be the happiest day of his life, has no excuse for gloominess; but I have always looked upon marriage as the most serious and important act that can be performed on the world's stage, and perhaps the seriousness of the subject has given me a seriousness of look. I know of nothing else, love; when it is all over, I shall be gay again."

Had Albert been a woman, he would have said that he had a *presentiment*; how or why he had it he would have been unable to explain. That it existed, however, and was felt, was none the less indisputable.

After his marriage, occupation being essential to his happiness, he devoted himself to literature, and let loose the flood of thought and feeling which had been long pent up in the deep recesses of his soul, by writing poetry, and not that alone. He had much to say, and he felt it. He had

derived impressions from the outer world, wherever fortune cast him in his journey through life. His observation had been close, and he had a keen appreciation of the picturesque. The sun and the moon had not shone in vain to him—the stars had not flickered through the dark canopy of night, the birds had not caroled in the first blush of the morning—the trees had not talked in the breeze—the lightning had not flashed—the thunder had not rolled—the storm had not raged—without producing their sublime effect upon his imagination. He had watched the glassy ocean in a calm, and when rolling in its grandeur in a gale, and listened to its roar, with more than common feelings. The waving of the rye, the sunlight on the landscape, the droning of the woods with their soft æolian song, and the ringdove's mellow dole faintly trembling on the breeze, were vivid in his memory, and he saw with poet's eye the beautiful in life.

His mind was rich in fancy, and he loved all that is great in nature—all that is grand, magnificent, sublime. He found in loneliness, delight; and as the eagle sweeps the cerulean vault of heaven, so did his spirit soar in search of beauty. Yet, why these tastes so conspicuous in him now, when hitherto he had manifested no actual development of high talents and refined tastes? I can only simply answer that the circumstances of his former career were adverse to the cultivation of poetical feeling; he had

been forced to pursue an uncongenial form of employment ; his early aspirations had been checked, his incipient reveries had been disturbed by one who had authority over him, that one was Mr. Sterling. Moreover, he had never enjoyed any real leisure, and to foster genius leisure is indispensable.

We are all, more or less, creatures of circumstances ; and much depends upon the accident of our original position, as to our conduct in life. The proverb says, " Opportunity makes the thief," it also does the hero, and the thief would often as readily become the hero, if an equal opportunity were afforded him ; and I am convinced, that among the high and mighty of the world, monarchs not excepted, there are more base, ignoble minds, and cruel hearts, and greater enemies of their species, to be found, than are possessed by many of the despised tenants of our jails, who have been driven to crime by the stern force of necessity. But we have no compassion for the houseless victims of starvation, if those wretched victims, in their desperation, steal. Nevertheless, it is a withering reproach to us that such starvation should exist, and a direct evidence that our system of society is miserably faulty, that our civilization is lamentably imperfect, and that notwithstanding all our vaunted Christian charity, there is a vast amount of uncharitableness pervading our community. Indeed, it is undeniable that the present is the most selfish age that has ever dawned upon the

world. Albert Parsons Coke was the creature of circumstances, and one more fortunate than the many.

He was now unharassed by poverty, and in no need of earning his daily bread by the work of his hands, or the exercise of his brain ; of late, everything seemed to conspire in his favor. His mind had been expanded and improved by travel, and his association with mankind, although, since the death of his adoptress, he had enjoyed but few of the refinements of life ; nevertheless, his rough contact with the world had rounded off the irregularities of his character, and prepared him for subsequent polish. The diamond must be subjected to the mechanical process of cutting and wearing down before it can be made to assume the symmetrical shape and brilliant polish which fits it for a place in the monarch's crown.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity," in making us acquainted with the shadows, as well as the lights, of our social system.

He was now a man of experience, and had encountered a sufficient number of mishaps in life to make him distinctly recognize the relations of good and evil, right and wrong ; and to make him sympathize with the afflicted and distressed, and altogether impress him with a much truer knowledge of humanity and the world than is possessed by the unadventurous majority, who have never met with such vicissitudes, who have passed through few or no mutations of

fortune, and who have not had their moral strength tested in the crucible of necessity. He now felt all his old ambition burning anew within him, and he worked hard to complete his two great literary undertakings, viz., an Utopian prose picture of *life is it should be* entitled, *The Undiscovered Isle*, where the inhabitants lived in primal innocence and love, "and all went merry as a marriage bell," and a long epic poem, descriptive of the short comings of the human race, entitled, *The Generation*. But in the midst of these great undertakings, the attention of our aspirant for fame, of which he loved to say, "Oh, Fame! Oh, Fame! next grandest word to God," was suddenly diverted by the birth of a baby in his wife's bedroom.

Jane—the still lovely Jane, had become a mother for the first time, and Albert was blessed with a son and heir.

This was an event which gladdened the father, and led him to think more of home, and his domestic affairs, than of either *The Undiscovered Isle* or *The Generation*, upon which, and about whose concerns, he had previously been so profoundly engaged. There was something tangible about the existence of a baby, which there was not in either that of his poem or the prose fiction, and which demanded priority of consideration. The creations of his brain were, therefore, cast into the shade for the hour, by this partnership creation in matrimony, and he turned from the black-letter child of his fancy, to contemplate the

small pink one, which his wife had just presented to himself and the world.

Albert walked into the presence of the young mother with all the composure of a stoic, and all the humanity and affection of a father, for the first time, after the great event of the day, a short time subsequent to its occurrence.

He caught a front view of the infant, in the arms of its nurse, as he entered the apartment, and involuntarily uttered within himself a soliloquy upon the frailty and helplessness of man.

"Dear me! how very small it is!" were his first words, critical, of its appearance.

"It's a very fine child, sir," said the nurse.

"Ah!" he continued, "and what exceedingly fine hair it has," alluding to the delicate silky fibre that thinly covered a very small head, the general pinkness of which it was insufficient to conceal. This child was baptized in the name of Edwin, and its little body, under the careful auspices of its mother, grew up and flourished like a green tree.

The muse of the father now took a parentai—a domestic turn; for, within a year of the child's birth, he wrote several pretty little poems, having reference to his first-born. Here is one of them, and as dainty a lullaby as I have ever read:

Hither, sleep! a mother wants thee!
Come with velvet arms,
Fold the baby that she grants thee
To thy own soft charms.

“ Bear him into Dreamland lightly !
Give him sight of flowers !
Do not bring him back till brightly
Breaks the morning hours !

“ Close his eyes with gentle fingers,
Cross his hands of snow !
Tell the angels where he lingers,
They must whisper low.”

Another of these thus prettily questions :

“ Who can tell what a baby thinks ?
* * * * *
What does he think of his mother’s eyes ?
What does he think of his mother’s hair ?
What of the cradle roof that flies
Forward and backward through the air ?
What does he think of his mother’s breast,
Bare and beautiful, smooth and white ?
Seeks he it ever with fresh delight,
‘Tis his cup of life, and couch of rest.”

Thirteen months after the birth of Edwin, a second child was born. This also was a son, and to him was given the name of Joseph Ebenezer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A NEW SITUATION.

SINCE her marriage, Jane had gone much into London society, and, being an attractive woman, she was everywhere courted. But, although, night after night, during "the season," her brougham had conveyed her to Mayfair and Belgravian drawing-rooms, where she had glided through the waltz, the polka, and the quadrille, her husband had but seldom accompanied her to these lighted saloons, in which the votaries of fashion held their revels. He cared but little about going into society at the present time. With his love of study, the love of gayety seemed to have forsaken him ; and so it frequently happened that, while he was gravely poring over venerable *tomes*, or committing to paper his views concerning *The Generation*, and the inhabitants of *The Undiscovered Isle*, by the light of his solitary lamp, his wife was listening to pretty compliments, and receiving attentions from men with more gallantry than principle.

Albert would rather have had her at home, but Jane had no intention to sacrifice her best days to the caprice, as she thought it, of a husband, who preferred his closet to the world ; so,

rather than go himself, or forbid her going, he allowed her to go alone. The fact was, there was little or no sympathy between them, and without sympathy there can be no enduring love. They exchanged no bursts of passion—they never quarreled—never spoke unkind words to each other, or otherwise acted in open antagonism, but the romance of their early love had fled, and Jane knew of one whom she could have liked better than her cousin-husband; albeit, he was her first love. First loves, as I said before, are seldom lasting. That one, she had met in London, years ago, and soon after her return from Florence. He was then reading for the bar, and too poor to keep a wife, otherwise he would perhaps have made proposals to her father for marrying her even then. I say *perhaps*, because he was ambitious; and although he felt himself passionately attached to Miss Morley, his prudence might have prevented him from contracting an alliance, which might have ultimately proved less advantageous than others he might have had the opportunity of forming. Very young men, unless they enjoy high hereditary rank, coupled with wealth, have not the same chance of making what is conventionally called a very good marriage, as they would have at a more mature age, provided that their circumstances were equally favorable. Women do not usually like marrying inexperienced lads.

This aspirant to the bar—Cunningham, by

name—thought, as a writer in the *Saturday Review* has thought since, namely, that if the King of England were to fall in love with the thirteenth daughter of a London washerwoman, it would be no reason why he should marry her ; and so also with others, whose circumstances would not be improved by combination. Thomas Carlyle has expressed similar views ; and the argument is very good, so far as the selfish policy of individuals is concerned, but socially the effect is of the most unhappy kind. It violates a natural law, by consigning thousands, yea, millions of women to celibacy, who would have made excellent wives ; and it leaves a vast host of desolate, discontented bachelors—men disappointed in their endeavors to find women, with plenty of money, to marry them. This phase of society certainly does require regeneration. But once divest the idea of money from that of respectability, and the evil is done away with. People are at the present day afraid to marry, because society expects so much of them. Society will, however, find itself the better for studying happiness more than appearances, and it is to be earnestly hoped that the day will soon come when this desirable change will take place.

The acquaintance, with occasional interruptions, had continued from that time up to the period I am treating of ; but Mr. Cunningham had known nothing about her intended marriage with her cousin, Albert, till the morning on

which that event took place, at Saint George's Church. Whether it was that he avoided her, and went little into society from that time, or that accident prevented their meeting, I do not know, but Mr. Cunningham and Jane saw nothing of each other for more than a year afterwards, when they unexpectedly met at an evening party, given at a house in Bryanston Square. Subsequent to this, however, they saw each other often in society, and their friendship assumed a warmth, which, had Mrs. Albert Parsons Coke been my wife, would have made me either jealous or suspicious, or both, although I am by no means easily moved in that way.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FATAL MORNING.

EIGHT months after the birth of his second child, Albert received the first intelligence of a great disaster. Mr. Morley, of Hanover Square, his solicitor and father-in-law, in whose hands he had trusted nearly his entire fortune and estate, had decamped, taking with him his bankers' balance, and leaving a host of creditors in dismay. There were rumors afloat of forgeries, misappropriated securities, and much besides, against him. But, notwithstanding all endeavors to find the missing man, none succeeded. His wife had departed this life a few months previously, and some of his Christian acquaintances, who were not his creditors, charitably surmised that the bereavement had driven him to commit suicide. Albert was hopeless of recovering anything from the first intelligence of the painful facts, and each day only more and more confirmed that hopelessness. Neither his daughter nor Sir William had the slightest idea where he had gone to, or what had become of him, so secretly and skillfully had he succeeded in making his exit from professional life in London. As may be supposed, both those last

mentioned felt the blow almost as heavily as Albert himself, but, in the case of each, there was a variation of effect. Albert bore the shock with philosophical firmness ; the old baronet, on the contrary, grew desperately excited and indignant under it, while Jane chiefly felt the humiliation which her father's conduct entailed, and suffered more in consequence of her own wounded pride, than in genuine regret for her husband's loss. Instead of offering him sympathy, she almost shunned him ; thus acting, not like a good, loving wife, but a proud spirited man or woman, who feels him or her self lessened for some reason—generally, I am sorry to say, through favors received, when much in need—in the estimation of the one they avoid. Three weeks passed away, without any tidings having reached the angry creditors of the abode, or fate of the fraudulent solicitor, by which time his affairs had been dragged into the Bankruptcy Court, and the assets discovered to be *nil*. Truly Albert stood much in need of his philosophy to comfort him in the midst of such severe misfortune.

Troubles seldom come alone, says the proverb, and there is a good deal of truth in it, for it is in the nature of one mishap to tend towards producing another, and it is difficult to say where the evil may end. I am now about to record an even greater calamity which befel Albert than the loss of nearly a hundred thousand pounds of his fortune. But I will preface it with a few

words descriptive of an interview which took place between Mr. Cunningham, the barrister, and Mrs. Parsons Coke, on the day prior to its occurrence, and five weeks after the disappearance of her father. They had met by appointment, on a fine May afternoon, in Hyde Park.

"Jane," said he, "I can bear this no longer; either I must go abroad and resign you forever, or you must forsake home, husband, and England to share my lot. I know that I am asking you to give up reputation and society—a great sacrifice for a woman to make—in return for my devotion; but either this must be, or I dread to think of the future. I have made every preparation to leave this country at any moment. To-morrow there will be a morning concert at Willis's Rooms; here is a ticket for it. If you are there at three o'clock, I shall know that you have resolved to make the sacrifice I entreat, and fly. If not, I say again, I dread my doom. It will either be suicide or life-long misery and despair. You must not blame me. You married without my having heard of your intention, and you so inflicted upon me months of pain and excruciating torture. It was long after that before I could reconcile myself to the world again. But courage came to my aid; again we met, and yet again. I felt all the old fire burn within me. But the torturing knowledge that you were *lost* to me was, at times, almost maddening. Oh, Jane! love, pride, darling of my heart, in years gone by, when you were the vir-

gin object of my most cherished hopes, you little know what I have so long suffered, and suffer still. But to-morrow, yes, to-morrow, must seal my fate."

This passionate burst of language was continued for many minutes. It was language not altogether new from his lips to the ear of the one he addressed, but it was more decisive than any she had ever before heard from him. The crisis had come, and she had now to decide between honor and infamy.

All that night long she lay awake by her husband's side, thinking over the plan of temptation proposed to her. She knew she was wrong to think of such a thing, and that it would be extremely wicked to carry it into execution. Then she thought of her husband's dullness, and the monotony of her life at home, which forced her to seek amusement in the world. She almost shuddered when she looked down the abyss which yawned beneath her. No, she would not do it—no! But the flesh is weak, and not even love for her children, or common respect for their father, sufficed to keep her out of the path of evil. She knew that whatever she did, there was no danger of her coming to absolute want, for the twenty thousand pounds which had been settled upon her at the time of her marriage would still remain hers.

The following day dawned clear and balmy. It found her still irresolute, still wavering. At breakfast she appeared flushed with nervous

excitement. She was restless, and left the table earlier than usual and repaired to her own room. Albert sauntered into the back parlor, which was used as an occasional sitting-room, and quite accidentally took up an open letter which he found lying on the mantelpiece. The commencement, "*My Dear Jane,*" attracted his attention; and the writing being that of a masculine hand, he, with pardonable curiosity, read it. That epistle was never intended to have met other eyes than hers to whom it was addressed. Its conclusion, "*Adieu, dearest, your ever-loving William,*" was quite enough to convince Albert that his wife was acting falsely towards him, even if its whole purport had not been of an equally warm and clandestine character.

As he was in the act of laying it down she entered the room in great haste, and was evidently much disconcerted to find her husband there, and still more so by seeing him in the act of replacing the letter which she had come in search of.

"There is a letter here," said Albert, sternly, "which requires some explanation. I presume it is addressed to you."

"What business have you to read my letters?" she asked, tartly, while her face crimsoned with a sense of mingled shame and indignation; "I consider it a great rudeness," and she advanced to the mantelpiece, and snatching the letter from his hand, abruptly quitted the apartment without saying another word

She was now decided as to her line of conduct. She felt that she had lost the respect of her husband, and that, after such a discovery as he had made, there could no longer be any chance of happiness left for her at home. He might forgive her if she explained all and resisted to-day's temptation, but she could never reconcile herself to live with a man—husband, cousin, the father of her children though he was—if she had undergone humiliation before that man, and that humiliation it was now impossible to escape. She longed to flee from the house, never to enter it again. She called her maid to dress her with all haste, and, without even taking a parting glance at her two children up in the nursery, she left the house.

Meanwhile, Albert had remained in the apartment where we last left him, pondering gravely over the unhappy circumstance which had just transpired, and he was about leaving the room to seek an interview with his wife on the subject when he heard the street door shut. At that moment Jane had crossed the threshold on her way to ruin! But he did not suppose at the moment that she had gone out, and it was not till some minutes afterwards that he became aware of the fact.

Hour after hour went by and dinner-time came, but Mrs. Parsons Coke had not returned. Albert supposed that the circumstances of the morning having made her unhappy, she had been led to seek solace elsewhere than with him,

which belief by no means comforted him, or relieved the extreme depression under which he had labored since his discovery of her clandestine correspondence. He thought it likely that she had gone to Beechworth Park, but then she had not taken any luggage with her, and this tended to lessen the probability of her having adopted such a course. Hour after hour passed away, and midnight came, but still no wife appeared.

Albert sat up all night long, and at dawn he found himself standing in front of the dining-room window, looking into the dull and silent street. He was sad, very sad, and completely unnerved. The double shock had proved too much for him. He had lost both fortune and happiness within nearly the same month. The gray light of early morning is as often likely to make one so disposed melancholy, as it is to have an opposite tendency. It was a cold cheerless prospect that lay before him. Was it then surprising if, after his long night watch, he turned away from that window in tears, and with a heaving breast flung himself on a sofa?

Day after day, week after week, month after month, succeeded that cold gray morning, without bringing any other tidings of the missing wife than were contained in a letter which she had written to her husband on the day she left home, and which Albert received by post a few hours after the time at which we just left him in his misery. It briefly referred to the desperate

step she had resolved to take and prayed his forgiveness, and hoped he would not take it too hard.

"The Lord help me!" he ejaculated as he read it, and the paper fell from his hands to the floor. For a moment he felt his indignation aroused and his pride bitterly wounded, but his next impulse was one of intense grief, and he burst into a flood of tears. He felt that all his love and kindness had been rewarded with baseness and ingratitude ; and, almost paralyzed with sorrow, he buried his face in his hands and sobbed like a child.

It is an affecting sight thus to see the strong man stricken by a mighty grief. Women weep upon slight provocation, but men only when in deep mental anguish. As the sturdy oak when struck by lightning, or riven and rent by a thunderbolt, so is a cultivated man, of a sensitive nature, when laid prostrate by a great and sudden calamity such as this. I will darken the picture over the false wife and the one under whose protection she had left England by the Dover Packet for Ostend. Such unholy deeds as theirs can not bear the light.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A DEATH SCENE.

SEVEN months after Albert had passed through the withering ordeal last described, his grandfather, Sir William Coke, lay on his bed, at the Hall of Beechworth Park, dying.

Albert, the physician, and two of the old man's faithful domestics were alone present in the sick-room. The blinds were drawn up and the curtains thrown back, for the sick man wanted light. "More light," was his last expression. But he was now no longer able to speak. Most people, on the verge of death, feel a similar desire for a strong light in their apartment.

It is at all times an affecting incident to stand by the bedside of a conscious dying man, or a conscious dying woman, of education and intelligence, and witness the surrender of LIFE; to see vitality forsaking the frame which it has so long animated; to watch the last agonizing glance, or the melancholy look of silent resignation; to behold the last spark of a bright intelligence extinguished forever, and all the lustre of the mind dimmed with the final beat of the pulse, and the filming of the eye never more to flash with the rays of a polished intellect.

There is something far more touching in such a scene than in the death of a child, or of those who have through life worked their bodies more than their minds, whose temperament has not been intellectual, whose refinement was never great. The sensitive organs—the susceptible faculties of the uneducated laborer—of the man not disposed for, or accustomed to, intellectual pursuits, are much less keen than are those of the man whose mental organization, tastes, and occupation have been of a higher order. The more refined, and studious, and thoughtful a man of superior intellect, literary tastes, or poetical temperament becomes, so much the more capable is he of deep, impassioned feeling; so much the more intensely can he experience the extremes of joy and misery; so much holier is he than other men; so much more warmed and actuated by generous impulses and the higher motives of the human mind. Consequently, the pain of such a man's regret, and the depth of such a man's despondency, would far exceed that of one oppositely situated; and it was this regret which Sir William now felt at the near prospect of parting from the world, his wealth, and unharassed life. He had none of those inducements to hail death, as a happy deliverance from a world whose influence had been ever barren to him of good fruits, and from a body which had experienced nothing save toil, hardship, and privation. With him fortune had been propitious, and although he had met with

his share of troubles (and who among us has not?) during life, the balance of happiness was in his favor.

Sir William was a very old man, and correspondingly tenacious of existence. He dreaded the fall into the vast, unknown abyss which yawned beneath him. Visions of heaven and hell broke across his disturbed imagination, and conflicting thoughts raged within his troubled soul, and beat wildly against his conscience, as roaring billows maddened by the stern resistance of unyielding rocks. But the tongue gave no utterance to those distracting thoughts. Suddenly he started in his bed, and a stifled, incoherent ejaculation broke the silence of the chamber. At that moment his spirit took wing, and left, cold and motionless, the clay which it had so long tenanted and guided through life.

* * * * *

By the will of the deceased, Albert was constituted sole heir to the estate, and succeeded to the title without question. Since the flight of his wife he had continued to live, with his two young children, in the house in Mount Street, and had led the same studious life as before. He had reduced his establishment a little, but, notwithstanding the great loss of money he sustained in consequence of the dishonesty of his father-in-law, sufficient means, otherwise entrusted, had been left at his command to enable him to still maintain a liberal expenditure. Within a month of the decease of his grand-

father, Albert received intelligence of the death of the venerable housekeeper at Cheltenham, which event took place in the same old house where she had passed the last thirty-six years of her life.

A certain solicitor, of Lincoln's Inn Square, was, at this time, engaged in executing the preliminaries necessary for obtaining a divorce in the matter of Albert and his wife, at the suit of the former.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE OMEGA OF THE FUGITIVE.

READER, have you ever been in Paris on New Year's Day? If so, you remember the gay bustle of the *jour de l'an*, and were impressed with the aspect of festivity and good humor which the city and people presented. You went out in the afternoon, and saw that the streets were crowded with an animated, well-dressed throng, and that the traffic was peculiar to the occasion; that every one was making holiday but shopmen and shopwomen, who were slaves to all the rest. You walked, or might have walked, all the way from the Madeline to the Chateau d'Eau, a distance of four miles, through masses of happy-looking people, who filled the foot-walks on either side of the road. You found the arcades as densely crowded with men, women, and children, as the Boulevards were, and you did not fail to remark that a mania for buying and selling seemed to have suddenly taken possession of all Paris; that everybody old enough to make a present was buying up some of the glittering treasures that were displayed in the shop windows; that every shop was a fancy fair, whose attractions were irresistible.

You saw, or might have seen, line after line of temporary shops—stalls of rough boards and uncouth look—erected along the Boulevards, and the other chief thoroughfares ; and these vieing with the brick and stone shops in the pleasing variety and appearance of their wares, notwithstanding their inferiority in point of quality, and the consequent lowness of price at which they were sold.

And why, you may have asked yourself, all this unusual bustle, and life, and prodigality, to-day ? Why all these maimed and halt ; these wearers of wretched looks and old garments ? Why this festivity—this exhibition of all the fashion and gayety, all the workmanship and wealth, and all the cripples and poverty of this beautiful city of beautiful France ? Why such crowds of smiling faces and perambulating feet ? Need I tell you, in answer, that people were buying *etrennes* to give away to their friends or relations, and that all the mendicant population of Paris were, by special permission, let loose to beg, this being the only day of the year on which they are allowed the privilege.

On this day you found yourself besieged on all sides for New Year's gifts. Your *auvergnat*, your *charbonnier*, and your *blanchisseuse* ; the *concierge*, the postman, the newspaper-man, the butcher's boy, the baker's boy, the grocer's boy, and your own servant, were equally forward in politely exacting from you the tribute of the day.

When you entered a restaurant, to refresh your weary body, the *garçon* levied a tax upon your generosity which there was no escaping, by presenting you with an orange, garnished with smiles. You gave him five francs and sought refuge in a *café*, but the *garçon* there you found to be just as lavish with his smiles as his brother of the restaurant ; and there was no doubt about his expectations, when he, in his most graceful manner, presented you with a cigar, tied round with ribbon.

It was while Paris was throbbing under all this peaceful excitement on the first of January, 1819, that an elderly man, of gentlemanly appearance, was seen to stagger in front of a glove shop in the Rue St. Honore, and then fall. He was lifted up from the ground and found to be lifeless. That man was THEOPHILUS MORLEY the fraudulent solicitor !

CHAPTER XXXIII

AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING AND DISCOVERY.

IN the year 1832, and on a beautiful September afternoon, a young man of tall and elegant figure, light complexion, and graceful carriage, whose age could not have been more than twenty years, might have been seen, preceded by several boy-guides, with their wild black eyes sparkling beneath the tassels of their red caps, ascending the lofty peak, which rises behind the town of Syra, on the island of that name, in the Grecian Archipelago.

When he gained the summit—an elevation of about two thousand feet—he sat down to breathe the delicious air, and contemplate the magnificent view, which included nearly the entire group of the Cyclades, and a few of the Sporades. It was a splendid picture, this sight of twenty-five islands, some of which rose into cloudy summits, while others lay in dark purple shadow, or gleamed bright and yellow in the sun, or were sunk low and barren, almost to a level with the deep blue sea that girt them.

The chastened delight with which any one of refined habits, capable of appreciating the picturesque, gazes upon scenery such as this, ap-

proaches, to my mind, nearest to the sublime of all other feelings of which our nature is capable. I can never survey a beautiful landscape without experiencing sensations of exaltment and exultation. There are few, however, who can resist the spell which binds the human eye to a contemplation of Nature's choicest—grandest handiwork. Who, for instance, could look down the deep broad valley of Mexico, and not yield to its glorious fascination ? Who could suppress his admiration, as, at a single glance, he took in a sunlit picture, more than a hundred miles in diameter, enframed in mountains rising here and there twelve thousand feet into the cerulean vault of heaven, and overtopped in the dreamy distance by the rugged and snowy summits of the mighty Cordillera of the cone-decked Andes?

The young man, after feasting his eyes for a while on the splendid scenery of the Archipelago, reluctantly commenced his descent, for the day was fast ebbing, and at length regained the passenger boat, by which he had travelled from Trieste. Soon afterwards, the latter resumed her voyage towards Smyrna, with her deck crowded with Greeks and Dalmatians, Turks and Jews, and a few more well-to-do tourists and traders in the cabin. Among the latter was an English family, consisting of a lady and gentleman, with their two children—son and daughter, the last mentioned being a beautiful girl, apparently in her eighteenth year.

"Well, sir," said the father of the young lady,

addressing the recent visitor to the peak, "how did you like your climb up the mountain?"

"Oh, very much indeed! I enjoyed it exceedingly."

The young man, then went on to describe the beauties of the scenery in somewhat glowing language, which drew from the daughter, who was a listener the exclamation, "Oh! Papa, I should have liked so much to ascend it."

This conversation resulted in the young man's producing a sketch-book, in which were some drawings of Swiss scenery. To several of the more finished views he had appended his name, which was as yet unknown to them, and these he showed one by one to the family group. The young lady, of whom, I may mention, our lonely traveller was already very much enamoured, was lavish in her praises of the loveliness of the scenery, and the beauty of the sketches; saying, "Look, mamma, how exquisite!" or, "Papa, is that not charming?" as the case might be; but the mother, after the first few moments, betrayed visible emotion, and was soon overcome by a violent tremor.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asked her husband, while the daughter affectionately exclaimed, "Oh! mamma, are you not well? Tell me, mamma! Speak!"

But the mother seemed to have lost the power of speech, and her eyes were fixed full upon the young man's face, in vacant wonder and embarrassment.

He, of course, was much disturbed by this incident, as well as alarmed as to the state of the lady's health, for she had turned ghastly pale, a symptom that, in her husband's mind, suggested brandy as a remedy, of which he went in search, and soon returned with a quantum. This she drank with a spasmodic effort; but the effect was beneficial, for her agitation subsided quickly afterwards.

"Only a little faintness!" she ejaculated, a few moments later.

* * * * *

The name she had seen in the sketch-book was "*Joseph Ebenezer Coke*."

"My son, my own darling child," was her next exclamation, as rising, she, to his intense astonishment, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him.

"Then you were false to my father!" retorted the other, with excitement. "Let me go!"

Upon hearing this unfeeling reproach from his mouth, she regarded him with a withering glance, and then swooned, immediately after which the daughter screamed, and "Mrs. Cunningham"—the Jane Morley of old—was carried away to her own cabin, in the arms of him who had first prompted her to do wrong.

It was the first meeting of the mother and the child since the morning on which she had left his father's house forever. During the long time which had elapsed since then, she, together with Mr. Cunningham, who married her at

Brussels, after Albert was known to have obtained a divorce, had led a wandering mode of life on the Continent. The two children now with her had been born within two years after her elopement, and they were her youngest. No communication whatever had taken place between herself and the husband she had been unfaithful to, nor had any attempt at such been made on either side since the fatal day. He had led the life of a widower from that time to this, and amid the rural beauties of Beechworth Park found, at least, contentment, while the leisure at his command enabled him fully to indulge his taste for literature, and appreciate its pleasures. His two works had been published, and attracted a good deal of attention, in consequence of their originality and great imaginative power. The critics, almost without exception, awarded him high praise, and men of learning read and admired. His eldest son, Edwin, was at Oxford, and intended for the army; while Joseph, now on his travels, and who had just come from the same University, looked forward to the bar as a profession.

Some very harsh words passed between the high-spirited Joseph and Mr. Cunningham when they met on deck, about half an hour after the swooning scene in the cabin, in which the latter severely censured him for the reproach he had uttered, and the former retorted with all the warmth of offended pride.

‘ You have brought a stain upon my family,

sir, and I wish to have nothing further to say to you," were his words, as he turned on his heel and walked away. All concerned must have been glad when the minarets and white walls of Smyrna, with its slender cypresses and feathery palms, were disclosed to their view.

Both the mother and daughter had remained in private since the great discovery, and Joseph landed among the bizarre and picturesque forms that met his eye on the city quay, without having seen anything more of his newly found parent, who had thus lived to suffer the reproach of her own son, as one of the penalties of her great error and unmotherly conduct, practiced in the desertion of her home and children.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MONEY AND MATRIMONY.

THE details of the early career of Joseph Ebenezer Coke, who has just been introduced to the reader, in the first blush of manhood, are not of a character upon which it is pleasing to dwell. Profligacy is at all times a subject for our pity and animadversion, and it affects us unfavorably to see health destroyed, habits vitiated, wealth squandered, and prospects ruined, on the part of those who, had they exercised common prudence, sensible self-control, might have turned the physical, mental, and worldly endowments which they originally possessed into sources of high utility, which would have brought them not only outward prosperity, but that priceless boon of happiness, which is ours, when we feel conscious of having done well, and used, instead of abused, the gifts bequeathed to us by nature and society. It is a melancholy fact that many of those who were most fitted of all their fellow-beings for doing good, not merely to themselves, but to all, have, by yielding to social vices, been degraded into abjectness, ever after to remain useless members of that community to which they belong. Gambling was

the chief vice into whose snare this, the second son of Albert, was beguiled ; but gambling begot recklessness, and recklessness begot extravagance, following upon which there is no limit to the milestones of error that mark the broad road to RUIN !

At the time of our meeting him on Mount Syra, however, this evil of his character had not had time or opportunity enough for development. But he had always been a warm-spirited, impulsive lad, eager after every form of excitement and novelty, and his debts at Oxford showed that he was not naturally disposed to practice the virtue of economy. He was, consequently, with ample means at his disposal, prone to excesses, and ever ready to enjoy life at any expense. His father had not been backward in his remonstrances and advice, but even bishops and other divines, as the newspapers occasionally disclose to us, cannot limit the riot to which young blood will sometimes run in the veins of conduct in their own sons. So it is not a matter for surprise that Sir Albert Parsons Coke preached one thing, and his son Joseph practiced another, and that very often diametrically opposed to it.

When he returned to England from his continental tour (upon which occasion he described his accidental meeting with his mother, a subject of such painful interest to Sir Albert, that he begged his son never to mention it again), he became a member of Crockford's Club, then

frequented by the most extravagant men in London of that day, and, owing to his costly mode of living and losses at play, soon became embarrassed, for the allowance—handsome though it was—of six hundred a year, made him by his father, was wholly inadequate to meet the expenses of such a course. It was at this period, nevertheless, that he succeeded in engaging the affections of a young orphan lady, then living under the guardianship of her maiden aunt. The latter was wealthy, and she had signified her intention of making her niece heiress to her entire property; but the young lady herself had only a trifling fortune in her own right, her father, a colonel in the Indian Army, having died poor, some years previously, at Calcutta, and what little income she had was obtained under the will of her mother, whose decease had occurred during her infancy.

It was, perhaps, owing as much to the aunt liking him, as to the niece, that he was indebted for the success of his suit, but between them he gained the prize. We all know the great influence that good or evil opinion exercises over the mind of a young lady, with regard to the object of her choice, or the candidate for her hand, and how easily she may be led by a good word in his favor, or thrown back by a remark to his disadvantage, so that it was quite to be expected that if the aunt liked Mr. Joseph Ebenezer Coke, as a suitor, the niece could have no reasonable grounds for refusing him. There-

fore, like a good girl, she accepted. I should feel a pang of sorrow for her, were it not that I know she loved him, and that he really did love her. The engagement was followed, after the lapse of four months, by the marriage ; and Joseph, who received with his bride a dowry of five thousand pounds, led her away to spend the honeymoon at Beechworth Park.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DISSOLUTION—FLIGHT.

ON the 23d of December, 1834, and nearly twelve months after her marriage, Catharine, the wife of Joseph Ebenezer Coke, gave birth to a son and heir at their house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square.

Bailiffs were just then in possession of the furniture, and the five thousand pounds which the husband had received with his bride were spent. But a few days afterwards, Mr. Coke negotiated a loan of a thousand pounds at the rate of forty per cent. interest, which enabled him to pay them out, and for eight months to keep out any new comers of the same description. Then, however, a great domestic calamity occurred, that not only prostrated him under the weight of sudden anguish, but disabled him from keeping his creditors any longer at bay. This calamity was the death of his wife. Three days prior to the fatal event an inflammatory disorder attacked her, and this was the cause—this the enemy that hurried her into the tyrant's power. Notwithstanding the extravagancies of Joseph Coke and the inconveniences thereby visited, not only upon himself but his wife, he had, from the

Alpha to the Omega of his married life, proved himself a kind and affectionate husband. Some may differ with me and ask, How could a man be a kind and affectionate husband, and yet act in a manner calculated to bring misery upon his wife and family ? To this I must answer, that the effect of such conduct, on his part, only indirectly fell upon the one dear to him ; that the issue of his prodigality and improvidence was uncertain ; that he had a rich father, and that his wife had a rich aunt from whom he might reasonably expect something at some future day ; and, finally, that he was thoughtless, and encouraged by the example of men richer than himself with whom he associated. I do not enumerate these things with the view of excusing him ; I admit his errors as candidly as I would my own, and as, I hope, reader, you would yours, but I do so with the intention of making you feel and believe that sincere affection for his wife and child was not incompatible with those faults, which I may liken to rocks whereon his careering bark might, sooner or later, be dashed to pieces.

I am the least likely man in the universe to justify iniquity, but I must first be convinced that what may be supposed such is not mere moral license, or at least, has some palliating features which reduce its enormity. Every allowance must be made, especially in the present state of society, for individual circumstances accompanying a divergence from the code of

strict morals. Actual necessity, for instance, will excuse a vast number of errors and shortcomings, and we may go so far as to say, as moral philosophers have said before us, that if a starving man were to steal a loaf from a baker's shop, provided that he was utterly without the means of subsistence, he would be morally justified in the act, although the law would think differently, and punish him for it as an offense against society. But society had left him to perish, and therefore, he was only acting in common self-defense against society in infringing one of its rules, by committing a theft forced upon him by extreme want.

The strong man wept over the corpse of his wife, and deep was his emotion. The grave had hardly closed over her, however, when, to ensure his own personal liberty, he found it necessary to fly the country, for the hounds of the law armed with the great *ca : sa :* were about to be let loose upon him. Such are the miseries of debt and poverty. And what became of his child? you may ask. Thereby hangs a tale!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE TWO SONS.

A FEW weeks after the hurried departure of Joseph, his father received a letter from him, bearing the Brussels postmark, in which he made mention of the child, and the person into whose care he had entrusted it previous to leaving England, and asked his father to look after its welfare. Guided by this information, Sir Albert wrote to a certain Mrs. Slater, residing at No. 10 Grove Terrace, St. John's Wood, requesting her to come to Beechworth Park, and bring with her his son's infant boy, who, he said, would be much better there than in strange hands in London.

Mrs. Slater was the wife of the chief officer of a merchant ship, who was now at sea, and she had formerly been lady's maid in the service of Catharine's aunt; and it was through this last circumstance that Joseph Coke had first heard of her, and then from the lips of his wife. The latter had entertained a very kind feeling towards her, and twice she had called upon Mrs. Coke, at Charles Street, relative to some matters concerning which she had sent to her.

On one of these occasions Joseph was present

during a part of the interview. In the emergency, therefore, consequent upon his wife's death and his own pressing embarrassments, it is not surprising that, in thinking about how he should place his child, he recurred to the ex-lady's maid, Mrs. Slater, and hurried away to her abode to ask the question whether she would do him the favor of becoming its nurse and protector.

I can assure the reader that it was with unfeigned delight and satisfaction he listened to her consent, and felt a heavy weight of anxiety that had oppressed him make to itself wings and fly away from that very moment. But he little anticipated the consequences in which that acceptance of his proposal was, some will say, *destined* to result. I am not a believer in the doctrine of predestinarianism, and, consequently, I do not myself suppose that what did occur was destined to do so. On the contrary, I attribute every occurrence more or less to accident. This last is a vague word to use, but not more so than *gravitation*, and numerous others which Newtonian philosophers are in the habit of laying so much stress upon, and about the meaning of which they in reality know little or nothing. I could explain this by a long train of argument, but my history is too argumentative already.

Mrs. Slater had all a woman's tact, and more than the average share of cunning, and she applied this tact and this cunning wrongfully. She

saw, by the letter of Sir Albert, that he was ready to adopt his infant grandson, and the idea occurred to her that it would be well to substitute her own son, who happened to be of a nearly equal age, for that of Mr. Coke's. The advantages of education, good breeding, and fortune thereby to be acquired, were far greater than she had any prospect of being able to extend to her offspring. Sincere filial affection, it may be said, would have dictated very differently to this—I admit it; but must remark that ten thousand women could be found in either London, or New York alone, who would, if they had the opportunity, be unmotherly and unnatural enough to part from, and transplant their children into a superior social element, than their own, such as was promised to the heir, or supposed heir, of Joseph Coke, in the present instance. Read the advertisements of children for adoption, in the American newspapers.

Mrs. Slater lived alone with her children, in the absence of her husband, and had no one near to question her conduct, so that she acted with impunity in the substitution referred to. She had a large amount of secretiveness, and even concealed the affair from her own servant, and she kept the one only who was by description a "maid of all work," so there was not much danger of the news spreading.

Sir Albert had never seen his son's child; consequently, when Mrs. Slater presented herself at the hall, Beechworth Park, with her

infant in her arms, he accepted her statement, "*I've brought you Mr. Coke's son, Sir Albert,*" as true, and not the shadow of a doubt about it crossed his mind. To sum up briefly, she was entertained by the baronet for several days, at the hall, and on leaving, he presented her with a handsome gift in money, in consideration of the trouble and expense of her journey from London. From that time the boy grew up under the affectionate auspices of his reputed grandfather.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN ESCAPE.

"It is not every father that knows his own son," and Mr. Slater, the mate of the merchant ship, was no wiser or more suspicious than other fathers, when he returned from a long voyage, and kissed "little Tommy," as he thought, but in reality little Teddy, for Robert was the name in which Joseph Coke's son had been baptized. He thought, poor fellow, that he saw his own flesh and blood in the form of the so-called Tommy, and he tried to recognize in the infant features, some likeness to himself or his wife, and, like most people, who try hard, and believe in what they try for, he thought he did recognize something very like himself about the eyes and mouth, and something very like his wife about the nose! Happy are the deluded, for what the mind knoweth not, the heart grieveth not after.

"Truth will out," and no woman can keep a secret long. These are beliefs that promised to receive a contradiction in the case of Mary Slater and her child, for her husband went to sea again, and returned and went again, without being made in the slightest degree aware of the

substitution that had taken place. In the mean time, she had treated the boy as kindly as her own, but without displaying any motherly warmth of affection for him. Her means were scanty, consequently he grew up unaccustomed to the luxuries of life, and without the benefit of refined example, or superior education. Nevertheless, matters became still worse in his ninth year, when Mrs. Slater received the intelligence of her husband's death at Sierra Leone. She thus found herself and three children left without any means of support. It was in this emergency that she succeeded in captivating one who had been also deprived of his consort, and who carried on the business of a stationer and news agent, in the neighborhood where she lived. The widower was childless, a fact which may account for his boldness in undertaking the responsibility of a second marriage, which necessitated the maintenance of not one only, but four persons.

This news agent, however, it afterwards appeared, was not so lovingly disinterested, as might be supposed, for no sooner had he married the mother, than he made the two sons fulfill the active duties of newsboys, while the daughter was made as generally useful as her tender age would permit, both in the shop and house, and day by day, he drilled them till after the lapse of a few years of constant hard work and running about, they had become highly serviceable machines. But this step-father of theirs, not

only worked them hard, he thrashed them well, whenever they diverged in the slightest degree from the strict rules he prescribed. He was what is called a severe man, and consequently a cruel, contemptible one, and he perfectly succeeded in making himself the terror of these members of the rising generation, who liyed under his petty despotism, and hated him in silence.

The mother, too, owing to declining health, and the vexations of her domestic life, for her husband was no less the tyrant with her than her children, became very peevish, and acting under the force of a bad, and, I may say, barbarous example, smote the juvenile community who called her "mother," in a manner the reverse of pleasant to their feelings. It was pitiable to see them, for they had a half-starved, downcast look, and their clothes were only picturesque owing to their rags and patches. The shop only brought in about a pound a week, which rendered strict economy necessary in the management of the establishment at the back. "Methodism" and "total abstinence," were practiced without variation, and oatmeal porridge, and a bare allowance of that, was the staple article of the children's diet. Under this treatment, the birthright-cheated child—Robert Coke, who now knew himself, or was known only as Thomas Slater, in heart, grew disaffected, and longed to make his escape from the scene of semi-starvation, threats, blows, and hard work.

He had heard much about ships and the sea, and he looked forward to some day running away from home, and adopting the career of a sailor, which had peculiar charms in his eyes, owing to his entire ignorance of its practical details. He looked upon a beautiful ocean, over which a noble ship with pouting sails, was bearing him on to some sunny land, where palm-trees spread their graceful fronds beneath a blushing sky, and the people were all cupids and psyches. He knew nothing of the rude hardships of the forecastle, the long night-watches, the rough and often brutal conduct of ships' officers. Alas! that experience, stern, bitter experience, with rueful visage, should ever dispel the mirage of hope, the unsophisticated imaginings of our boyhood; should teach us that all is not gold that glitters—that there is more sorrow and misery than joy and happiness—more vice and uncharitableness than virtue and generosity—more love of MAMMON than of MERIT actuating mankind—that the path to fame is thorny, and life from the cradle to the grave a perpetual struggle, occasionally lighted by a sunbeam, but often darkened by the storm-clouds from whose showers there is no escape.

At length, on a fine morning, in the February of 1851, our young friend, whom we must still call Thomas Slater, suddenly disappeared from the news shop at St. John's Wood.

The adventurous boy, after leaving home, directed his steps towards the London Docks,

and when he arrived there he looked anxiously at the ships lying alongside the sheds. He felt rather timid and bewildered for the first half hour, owing to the bustle and novelty of the scene, and the difficulty he found in threading his way among the piles of cargo, and gangs of laborers. After some hours' wandering, and several vain attempts at crossing the gangway to get on board the vessels nearest him, he found himself in the *Export Dock*. He had been previously in the *Import Dock*, where the noise and confusion were endless; but here all was comparatively tranquil.

A large sailing bill, posted on a board, which was lashed to the bulwarks of one of the outward bound, attracted his attention soon after this, and he found on reading it that the vessel was bound for New York.

"This is the ship I'll go in," whispered the fugitive, and he ascended the gangway ladder, to make inquiries of the captain, whether he would take him as cabin-boy. But the manager of the floating hotel—she was a passenger ship, was not on board. However, he resolved to wait for him, and after the lapse of an hour or two, his patience was rewarded by the appearance of that nautical personage, to whom he made prompt application, offering his services "for nothing," if the captain would only take him to sea. The result was, that the captain did take him, and a few days afterwards, the boy found himself in the middle of the channel, sea sick.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE FIRST MEETING.

A very short time only after Sir Albert Coke had received from his son the letter before referred to, bearing the Brussels postmark, he wrote to him a letter, informing him that he had taken his child under his own roof, and also giving him serious counsel upon the subject of his affairs and as to his future conduct. He concluded by offering to pay his debts, on the condition that he would immediately return to England, and there either complete his studies for the bar, or accept a commission in the army. This was too good a chance for Joseph to throw away, so he wrote back, in reply, that he gladly accepted the offer, and would return home as soon as he received word that the judgments which were out against him, and a list of which he enclosed, were settled. The father lost no time in paying these off, and enclosing the attorneys' receipts for the money to his son.

In a fortnight afterwards, Joseph was in London, negotiating through an army agent for the purchase of a commission. A few days later, he received a letter from his father, informing him that his child was suffering under an attack

of small-pox. Had it been any other disease, Mr. Coke would have hastened to see the little sufferer, but of the small-pox he had a great dread, for he soliloquized, "If I took it, and it was not fatal, I should very likely be disfigured for life," and be it known that, although he was not exactly an Adonis, he was very proud of his personal appearance. As it was, he made up his mind to remain in London, and trust to the tender offices of those at the Hall. He was, nevertheless, exceedingly anxious to hear daily of the child's condition. He was exceedingly depressed by day and sleepless by night, while it remained in a critical state, and he felt relieved of a heavy load of anxiety when the report reached him that it was out of danger. A month later he repaired to the Hall, and exclaimed, "Dear me, how altered he is!" upon first seeing it. But no suspicion of its not being his own child crossed his mind. He accounted for the change by its recent illness, and the marks which that illness had left on the infant countenance.

A few days after this time, Joseph Ebenezer Coke was gazetted to an ensigncy, by purchase, in a regiment of the line.

"I was lucky," he remarked, "in getting the commission when I did, for in another month I'd have been past the age for entering the service."

For the first two years of his military life he remained at home, but his regiment was then

ordered to Gibraltar, and there he spent the next five years of his life, and received his promotion to a lieutenancy. His regiment was not then ordered home, but he applied for, and was granted, leave of absence, on account of the state of his health. There was nothing seriously the matter with him, but he was thoroughly sick and tired of the rock and fortress, and he therefore curried favor with the surgeons, to get their certificate.

When he presented himself at the Hall, immediately after his arrival in England, he received an affectionate welcome from his father, and bestowed a fatherly greeting upon his child, who had remained awake nearly the whole of the previous night, in eager anticipation of his coming.

"How's Edwin?" he asked, after the lapse of a few moments, in allusion to his brother who had entered the army, since we last left him, and who was now quartered with his regiment at Sydney, Australia.

"Oh, he was very well when I last heard from him, very well! How long is it since you heard from him?"

"It's more than a year since he wrote to me, and its more than two years, since I wrote to him, so the advantage is on my side—eh?"

"Now Edward," he said, addressing his son, "come here and sit on my knee, and tell me all that you've been doing," and he took hold of the boy affectionately, and raised him up.

"Why," said the father, suddenly thinking of the medical certificate, by which his son had obtained leave of absence, "You're looking remarkably well, Joseph? I think Gibraltar must have agreed, instead of disagreed, with you."

"Gib, you mean, father; we always call the key Gib. Gib, with a J, you know. Yes, agreed pretty well, but dreadful slow."

"What do you mean by 'the key'?" asked Sir Albert.

Joseph laughed, and said, "Why, the key of the Mediterranean to be sure. What other key where you thinking about—latch-key—eh?" and Joseph laughed again.

"I'm going to exchange into the Guards," he then remarked; "I'll buy my promotion to a captaincy? What do you think of it?"

"Just as you like."

"Then that's settled," replied the lieutenant.

After a week spent at the Hall, he took his departure for Paris, to see life, as he expressed it, and he remained there three months or more, by the end of which time he had used up Paris, and felt an inclination to use up London; so he paid his bill at *Meurice's*, and went to Calais, to embark on the packet for Dover.

It was a warm and beautiful evening in the month of June, and the setting sun was suffusing the western sky with a glorious effulgence, and shedding his golden radiance far and wide, when our traveller stepped on board the steamer, at the Calais pier. He had much of the gal-

antry which every British officer is popularly supposed to possess, and he therefore soon succeeded in making the acquaintance of two of the lady passengers. He was engaged in a discursive conversation with these, when the captain approached, and said, "Ladies, I shall feel greatly obliged if you will take charge of this young lady till we arrive; she is travelling alone."

The young lady alluded to was of prepossessing appearance, and apparently not more than eighteen. She was a little under the middle height, slender, and graceful. Her complexion was fair, and her face slightly oval, with a delicately pointed chin. She had no classical regularity of features, but their general expression was pleasing, calm, and dignified. Her eyes, which were of a lustrous brown, lent a peculiar animation to her countenance, and a profusion of glossy and nearly auburn hair was drawn neatly back from her finely arched forehead; her hands and feet were delicately small and easy of motion; and she had a clear musical voice, and a penetrating yet winning glance, which was capable of expressing more than she might dare to speak in words.

The ladies, who were elderly and of a matronly aspect, consented, and Adelaide Wilberforce, such was her name, took her seat by their side, and joined in conversation.

"You are English, I perceive," remarked, the lieutenant, after they had conversed awhile.

"Yes, I'm from Liverpool."

"Oh, indeed! I know Liverpool very well." It had previously transpired that she was returning from an Ursuline Convent at Amiens, where she had received her education, so this afforded plenty to talk about, and Mr. Coke, or Captain Coke, as he preferred to be called, found plenty to talk about accordingly.

"How do you like travelling alone?" asked the latter.

"Oh, I don't mind it at all. A lady, travelling alone, always meets with a great deal of kindness I think. But I'm only crossing the channel alone. My sister and brother-in-law came with me from Amiens, and gave me in charge of the captain, and my eldest sister is to meet me at Dover."

"Oh, indeed, then you're well taken care of."

"Oh yes! Did you think I was not well taken care of? I suppose you thought me an unprotected female? Now, tell me?" and as she spoke, she smiled mirthfully, and darted an inquiring look at him. There was a freedom and a banter about her style of conversation which surprised, while it amused, the gay lieutenant, and he said to himself, "I believe it's true that every woman is at heart a rake."

"Well, no," he replied; "how could I think you unprotected? It appears to me that you are under very good protection. I, at least, offer you mine;" and with a bow and a smile, he placed his hand near his heart, in a manner more sug-

gestive of the latter than mere protection. Miss Wilberforce averted her face, feeling, no doubt, that he had perpetrated a piece of superfluous gallantry. "But he did it in such a way, you know," as she afterwards remarked to her sister, "that I couldn't be angry."

By this time they were alone, the other ladies having entered the cabin, and quite a flirtation appeared to have commenced between them.

Midnight found them still on deck, seated *vis à vis* to each other, with a travelling rug, the property of the lieutenant, protecting their knees from the cool night air. The position was interesting, and one which would have led the casual observer to infer that they were either relatives or old friends. The sudden intimacy, and the prolonged stay on deck, caused the ladies to whom the captain had introduced Miss Wilberforce to have their doubts about her, as they privately remarked.

"Don't you intend going down stairs?" asked one of them at about half-past twelve.

"Oh no, thank you," was the young lady's reply; "The night is so fine, and this rug is so nice and warm, that I prefer remaining on deck. I like to look at the moon and the stars, and Captain Coke (he had communicated his name to her) is so very kind. I'm sure I should have been sea-sick, but for his agreeable conversation."

Such an unqualified preference for remaining on deck as was here expressed left the matron no room for further questioning on the subject,

so she bade the two a cold good-night, and went down to the ladies' cabin. She would have remonstrated, but that she did not feel herself in a position of sufficient authority over her to do so. As it was she said to herself, "These young ladies, educated in convents, are so unaccustomed to the world when they come out that they run wild. She wants somebody to tell her what is right, and what is wrong. If somebody doesn't tell her she'll come to something some day, mark my words."

All night long, did the two sit gazing into each other's eyes, and listening to each other's conversation, and sharing the one travelling wrapper. But they were not alone. Groups of ladies and gentlemen passed the night likewise on deck, enjoying the calm, and the moonlight in each other's society, and it was declared by all to be far preferable to going down into "that close cabin."

It was daylight when the steamer commenced landing her passengers at the Dover pier. Miss Wilberforce remained on board till most of the others had gone ashore, in expectation of her sister.

The ladies into whose care the captain had entrusted her, bade her good-by as they left the vessel, but the lieutenant, with his usual gallantry, still kept by her side. The sister not making her appearance, the captain suggested that she would find it more comfortable to wait at "The Ship"—a hotel fronting the quay, a suggestion

which had been previously made by Mr. Coke, but which she had felt too timorous to act upon.

"Come, and I'll take you," said the captain, and the three went there together. Nothing having been heard of her sister at the hotel, Miss Wilberforce resolved to breakfast early, and take her departure for London.

This she did, the lieutenant accompanying her, by the first train, the railway having been opened a short time previously. When they arrived at the London Bridge Station, Miss Wilberforce again looked anxiously for the appearance of her sister, but no sister was there.

"I'd better take a cab, and drive to the house," she remarked; upon which her companion promptly called one, and saw that her luggage was placed carefully in it. He then said, "Shall I accompany you, or do you think you'll be quite safe alone?"

"Oh, quite safe, thank you."

"You'll be glad to see me, I know, if I call," said the lieutenant, fishing for an invitation.

"Oh, of course," said the lady, with a smile. The two shook hands, and the cab drove off. On the next day, in the afternoon, the lieutenant called at 27 Harley Street, the address mentioned by Miss Wilberforce, and sent up his card to her. It was the house in which her married sister was lodging, and both were at home. They received him, and a pleasant conversation ensued, which continued for about two hours, during part of which time, the visitor and Adelaide

were left alone. There was nothing, however, said, that partook of the character of love-making. Some soft nothings might have escaped the visitor's lips, but they were accepted in the spirit in which they were spoken, and as necessary elements in a sparkling and familiar conversation. No doubt they looked admiringly at each other, as people who like each other do. But Mr. Coke said nothing, nor had said anything calculated to lead Miss Wilberforce to believe that he loved her, or that he had any serious intentions towards her.

"We shall be happy to see you again," said the sisters, as he was about to take his departure, and he availed himself of the invitation, by calling again, three days afterwards, on which occasion it happened that Miss Wilberforce was not at home. He failed to repeat the visit, and thought no more about her.

"I wonder why Captain Coke has not called again," often remarked Miss Wilberforce to her sister after this; and, to tell the truth, she felt "dreadfully disappointed" that he had not called. She felt a liking for him, which he might easily have fanned into love; and the desire to love and to have something to love is innate in the human, and especially the female, breast. She felt that by his not continuing to call, she had probably lost the chance of a husband to her taste (for it had transpired in their conversation that he was a widower, and consequently *eligible*), and this pained her beyond measure. It may be easily

understood why the lieutenant did not make a point of continuing the acquaintance, although the circumstance of his having called to see Miss Wilberforce may have led the reader, as it led the lady herself, to suppose that a deeper feeling existed on the part of that gentleman than was really the case. He looked upon her as an agreeable girl and a pleasant travelling acquaintance ; but one whose social position and probable fortune were not of an order to make her more than usually desirable to know, or to induce him to entertain the idea of marrying her, even if he had felt that his affections inclined in that direction, which they did not. In other words, he was not in love with her, and it was not his interest to be in love with her. She had lost both her parents a few years previously, and by the will of one of these she would become entitled to some property in Liverpool, worth about two hundred pounds a year, on attaining her majority. Her father, who used to pride himself upon being a "Dickey Sam," that is, a native of the latter town, had practiced medicine there for many years, but without gaining any eminence in his profession ; and her mother was the daughter of a cotton broker of the same place. These particulars Joseph Coke had learned in the course of his conversation with her on board the steamer ; and as the son of a baronet, and an officer in the army, he therefore esteemed her to be of anything but patrician birth, and he was too much of an aristocrat not to have a greater partiality

for patrician than plebeian blood, where he was personally concerned. The reader may have formed the opinion that Miss Wilberforce did not act according to the strictest propriety in sitting up with him all night on the deck of the steamer, and that consequently her tone of character was not of the highest order. That it was not in keeping with the strictest propriety, I readily admit ; but, like most other girls who happen to do indefensible things, she meant no harm by it, and thought flirtation a very harmless amusement. We must, therefore, not judge her too severely. She was young, and naturally vain and coquettish ; while, to use one of her own expressions, she would have given the world for society, and, after once emerging from the convent walls, she felt unable to live without it. She continued to reside with her sister in London for nearly a year after her return from France, and then she went on a visit to her other married sister, residing at Boulogne. She from thence travelled with a lady friend to Belgium, and the field of Waterloo, and thence onward, by way of Rotterdam and the Rhine, to Germany, and from Germany to Switzerland, where she saw the sun rise from the top of the Rigi Mountain, and nearly fell into a *crevasse* while walking over one of the Grindelwald glaciers. Following this tour, she returned to London, after an absence of more than a year, and again took up her residence with her sister, whose husband had just previously gone on a business errand to the United States, with the

prospect of eventually making America the land of his permanent residence. He returned a few weeks after her arrival, and having meanwhile decided upon removing to New York, little time was lost in preparing for the change. It was only natural, under the circumstances, that both her sister and brother-in-law should have said to Adelaide, "Will you come with us?" for she was free of the world, without a tie and almost without an interest to bind her to any particular place or country, and, with economy, she had means sufficient to enable her to travel and support herself as a lady. Two hundred a year in her hands went far. She studied elegance and economy in everything, yet without displaying, in the slightest degree, either affectation or parsimony. Adelaide rather liked the idea of visiting the New World; for, as she remarked, she had heard and read so much about it that she wanted to see for herself; and the present opportunity of making the visit, under pleasant auspices, was not one likely to occur again. So she agreed to go with her sister, and in due time embarked at Liverpool, on the steamer Hibernia, for New York, where, in the month of May, 1845, the vessel duly arrived.

Miss Wilberforce was, to use her own language, greatly taken with the Empire City, and particularly its hotels, which latter she was well able to appreciate and value, by comparison with those that fall to the lot of the European tourist out of Paris. Two years had now elaps-

ed since her first meeting with Lieutenant Coke, and, meanwhile, she had seen him only upon that one occasion in Gower Street. But she had not forgotten or lost interest in him. Since making his acquaintance, she had become a regular subscriber to the *British Army List*, and by it she had, by this time, learned that his regiment had returned home, and that he had purchased his promotion to a captaincy. During these two years she had been devising plans for bringing herself into communication with him, but none of these had, as yet, been put into execution. She thought it prudent not to hurry them, but trust, in some measure, to time and opportunity. Be it remembered that she had a secret and, what she felt to be, an undying passion for him, although that passion was by no means beyond her own control, or likely to mar her happiness. But it was strong enough, as we have seen, to make her cherish the hope of meeting him again and renewing an acquaintance which even yet might lead to something which would exercise an important influence over her future. That tendency towards flirtation, which she displayed on board the Dover packet, seemed since to have further developed itself; for, during her residence with her sister in London, she met with several admirers whose attentions she courted with the artful heartlessness of an accomplished coquette. She felt a joyous pride in flinging her arrows into every susceptible heart. She had heard of *lady-killers* among men, and

she saw no reason why she should not become, as she facetiously termed it, a *beau-killer* among women. When travelling on the Continent, too, she succeeded in fascinating one unsuspecting individual so supremely that he offered to endow her with all his worldly goods; but she humorously told him that because he had lost his heart that was no reason why he should lose his goods too; and with this consolatory admonition she left him to recover. She felt her pride a little hurt by her first beau, as she called the lieutenant, having neglected her, and this appeared to fire her with the resolution of avenging herself upon *man-kind* generally. New York society, she now found, afforded her every facility for indulging her passion for flirtation. Her brother-in-law having family connections and a circle of acquaintance in the city, she very soon saw herself surrounded by a bevy of young gentlemen, many of whom she found to be as consummate flirts as herself. She contrasted the *brusquerie*, or indifference, often exhibited by many of her own countrymen towards ladies, with the intense and proverbial politeness of those of America. "I have seen gentlemen in England and Germany disobliging to ladies; but in America, never," was one of her sayings after experience had enabled her to judge. She subsequently discovered that the greatest fault in the character of American ladies, was what she termed "their squeamishness," and that the most objectionable habit on the part of the men,

was the one which made a spittoon an indispensable article of furniture in every parlor. "It makes me ill every time I see one," was her remark, which, if not exaggerated, would lead us to infer that she must have been very sick indeed all the time she was in the United States. Another of her criticisms applied to the habit of habitual exaggeration which most of her friends indulged in. "Every man," she said, "is either the smartest, the very smartest, man I know, or he's exactly the reverse. He's either very bad or very good." She complained of there being no conductors to the city omnibuses, and of their proprietors making the public do their work, by thrusting the fare through the aperture, near the roof, at immense personal inconvenience, and she only consented to travel by them, because the gentlemen were "so polite," in doing the work for her, and "so particular" in counting the change before handing it back. For the first few weeks after her arrival, she resided with her sister at the New York Hotel, but afterwards the latter commenced housekeeping in Fourteenth Street, and thither Adelaide also removed.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE CONFESSION.

It was nine o'clock on the second night following the departure of the young fugitive from the news shop at St. John's Wood, and, the shutters having just been put up, the news-vender and his wife were seated in the small apartment which constituted their sitting and dining room, and, to a great extent, their kitchen. They were talking over the mysterious disappearance of "Tom." He had been reproaching his wife during the whole of this and nearly the whole of the preceding day, for, as he termed it, her "bad bringing up of the lad," and, in his usual way, he was employing scriptural arguments to carry conviction to her mind. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," was one of his favorite quotations, and, with the narrow mindedness of most uncultivated and ungifted men, he interpreted the meaning literally, and erroneously thought corporal punishment a heavenly-ordained thing. Such men have got to learn that moral power exercises more influence over human conduct than mere brute force, and that it is sinful, and more than barbarous, to resort to any such means of enforcing obedience, or inflicting the penalty of wrong, as flogging. The same even

applies, but in a lesser degree, to animals of the lower order, yet men are, for the most part, so perversely and lamentably harsh and stupid, that they either cannot perceive it, or are wanting in goodness enough to practice it. The example set by John S. Rarey, has practically enlightened the popular mind more to the advantages of gentleness and kind treatment in the management of the horse than all the generations of horse-trainers that preceded him.

"Well," said the wife, after some rather sharp and surly rejoinders to the speeches of her husband, "I'm glad he's not my son," and, as she spoke, she rose from her chair, and proceeded to attend to some household duties.

The eyes of the news-vender followed her with a look of amazement. "Not your son, Mary! What's that?" he said in a tone of surprise.

"No," she replied tartly. "Not my son. I mean what I say."

The news-vender kept his gaze fixed on the form of his wife, whose back happened, however, to be turned to him, and he remained in wondering silence for a few moments, waiting to hear what she would say next.

"Not your son, did you say, Mary?" he repeated, finding that she continued her occupation without further remark.

"I did," she answered. "What more do you want to know?" and she took up a candle, and without awaiting his reply to her question, went up stairs.

"Want to know," said the offended husband, repeating her words; "That's a pretty how-do-you-do, indeed! What more do I want to know, eh?" and, after a pause of a few minutes, Jabez Bunting, such was his name, moved by the spirit of curiosity and anger, followed his spouse whither she had gone.

"Mary," he spoke as he opened the door of the room in which he found her busied in some way with the contents of a drawer and closet, "what do you mean by treating me in this manner? What is this about Tom?"

"Bless me, man, how you do worry about that!" exclaimed the wife petulantly. "There's many a thing in the world more wonderful than you think for. And I tell you, he's not mine. He's Mr. Coke's boy, and I only had him to nurse." The face of Jabez Bunting grew long with an expression of holy horror.

"Why, then, you deceived me," he ejaculated. "You always led me to suppose you had sent him to his grandfather, Sir Albert Coke. What's the meaning of such deception?" and the pitch of Jabez Bunting's voice increased with his indignation.

The wife felt her position an unpleasant one, and a moment's reflection convinced her that, as she had said so much, she ought to make a candid confession of the entire facts, and the motives which induced her to commit the error of substituting the one child for the other. This she did at the moment, and expressed her contrition

in a flood of tears—woman's great relief. "Well, as a Christian man," said Jabez, who felt himself for once in the character of an injured husband, "as a Christian man, I say, I cannot allow Sir Albert Coke to be deceived any longer, and to-morrow I shall write and acquaint him with the scandalous facts, for scandalous, indeed, they are;" and, so saying, the pious news-vender folded his arms, and marched across the room with a look of righteous indignation. Then, turning abruptly, he addressed his wife seriously on the sin of her conduct, which he stigmatized as unmotherly and unnatural. These bitter reproaches fell upon the ear of his wife, who sat sobbing with her elbows resting on her knees, and her face buried in her hands, without eliciting a reply. She felt that she had been guilty of a great wrong, and was unable to defend herself. She was no longer defiant, but bowed down. At length her courage revived, and she said, "Say no more. Your preaching will not mend matters. Do what you like, but I'm going to bed," and she began the work of preparation accordingly, while Jabez went down stairs to indulge in the vice of smoking—a very prevalent vice, indeed, all the world over, and which people indulge in, to the detriment of their own health, and the annoyance of those of their neighbors who have wisdom or good taste enough to abstain from the evil practice.

CHAPTER XL.

THE TRANSATLANTIC CORRESPONDENCE, AND WHAT
BECAME OF IT.

ALTHOUGH residing in New York, Miss Wilberforce faithfully continued her subscription to the British *Army List*, and every month, immediately after its receipt, she invariably turned to the index of names, and the initial *C*, to find out whether Captain Coke was still in the land of the living, where he was, and what he was, for exchange or promotion were circumstances with which she had become quite familiar. Indeed, she had read the *Army List* month after month, so long and so carefully, that she almost knew the position of every officer in Her Majesty's service. It was about five months after her arrival in America, when that small red book told her that Captain Coke had exchanged into the Guards. This intelligence interested her very much indeed, and seemed to afford her the desired opportunity for putting herself in communication with him. She thought over a variety of ingenious plans for doing this, but at last reverted to the obvious one of writing to him direct. "I'll write immediately and congratulate him," she said to herself, "and how sur-

prised he will be to hear that I was taking such an interest in him. There's no harm in that, and it will give him a chance of breaking the ice." She dropped the letter into the General Post-office with her own hands, and a fortnight afterwards it reached the hands of the gentleman to whom it was directed. It occasioned him some surprise to see it bearing the United States post-mark, and addressed in an unfamiliar female hand, and, before reading it, he turned to the signature, immediately upon glancing at which he leaned back in his chair and laughed. He felt pleased and flattered, and liked "the girl's pluck," as he expressed it. "Now," said he, "a sweeping bow like this ought to be returned. I'll answer it;" and upon this determination he acted about a week afterwards, when he felt himself in the humor to write. "Nice girl—very" he soliloquized, as he sat down to the task, and under this impression he wrote a nice letter, the merits of which he summed up in the remark, "short and sweet." It ran thus :

LONDON, UNITED SERVICE CLUB,
December 2, 1845.

MY DEAR MADAM.—Believe me I was very much gratified by the receipt of your kind letter from New York, about the last place in the world where I supposed you to be. You say that I may have forgotten you. Why? How could I ever forget those delightful hours we spent together, in the bright moonlight, on the Calais boat. Indeed, I have often thought of you, and wondered I had never met you. I had finally concluded that you had yielded to the solicitations of some fortunate admirer, and settled down in some quiet home. But your signature tells me that the happy day has not yet come for some one. For your congratulations I return you my warmest thanks; for your courage in undertaking to read the *Army List* I am sorry that I am quite incapable of making any adequate return. It is an exploit worthy of the

lady who read *Johnson's Dictionary* and the *London Directory* all through for amusement. I need not tell you how glad I shall be to hear from you again. I am quite well, thank you. How are you? Let me know what you think of Uncle Sam.

Yours very faithfully,

JOSEPH E. COKE.

It is needless to say when this letter reached the hand of Adelaide, it occasioned her that species of satisfaction and delight which a woman always feels when she has realized her object—any thing, in fact, upon which she may have set her mind.

"This is just what I wanted; I'm so glad!" she exclaimed to herself after reading it, and she began immediately to think about answering it. "What shall I say to him?" she questioned. "Oh, I'll tell him all about my *beaux*, and my travels; and, as he wants to know something about Uncle Sam, why, I'll just write what I think. Uncle Sam won't object, I know. Will you, Uncle Sam?" and she turned as she spoke to a tolerably large-sized dog that stood watching by her, and which her sister had purchased as "a full-grown King Charles," on her first arrival in the country. To her disappointment, however, its tan spots had since become white, and while its appearance was changed to that of a terrier, its size had undergone an increase, which presented a living contradiction to the words of those who sold it.

"Only to think of him talking of my yielding to some fortunate admirer, and settling down in some quiet home. I'll quiz him about that."

The correspondence thus begun was continued on both sides with increasing warmth for more than two years, during which Miss Wilberforce had continued to live with her sister in New York. At the end of that time, however, she secretly formed the opinion that she was becoming a little *passe* in the estimation of Young America, and having a particular object in view, which the reader will shortly comprehend, she decided upon returning to Europe, hoping that the change would be for the better.

Some weeks before this, she had signified her intentions to the captain who had, by this time, become her avowed lover, and long been asking when he might expect to see her back in England.

"Now," she wrote, "I'm going to please you, and do exactly what you wish. You have been begging and praying for my return so long, that I can't refuse you. You say you love me; you ask me will I marry you. Need I answer you? Meet me at Liverpool, on the arrival of the steamer, and I'll tell you all." A lover by correspondence is not unusual. The affections may be as strongly appealed to in pen and ink as by word of mouth, and, when a woman is capable of writing a good letter, she conveys insensibly to the susceptible mind of him to whom she writes, a charm which her personal qualities might fail in producing. A man, under such circumstances, forms an exaggerated idea of the perfections of the woman who speaks to him in

happy language from afar off. Too often he longs to meet her, and when he does meet her, turns away disappointed. He falls in love with his ideal, and, when the *real* presents itself, he feels half sorry, half surprised, at his own delusion. The fascination of Adelaide's pen had won upon Joseph Coke far more than that of her tongue, and he could hardly say why. Her letters had made him think of her, and in thinking of her he had reason to love her. This is the history of many a correspondence—of many a marriage. He had changed, too, somewhat since they first met. He now felt more alone, more in want of sympathy, and, instinctively, he yearned for some ministering spirit to be to him what the mother of his child had been ; and, strange to say, among all his circle of acquaintance, there was not one that he felt could supply her place, and, at the same time, that she brought him happiness, bring him fortune. This last was, unfortunately, with him a *sine qua non*. With his affections thus disengaged, and his intentions vague and irresolute, in the absence of an object to make them clear and decided, he fastened upon his fair transatlantic correspondent, of whom he had certainly pleasant recollections, and whose effusions had fallen upon him like soft incense, making him so much in love with himself, that it was hard to resist feeling love for the charmer also, for she had a subtle way of flattering without showing it, and how could she fail in exciting admiration in return ?

When Joseph Coke received the letter, advising him of her intended departure for Liverpool, he was quartered with his regiment in London. He felt somewhat surprised at this intelligence, as well as the tone of her epistle, and began to think that he had said a little too much in his letters to her. He had not bound himself to marry her by any means ; yet she seemed to wish to convey the idea that she was returning to England entirely on his account. He would be very glad to see her, but he felt adverse to being held responsible in any way towards her, however much his own feelings might be involved. He now began to ask himself, whether he really loved her, but the fact was he did not know his own mind on the subject. "Whether I love her or not," he soliloquized, "is neither here nor there in the matter of marrying." He meant by this that he would be guided by policy and not his affections, in the choice of a wife. He, however, had no desire to break off the acquaintance, although the journey to Liverpool was a thing hardly to be contemplated.

When Miss Wilberforce arrived at Liverpool, instead of Captain Coke, she found a letter from him, which had been sent to the care of the ship agents. In it he regretted the impossibility of his coming to Liverpool, on account of his military duties, but mentioned that he had engaged rooms for her at a private house in Wimpole Street, London, where he would call and see her immediately upon hearing of her arrival.

"Ah! just what I expected," she said to herself, suppressing her disappointment. She took the first train for the metropolis, and drove from the Euston Square Station to the address given in the letter. That evening, Joseph Coke, on returning to his lodgings, found a note on his table, in her handwriting. He opened it, and found it pleasant, genial, and affectionate, full of regrets at his non-appearance at Liverpool, but expressing delight at the receipt of his letter, and the prospect of soon seeing him, and uttering not one word of reproach. This epistle agreeably surprised the captain, who had anticipated a display of coolness in consequence of his not having gone to meet her, and, late as it was (half-past nine), he called a cab and drove to Wimpole Street.

It was but natural that Adelaide should look for a greeting not altogether formal, from the man who had written to her about love and marriage, and been the virtual cause of her return to England; and, therefore, when I say that it wore the semblance of affection more than ceremony, the announcement will occasion no surprise. It is neither necessary to describe the meeting nor the conversation, in any but the most general terms. The interview was, of course, private, and much was said that would not have been spoken in the presence of a third party—a common circumstance, however, with lovers, and many who are not lovers, all the world over.

Joseph's impression was that she was as beautiful and attractive as when they had first met, nearly six years before, and, carried away by his gallantry, he, perhaps, led her to hope that the hand, which it was his secret resolution not to yield, would be hers. When he returned home that night, and reflected upon what had passed, his soliloquy was, "She's plotting to marry me, I can see, but it will never do for me to wed myself to a dowerless woman. Were she rich I might not hesitate to take her, but as it is the act would be fatal. Under these circumstances, I feel that I have done wrong, and I must simply undeceive her, as quickly as possible." But this last intention he was slow to carry out. He continued to visit her, and talk to her in nearly the same strain in which he had written, always, however, avoiding a literal promise. The purity of his motive in thus acting may, with good reason, be questioned. Considerable allowance must, however, be made for him. He was carried away by his sympathies and a fascination which he was unable to explain. There was a conflict between feeling and interest going on within him, and making love to her was congenial to him, although unstimulated by the prospect of marriage. He avoided asking himself whether there was any harm in it, and, indeed, he was very little troubled on that point. Thus day after day, and week after week, passed away.

At length, one afternoon, nearly three months

after her arrival from America, and on the occasion of one of his customary calls at her apartments, she said to him, as he took her hand in his, "Do you really love me?" Her manner was unusually pensive as she spoke, and hearing no immediate response to her question, she raised her eloquent eyes up to his, and fixed them steadily upon him. She had the look of a woman who felt that she was not loved enough by the man to whom she looked for love, and as one who had sorrowful doubts as to his ultimate intentions.

"Why, do you doubt me?" he asked. "You look sad to-day. What's the matter?"

"Nothing unusual is the matter; but I've been thinking over things this morning, and it's left me quite unhappy."

"Poor girl!" said Joseph, caressing her with an air of much compassion, "What made it think over any thing to make it feel unhappy? What can I do for it, eh?" and he grew more tender as he spoke.

"If I only felt sure," said Adelaide, wiping an incipient tear from her eye.

"Felt sure of what?"

"Of *you*," she said, with deep but subdued emphasis, "I should not be so."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" interrogated Joseph.

"I want you to do no more than you wish, but you know I'm living in London alone, and I came across the Atlantic entirely because of you."

"Ah! I'm sorry for that," said he seriously. "What a pity that I influenced you in the matter. However, it's too late to talk about that now. And so," he resumed, after a short pause, "You came across the Atlantic entirely for me. What a lucky man I am to have such a nice young lady come all the way from America to see me!"

"Yes; I'm sorry I did it now," said Adelaide, slightly piqued.

"Sorry, eh! Oh, that alters the case completely. Why are you sorry? Come, tell me."

"You ought to know why."

"Ought I, indeed?" and Joseph, faltering as he spoke, felt her words come home to him with subtle force.

"Yes," said he, "I believe that I have done wrong, unless I meant to marry you." Her claims upon him had increased, with circumstances that had very recently transpired, and he felt that he was bound to her by a moral tie, which it would be dishonorable in him to overlook. Moreover, of late he had grown more and more enamoured of her.

"Would you like to be my wife?" he asked, coaxingly, and looking down with a smile on his lips into her eyes.

"If I were your wife I should be happy."

"Would you, indeed? Oh! all right—very well. What a happy man I ought to be!" And meanwhile she had yielded to his embrace.

Joseph Coke, to do him justice, was a man

who, however much he studied interest, fully appreciated the value of principle, and who, rather than forfeit honor, would sacrifice much, but not all. He was a man of noble, as well as less worthy, motives; he was capable of being generous from impulse, and when a sense of justice overtook him, he generally yielded to the right. Had he been of more decided character, he would have been a better man, and with fewer faults than most of his species. As it was, he was capable of being either a very good or a very bad man, according to circumstances. "If then," he soliloquized that night in his own room, "I have led her to believe that I intend marrying her, and I feel that I have, and her happiness is dependent upon my doing so, cost what it may I'll do the proper thing;" and, placing the extinguisher on the candle, he retired in darkness to his couch.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ASTOUNDING LETTER.

JABEZ BUNTING was true to his word, and, on the day following his wife's disclosure, he wrote Sir Albert Coke the following letter :

LONDON, 10 GROVE TERRACE, ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
February 21, 1851.

SIR,—I am very sorry, Sir Albert, to make you acquainted with a painful fact that I only heard of, for the first time, last night. But I feel it my duty, as a Christian man, to lose no time in putting the whole case before you. My wife, sir, was a widow, named Mrs. Slater, and had three children, two of them boys, when I married her, and one of these boys, Thomas, going on seventeen, ran away last Tuesday morning, and we've heard nothing of him since. And my wife tells me now that he isn't her son, but your son's son, Master Edward, as went to the Continent after its mother died, and that she took her Tommy to you at Beechworth Hall, instead of the baby that Mister Coke gave her to nurse. And, sir, it has grieved me sorely to think that my wife could have done so wrong a thing, which she says was for the sake of having her own boy better educated and brought up than with her. I have told her it wasn't motherly, but wicked, to have done so, and she's sorry for it. I don't know how your grandson's to be found now; but likely, if we wait, he'll come back. About my wife's boy that was put in place of him, I leave it entirely to yourself, sir; but, if you wish it, I shall feel it my bounden duty to take him off your hands, although I'm only a poor man. Excuse this bad news, and the liberty I take, and accept, sir, my assurances that I will do whatever you may wish towards remedying this bad case.

I am, sir, your most humble servant,
JABEZ BUNTING.

When this epistle reached the Hall, Sir Albert Coke, and his supposed grandson, were seated alone at breakfast in the library, and the pleasant sunshine was streaming through the windows

upon the old oaken paneling of the walls, and shooting across the rimy greensward opposite, with a cheerful melting radiance, which was all the more welcome because of the keen and bracing frostiness of the morning air. No sooner had Sir Albert read the letter carefully from beginning to end, than he fixed his gaze full upon his companion, and said, "Edward, my boy, here's strange news, bad news. Read that letter," and he handed it over to him. "It's only two months since I heard of the death of Edwin, and now there's another blow for me. It's a true saying—'troubles never come alone.' " The boy's face colored as he took it, for he saw, by the baronet's manner, that some very unlooked-for intelligence had arrived. "Something has happened to my father," he ejaculated, before reading it, and looking up inquiringly into the old man's face. "No, that is not it; it's something about yourself; read;" and the boy, with a secret feeling of dread, began the perusal of the ominous letter.

"I am astounded!" exclaimed Sir Albert, before the other had read three lines of it, and this quickened the lad's apprehension. The old man watched him after this in silence. He saw his color heighten as he read, and was moved with emotion, when, on finishing its perusal, the boy burst into tears.

"Is it true?" he asked, afraid to call him *grandfather*.

"I don't know," said the old man, affection-

ately, "but whether it's true or not, it shall make no difference to you. I'll take care of you both."

Edward wiped away his tears, but a weight of sadness and disappointment oppressed him, and he felt sore vexed. His prospects in life were suddenly blighted by the disclosure of a fraud, of which he had been at once the unconscious instrument, and the innocent victim. No longer could he call the kind guardian of his youth by the name which had before been familiar to him. He felt abased, and no better than an impostor. He would rather have never lived, than that such misfortune and degradation should have overtaken him. He had a yearning to escape from the house that had so long sheltered him. He dreaded to meet the eye of the man who had been deceived by his mother. He felt himself in a false and embarrassing position. He had been usurping from his cradle the birthright of another, and his own conscience seemed to reproach him for the wrong done by his parent. Had he been less proud-spirited, he would not have suffered the pangs he did. But, as it was, he felt suddenly overwhelmed by a great and unexpected calamity.

Sir Albert's kind words were comforting, and he was grateful to him—grateful not only for those, but for the past. He would have willingly asked his forgiveness for having been the cause of his generosity being trespassed upon for nearly sixteen years, but he knew that his so

doing would have only aggravated the painful feelings under which the old gentleman already labored. To the latter, the disclosure was a source of the most bitter disappointment and regret, but he was calm, notwithstanding, and he had acquired so much affection for the boy, through constant association with him from his childhood, and the boy for him, that he felt it would be both wrong and against his own nature to change his conduct towards him. He was a man of generous impulses, and more deplored the deception that had been practiced for the boy's sake than his own. It was, however, only right that the real heir of his son should be brought to light, and the mistake corrected as soon as possible. He, therefore, decided to institute immediate inquiries, and take measures for having the case proved.

He said little more than I have chronicled at the breakfast table, but wrote to his solicitor at Hastings immediately afterwards, requesting him to come to the Hall without delay. The solicitor arrived almost as soon as the mounted messenger that conveyed the letter returned, and a private interview between Sir Albert and him at once followed. "This is what I sent to you for," said the baronet, handing the letter to the lawyer, and the latter read it carefully through.

"Well, what do you think of it?" queried the old gentleman, when the solicitor had finished its perusal, and was looking in seemingly blank wonder into the face of his client.

"Why, I think it's a trick."

"Do you mean that you doubt the truth of the statements?"

"Yes, I do. I think this Jabez Bunting wants to get you to adopt the boy that he says has run away."

"Oh, I think not; I think not. It doesn't read like it. However, I want you to go to London as early as you can, and institute personal inquiries into the matter. I'll give you the letter to take with you. What seems most important, is to find out the boy that is said to be the real Edward Coke. But, perhaps, he'll have returned home before you get there. If so, learn all you can, and bring him back with you. It's really a very distressing thing."

"Very, indeed, Sir Albert, if true; but, as I remarked before, I think it's a trumped-up case. However, I shall soon see."

This conversation was repeated with additions and variations during the remainder of the interview.

The solicitor left Hastings on the following morning for London, and, after driving to a miserable hotel in the Strand, near Charing Cross, where he took possession of a miserable room, with a bed in it, he made his toilet hastily, and, calling a Hansom cab, drove to St. John's Wood, according to the address given in the letter. As he entered the news shop, he saw a matronly woman, of about forty, behind the counter serving stationery to a little girl. He inferred that she was Mrs. Bunting.

"Oh, is your son Thomas within, Mrs. Bunting?" he asked.

"No, he is not, sir. What might you be wanting?"

"When do you expect him in?"

"Well, sir, he's been gone away five days this morning, and we don't know where he's gone to."

This tallied too well with the letter, for the solicitor to congratulate himself on the result of his diplomacy; so he changed his tone.

"I should like to have a few minutes' conversation with you, Mrs. Bunting, when you're disengaged," he then observed, upon which her suspicion that his visit had reference to her husband's letter to Sir Albert Coke was confirmed.

"Yes, sir," she said, and became very pale and nervous. The little girl having made her purchase, left the shop.

"Are you the person," he then said "who took the boy, that you said was Mr. Coke's, to Beechworth Hall?"

"Yes, sir."

"That was your own son; was it it not?" said the attorney, fixing his cold eye upon her.

"Oh sir, don't ask me!" she exclaimed, and, at the same time, burst into tears.

At that moment her husband entered the shop, from the street.

"This is the gentleman about the letter," she said, turning to him in her trouble, yet, at the same time, dreading his presence.

"Oh yes," said Mr. Bunting; "Well, sir, it's all true. My wife did a very wrong thing, but she's sorry for it now."

"You wrote this letter?" said the solicitor.

"Yes, I wrote it. I thought it my duty to write it, whatever her feelings might be. She'd no right to do what she did."

"Stop, my good man; have you any other evidence to offer; did you know any thing of the circumstance at the time?"

"Did I know any thing? No; have you read my letter? Sir, you ask me a strange question;" and Mr. Bunting raised himself to his full height, with a vulgar air of offended dignity.

The result of further conversation was, that the attorney became satisfied that the letter which brought him to London, was a genuine statement of facts.

"It's a very serious case," said he, shaking his head. "It involves a charge of obtaining money under false pretenses from Sir Albert Coke."

"It's all through you, Jabez Bunting," said the wife, crying.

Jabez rebuked her, with a stern piercing look, and the words, "Hold your tongue, will you?"

"Well," remarked the attorney, before taking his leave, and referring to the young runaway, "do what you can to find him, and I'll give notice at all the police stations" (Mrs. Bunting involuntarily shuddered at the mere mention of police) "that such a boy is missing, and have

handbills circulated, describing his person according to the information you have given me. And if you should hear any thing, write to me at once, to this address" (handing him his card) "and I'll compensate you for your trouble."

"Very well, sir, I'll do so," was Mr. Bunting's reply.

"Good-day," said the lawyer.

"Good-day, sir;" and greatly to the relief of Mrs. Bunting, he left the shop, and re-entered the cab in waiting.

CHAPTER XLII.

NEW YORK CITY.

It was near the end of March before the ship, on board of which Thomas Slater had embarked, arrived at New York.

"Now," said the captain to the boy, "do you want to go ashore, or will you go back in the ship?"

"If you please, captain, I'll go ashore," was the reply.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked the other.

For a moment, the boy hung down his head thoughtfully, and in evident embarrassment for a suitable answer.

"I'll do any thing I can get to do," he then said. "I don't want to go back to London."

"Don't want to go back, eh? Well, you can go ashore as soon as you like, and here's five dollars for you; but take care what you're about there, and mind your P's and Q's, or you'll be falling into bad company, and getting yourself into trouble."

With this parting advice, the boy left the ship, and went forth to seek his fortune in the New World unfriended and alone. He was in his seventeenth year; intelligent but uncultivated;

of strong build and medium height ; with hair of a dark curly brown ; eyes of a hazel hue, and a complexion inclining to florid. His whole personal estate was the five dollars handed him by the captain ; and he had been so unaccustomed to having money, that he looked upon it as an endless treasure. He felt, as he entered Broadway, quite jubilant and hopeful, in consequence of having such an amount of capital at his disposal. He took the five-dollar piece out of his pocket, and looked at it every few minutes in sheer admiration and delight, and even when he put it back again, his hand went with it, and kept it close company. He had no intention of immediately changing that coin, for he had, in his wisdom, filled his pockets with ship biscuit, before he came ashore, and that would suffice for him to-day, with a drink of water, which he could get anywhere. Without that golden coin, he would have felt himself miserably destitute, instead of buoyant with hope, and conscious of the power to practice the virtue of economy. His animal spirits were so abundant, that the example of a boy hanging on behind an omnibus, was instantly followed by him, and the knowledge that he was riding free of expense, afforded him supreme satisfaction. Although he was eventually forced to abandon his position, by a dexterous use of the driver's whip, coupled with a violent banging of the door, he was not in the least discouraged by the termination of the adventure, if we may judge by his immediately

directing his attention to another omnibus, from which he alighted at his own discretion near Union Square. He then attempted a solution of the question, "Where am I?" and concluded that he had better walk back again.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and brightly shone the sun. He had, at first, a disposition to walk on the sunny side of the way, but with the keen observation of a London boy, he saw that the shady side was the fashionable one, and, with five dollars in his pocket, why should he not walk on the shady side, and enjoy life? He had a rare eye for physiognomy and the beautiful, so that the chiseled beauty of Broadway did not pass without exciting a glow of pleasure and admiration in his youthful mind. He thought of the five dollars in his pocket, and skipping forward with a feeling something akin to rapture, he ejaculated, in allusion to the fair pedestrians, "Some day I'll be able to marry one of these!" and he skipped again with joy. But he was not wholly given up to idle pleasure. He had an earnest purpose in view, and that was to obtain employment, for the five dollars, he knew, would not last forever.

While in this frame of mind, he saw another boy, of about his own age, walking leisurely along, with apparently no particular object in view, for he had his hands in his pockets, and was alternately humming and whistling a tune, without the slightest regard to music.

"I say," said he, as they walked side by side, "can you tell me where I can get work?"

"Why, you're English," replied the other. "I know that. What makes you think so?" queried the adventurer.

"Why, I can tell, I guess. My father's English. When did you come here?"

"Only to-day."

"Only to-day. Oh! then you're nothing of a Yankee yet."

"No," replied the runaway, subdued by the quicker manner of the stranger.

"Oh, work's easy to be got here. What sort of work do you want?"

"Any thing," was the response. "I'm not particular what, so that I can earn a living."

"Ah! well, you'll do, I guess. You can get work almost anywhere. Ask at the stores."

"What stores?"

"Why, these stores all along Broadway, and most everywhere else. There's plenty of work, I guess."

Following this admirable advice, he made inquiries, and so far succeeded at one place, a druggist's, that he was told to call on the next morning, which he did, and was then and there engaged as errand boy, at a dollar a week, with his board and lodging. This, to him, was prosperity, indeed, and he resolved, now that he had made a beginning, to lose no opportunity of working his way up in the world.

CHAPTER XLIII.

SOLEMN VOWS.

"It must be a private marriage," said Joseph Coke, in a conversation at Adelaide's apartments, a few days later than we last left them; "for the present, at least, it must be kept secret. It would never do for my father to know that I married you. But you don't mind that, do you?"

"I'll do whatever you wish," replied Adelaide; "but, of course, I'd rather be married openly."

"Yes, very true, my dear, but we can't have every thing that we wish always in this world. It will be all the same after my father's death, or when I see an opportunity of making the thing known to him."

"Yes, but if I were a man of your age, instead of what I am, I'd like to see who'd keep me from marrying, before the world, who and when I liked. I wouldn't have their money unless I could have that much liberty."

"Very true," said Joseph, pensively, and without any particular meaning.

"We'll be married in church, I suppose," she continued.

"Oh yes; it's all the same whether we're married in church or at a registrar's office, or

in this house. Marriage is only a civil contract ; it's the easiest thing in the world."

"I've always been taught to look upon it as a sacrament ; it is so in the Catholic Church," said Adelaide.

"Oh yes, I know that ; it's all an idea. After all, what does it matter what you call it, the thing's the same. I don't wish to offend your prejudices in the least, but you must excuse me, my dear, for calling it only a civil contract, liable at any time to be dissolved by the law of divorce."

"I don't think that's right," she observed. "I think people once united ought never to be parted, save by death. Our church tells us that."

"Well, virtually, there's no divorce for the masses, on account of the cost ; but, by-and-bye, you'll find there will be a cheap divorce court established, where people will have their rings struck off by the thousand."

"Oh ! don't talk so. Come and listen to this," and she read an amusing extract from a newspaper relating to a flight to Gretna Green.

Within a few weeks from this time, Joseph Coke's regiment was ordered to Dublin, and, meanwhile, the relations between him and Adelaide had remained the same.

"You'd better come with me to Ireland," said he, "I shall feel desolate without you."

"Only on one condition," she replied.

"What is that?" He had no occasion to

inquire, but we often ask for the sake of asking.

"Have you forgotten?" and she looked up at him with a cunning but anxious smile.

"No, I have not forgotten," he answered, musingly. "When shall it take place?"

"Whenever you like, my dear," and she took his hand in hers.

"Well, I was thinking it would be better to wait till I get to Ireland, and after that there need be no delay. Are you agreeable?"

She nodded assent.

A week after his departure for Dublin, she followed him by appointment, and took possession of apartments that he had secured for her in Mountjoy Square. Here he visited her daily till after the lapse of a month, when he obtained a short furlough. He had previously decided that the ceremony should be performed at some retired country chapel, where the requisite privacy could be secured, and it had been arranged between them that they were to leave town together. Accordingly, on the 3d of February, 1849, they repaired to Navan, a small inland town, on the banks of the river Boyne, at its junction with a stream called the Blackwater, in the county of Meath, and there, at the hotel, they engaged a suite of two rooms—a parlor and bedroom. On the day following their arrival, Joseph called upon the parish priest, one Father Duffy, and made arrangements with him for their marriage, to take place on the next day.

"You're both good Catholics, I suppose," said the priest.

"I hope so," said Joseph, and the other was satisfied.

"That's a wild boy, I know," soliloquized the latter, after his interview with Joseph, "or else why would he want a private marriage? But it's not for me to refuse the sacrament, and he's a liberal gentleman after all." Joseph had given him five pounds in advance.

At two o'clock on the afternoon named, Joseph and Adelaide walked from the hotel to the chapel, where, according to arrangement, Father Duffy was in waiting to unite them in the bonds of holy wedlock. The former closed the chapel door, and the two proceeded to the altar, at which Adelaide was the first to kneel. The priest, who wore a soutane, took his position in front of them, within the rails, and uttered a short exhortation, following which he said to Joseph, who had given the name of William Morgan, "Will you take Adelaide Wilberforce, the lady here present, to be your lawful wife?"

"I will," was the answer, in a clear but subdued voice.

Then, turning to Adelaide, he said, "Will you take William Morgan, the gentleman here present, to be your lawful husband?"

"I will," was the solemn response. The priest then repeated, from memory, the words by which the man takes the woman to be his wedded wife till death doth them part, and

Joseph repeated those words after him, with sonorous distinctness. Adelaide did the same in her turn. This completed the marriage contract, and, indeed, the whole sacrament of matrimony. Joseph now took from his waistcoat pocket a wedding ring, and placed it on his bride's finger, the latter, however, being in no way an essential part of the marriage ceremony, it being the mutual consent *per verba de presenti* which makes the contracting parties man and wife. The priest then uttered another brief exhortation, after which Adelaide asked him, in the presence of her husband, to enter the marriage in his private registry.

"I have none," said he, "but the public parochial registry."

"Ah, that will not do," she replied, "as it might expose our secret."

Both then went towards the door of the chapel, but Joseph turned back, and handed the priest a five-pound note.

"What's this for? Sure you paid the fee before," inquired the reverend father.

"For your trouble, and thank you," replied the bridegroom, at the same time shaking his hand; and immediately afterwards the newly wedded couple left the chapel. To all this, by the express desire of both, there were no witnesses.

The reader will probably feel surprised when I say that Joseph Coke felt himself no more married to Adelaide Wilberforce after the per-

formance of this ceremony by Father Duffy than he was before it occurred. He simply felt that he was morally, and not legally, tied to her ; for he was aware of an important fact, of which she was in ignorance, namely, that a marriage between a Protestant and a Roman Catholic, solemnized by a priest of the latter faith in Ireland, without their having been previously married in the Protestant Church, is by law invalid, and, as he was a Protestant, and she was a Catholic, the case was clear. It is a vile enactment, and the sooner it is amended the better.

Joseph kept this knowledge secret, and quieted the qualms of his own conscience by the simple reflection that what is not known is not felt, a form of consolation which might be easily employed by any knave who has reduced his dishonest practices to such a system that discovery may never take place.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE HEIRESS.

WHEN Sir Albert received the letter penned by Jabez Bunting, which created so much sensation at the Hall, he lost no time in conveying intelligence of the circumstances which it disclosed to his son Joseph, who still remained quartered with his regiment in Dublin. Its astounding effect upon the latter may be easily imagined. "This is romance in real life, with a vengeance," he remarked, after the first shock of surprise had passed away, and he remained doubtful whether to believe or disbelieve the story. "It may be only an attempt to get a child adopted, or to extort money, for all I know," he soliloquized; "but, if it is true, by the Lord Harry, I'll make them suffer."

It was a great blow for him to even hear that he had been the victim of a cheat and a delusion, by supposing the child of another to be his own, and that one his only son. If the statement of Jabez Bunting was true, it was a bitter disappointment; if false, it might be hard to prove its falsity, and thus a doubt would be thrown over the parentage of the boy, which would be exceedingly painful and embarrassing. He received the letter at the barracks at Kilmainham,

and, before replying to it, resolved to consult Adelaide. She was now residing very privately in a cottage of her own at Rathmines, under the name of Mrs. Coke ; and Joseph, although nominally living at the barracks as a single man, passed most of his leisure hours with her every day, and was known to the two female servants that were kept, as "the master." This arrangement worked with tolerable comfort, although the necessity for keeping her marriage secret precluded Adelaide from all society, beyond her husband's. But she was patient, under the assurance that it would not be for long. As it was, if any of his fellow-officers knew of his daily visits, they were accounted for by a reasonable supposition that the circumstances were not exactly what they were. To relieve the monotony of her life, however, she had a child, which was now nearly a year old, and upon which she doted with all the ardor that a mother commonly feels for her first-born. It was her joy, her pride, her solace. She would have been miserable without it ; but with it, the narrow limits of her home were a sufficient world for her enjoyment. With the birth of that child she had become more domestic and attached than ever, and she loved the father more for its sake. It is so with nearly all marriages, and where there is no fruit, there is disappointment.

Joseph read the letter to her early in the afternoon of the day upon which he received it, and,

at its conclusion, put the question, "Now do you believe it?"

"Let me look at it," she replied, and, after scanning it carefully over, returned it with the remark, "I'm afraid so."

"Well, what do you think I'd better do?" asked Joseph, after they had talked the matter over. "I think the best plan would be for me to go over and see about it."

"Yes, perhaps so."

"Well, would you like to come with me as far as London, or stay here?"

"Stay here."

"Very well, I'll see about leave to-morrow; and, meanwhile, I'll answer this letter, and say that I'm coming."

When Joseph arrived at the Hall, he found the boy shy and dejected. He was sorry to see this, and endeavored to cheer him.

"Come, Robert, my boy," he said, addressing him; "you must not look so. What's the matter?"

The boy burst into tears, and buried his head in the breast of him whom, from childhood, he had believed to be his father.

Joseph was touched, but summoned resolution enough to say, "Come, come, this won't do. Tell me what you're crying for?"

"The letter," he sobbed.

"Oh, nonsense! What good will crying do? It's no fault of yours. Go and wash your face, and think no more about it."

" Well, has any thing been heard of the missing boy in London ?" asked Joseph of his father.

" Nothing as yet," was the reply ; " but I've offered a reward of twenty pounds for any information about him, and it's likely that he'll turn up before long."

" It's an unfortunate thing, certainly. I suppose there's no doubt about its being true ?"

" No, I should think not, from all I can learn from Atkinson, my attorney, who went to see about it. But you've only yourself to blame, Joseph. You ought not to have placed yourself in such a position that you had to leave the country, and you ought to have made better choice of the person to whom you entrusted your child."

" Yes, I know all that, but the thing's done, and the question is, what should I do now ?"

" Well, the only thing you can do is to remedy the mistake, or I should say the fraud, by restoring your own child to his proper place, and making up for his neglected education, by sending him to some good school at once. As for the boy here, I'll see that he's provided for."

" Well, we must find him first, and take care of him afterwards. But I shall not feel perfectly sure, in my own mind, of the truth of that letter, till I see the woman and the other boy. What I propose doing is, to take Robert up to London with me to-morrow, so that when I go to see this Mrs. Bunting I may have him with me. If I could get the two boys together before

her, I think, like Solomon, I might prove the case to my satisfaction. As it is, however, I have not much doubt that she was the liar and deceiver that she acknowledges herself, and the more I look at the boy in the house here, the more I feel that conviction strengthened, and wish the woman hung that made him the instrument of such an infamous cheat.

"Well, well," said Sir Albert, "what's done can't be undone. You must make the best of what is, and, perhaps, all will come right in the long run. There's nothing bad that might not be worse in this world."

"I feel very sad about it," said Joseph, with a sigh, and, on the next day, he left with the boy for London. There he had several unpleasant and somewhat stormy interviews with Mrs. Bunting, which only convinced him of the truth of her confession, and made him more hopeless of finding the missing youth. The search, however, would be kept up, and, meanwhile, he would trust to time and circumstances. As for a prosecution it was useless.

It was near the end of the month of March, and the upper ten thousand of England were preparing for the opening of the London season. Joseph availed himself of the opportunity of calling upon some of his old friends. At the house of one of these he met one whom he had not seen since girlhood. She was now twenty-eight, graceful, intelligent, accomplished, travelled, moderately beautiful, unmarried, and, better

than all, in the eyes of Joseph Ebenezer Coke,
AN HEIRESS !

He was glad to meet her. Indeed, I may say, he was delighted. He liked her in every way, and that was more than he could have said of more than one other woman he had ever known, and she was gone to "that bourne whence no traveller returns, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." He was, moreover, sanguine that he had only to ask in order to receive. He flattered himself that he was an attractive widower, and he knew the effect of a prospective title upon a woman's mind when the question of marriage had to be decided. He resolved to propose.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FATAL DISCOVERY.

SEVEN months after this, Joseph Coke, who had meanwhile become a major, or, as he himself phrased it, attained his *major-ity*, returned with his regiment to London. Adelaide remained behind, in the cottage at Rathmines. Previous to Joseph's departure from Ireland, a coolness had arisen between them, in consequence of his neglect. She had therefore chosen to remain where she was to come to England. A separation had taken place, but she only regarded it as temporary. It was partly a matter of pique on her side, and dignity, as she thought, on his. Time would heal the breach, and, meanwhile, she could endure living alone. Whenever she chose, she had the power of divulging the secret of her marriage, yet she would not do any thing to injure Joseph, however bad his conduct might be, so long as there was hope of reconciliation, and he contributed to the support of herself and child. She had no suspicions that her marriage with him was illegal, for she remained in ignorance of the obnoxious law which made it so, and she was still less suspicious that he would repudiate her and marry another. She

received two or three letters from him after his departure, but these were distinguished by little warmth of character, and referred chiefly to her child and pecuniary matters.

Three months had hardly elapsed before she grew wearied of her lonely life, and resolved to leave Ireland. With this view she caused the cottage furniture to be sold by auction, and, accompanied by her child and nurse, she found herself, a few days afterwards, in London. She was compelled to stay at a hotel, in the first instance, owing to the difficulty of procuring lodgings of a suitable character. She was averse to going back to her old apartments because an explanation, involving a disclosure of her marriage, would have been necessary. She felt embarrassed, weary, and grief-worn, and on the morning following her arrival decided to write to Joseph, informing him of her arrival. She knew her note would be a surprise to him, for she had said nothing previously of her intention to return to London. This epistle, which was addressed to the barracks, at Knightsbridge, did not reach the hand of Joseph till the morning afterwards. Meanwhile, Adelaide had called at the house in Wimpole Street, where she had formerly resided. The landlady was a genial, buxom widow, of the fat, fair, and forty type, and Adelaide felt that she was the only person in London to whom she could confide her secret, if ever she found herself in a position when the disclosure would become necessary.

"How altered you are!" said the landlady, a person remarkable for her candor, after the how-do-you-do's of the day had been exchanged.

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I do, indeed. You're getting quite stout. I'd have thought it was five years since I last saw you."

"Ah! I'm getting old, you see, Mrs. Needham."

"Well, I was disappointed about the captain and you," she remarked, with a sudden change of tone.

"Why? In what respect?" inquired Adelaide.

"Well, I always thought it was to be a match."

Adelaide felt embarrassed. Had Mrs. Needham then heard any thing, and what could it be?

"It took me quite by surprise, when I read of his marriage the other day."

"Whose marriage?" asked Adelaide spasmodically, and rising from her seat.

"Why, Major Coke's. Didn't you know of it?"

"No! No! It CAN'T BE. No! No!" and Adelaide flung herself hysterically into the arms of the landlady, and burst into a flood of tears.

"My dear Miss Wilberforce," said the other, endeavoring to pacify her, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I wouldn't have told you for the world, if I'd known."

Adelaide sobbed louder at the mention of her own maiden name.

"Is it true?" she asked, raising herself up,

and fixing her eyes earnestly upon her informant.

"Yes, of course ; I thought you knew all about it. It was among the marriages in the *Times*."

"Where is it ? show it me !" she demanded, with impassioned emphasis.

"Well, it's six weeks since I saw it, and I don't know that I can find the paper. But I'll go and see, if you stop crying."

"Yes, go ; never mind me," and Adelaide made an effort to recover herself.

Mrs. Needham was successful, and, in a few minutes afterwards, returned with a copy of the *Times* of the 21st December, 1851, in which she pointed to the following advertisement :

"At St. Pancras Church, on the 19th instant, by the Rev. James Cuthbert, Joseph Ebenezer Coke, only surviving son of Sir Albert Coke, Bart., of Beechworth Hall, Sussex, Major Coldstream Guards, to Fanny, only daughter of the late John Smith, banker, of the city of London."

Adelaide clutched the paper nervously, and read with anxious interest—read as if her life depended upon the result. She had no sooner done so, than it fell from her hand, her face grew blanched, and she sank with a stifled shriek to the floor.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE FAMILY HISTORY REVEALED.

THE young adventurer from St. John's Wood was naturally aspiring, and the effect of American institutions was to increase that tendency. The drug store in which he found employment suggested to him the medical profession, for which he determined to study. With this view he left the shop, after three years' service, and became assistant to a surgeon, who compounded his own prescriptions, and who, in consideration of hard work and small pay, instructed him so far in medical science, that, by close study of books and other aids at his command, he was enabled, in the year 1858, to obtain a surgeon's diploma at the New York Medical College.

He felt proud of the distinction, but, after a brief experience, saw little prospect of making a fortune by it, or even a fair living. He took a basement office in Ninth Street, and put over its entrance a large tin plate, with DR. SLATER painted thereon in large letters, and there he patiently awaited the arrival of patients who never came. He sat before a table furnished with pen, ink, and paper, and occasionally he scribbled on the latter for mere pastime. He had some idea of writing medical books, for the

purpose of making himself known in the profession, by which he meant re-writing books that had been written by wiser men long before. He also entertained a belief that he was something of a poet, and thought it would be an original stroke of genius to write a grand alliterative poem, in which, not only every word, but every syllable should begin with the same letter, but he never succeeded in getting beyond the first line :

“ Let lovely lilies line Lee’s lonely lane.”

He had further a taste for fiction, and thought there was no harm in trying his hand at a story, which, after completion, he submitted to a publisher. Before doing so, however, he made a diligent search for a Greek quotation for the title page. He selected Greek, because he thought it looked very learned, and being known only to the few, of which he was certainly not one, it mattered little whether or not his quotation was as apt as he wished it to be. He therefore embellished his manuscript with one second-hand from Homer, but, not knowing this last fact, he assigned the authorship to Hesiod, which he took care to write ‘*ΗΣΙΟΔΟΣ*’.

*οῆμά τέ οἱ χεύωσιν ἐπὶ πλατεῖ ‘Ελλησπόντῳ·
καὶ ποτε τίς εἴπησι καὶ δρυγόνων ἀνθρώπων,
ηὗτ πολυκλήιδι πλέων ἐπὶ οὖνοπα πόντον·
ἀνδρὸς μὲν τὸδε σῆμα πάλαι κατατεθητῶτος,
ὅν ποτ’ ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτανε φαίδημος· Εκτῷρ.*

The sight of these mysterious characters ap-

peared to produce any thing but a favorable effect upon the mind of the publisher, who observed : "This is Latin ; isn't it?"

"No, sir ; Greek."

"Well, it's all the same. Our people would be afraid to look at a book with that on the title page. But you can leave it till to-morrow." The author had then the pleasure of hearing it declined. "The tale is a little too heavy to go down with the public," was the remark of the publisher, when pressed for the reason of his doing so.

"Why, I should have thought that would have been the very reason why it would go down. Kites with heavy tails go down, you know."

"Ah, you're witty, you're witty!" was the rejoinder.

As a last resort, he tried to get married, and to a lady not altogether without fortune. He therefore cultivated his acquaintance with "up-town people," to the verge of affection, and lost no opportunity of procuring an introduction into respectable families. He was indiscreet enough, on one occasion, when making an evening call upon a young lady in Fourth Avenue, who had reason to believe that he was very much in love with her, and with whom he was seated alone, to say : "I would not marry any body unless she had money, or into whose parents' house I could not afterwards come to live."

"Well," said she, naively, and to his great

surprise, "I don't know whether we could make room for you here ; but, if you like, I'll ask mamma."

He felt very much embarrassed to reply, as may be imagined, but what could he do ? There was no getting out of it. He felt that it would be awkward to say that he didn't mean *her parents'* house, and, moreover, he was not quite certain but that theirs would do as well as any other. He therefore passed it over agreeably, as a capital joke.

"Will you?" said he ; "that's a good girl. But, remember, I didn't mean it."

The end of it was, that they became husband and wife very shortly afterwards, and he moved his office from the basement in Ninth Street to the basement of the house of his mother-in-law, where he enjoyed the felicity of living rent free, and soon got into what he called a capital practice. Thus time wore on, till the war of secession began, and when the loyal millions of the North arose as one man, to defend the honor of that flag which was outraged at Fort Sumter, Thomas Slater rose with them, and volunteered for the national army, and denounced in unmeasured language, alike with all around him, every enemy of the Union. "This flag has sheltered me, this flag will I protect," were his words, "and, if necessary, with my blood."

A fierce determination took possession of the popular mind ; it was to "whip" back the rebellious South, and neither money nor men were

found wanting for the emergency. A people that exhibited apparent apathy before the commencement of hostilities on the 12th of April, in Charleston Harbor, suddenly fired up with a patriotic enthusiasm, that astonished the South as much as it did the world. The Southern leaders had miscalculated Northern feeling. They thought they had only to take possession of Washington, and establish a military government there, in order to intimidate the whole North. But they soon discovered their mistake; yet, foiled in their schemes, resolved on the desperate struggle which made America resound with the din of arms and shed the blood of tens of thousands of her sons. The question arises, Why was this war of brother against brother not prevented? and the answer is, because the Abolitionists of the North, disregarding the premonitory symptoms of revolution, turned a deaf ear to every suggestion in favor of compromise, and allowed the storm to overtake them, without a single effort to avert the disaster. Up to its actual occurrence, they obstinately refused to believe that it would ever occur. They thought it a freak of madness, to talk of the South rising in arms against the North, and they treated the matter as little better than a joke, till events proved it a stern reality, and the day for compromise had passed. Thus, both North and South miscalculated, and behold the bitter fruits!

Thomas Slater became Surgeon to the Seventy-first Regiment of New York, which was one

of the first that volunteered under the three months' service call. It was equipped with great haste, and dispatched to Washington by way of Annapolis, the route through Baltimore being uncertain for the time being.

It was not until they were on board the transport steamer that Mr. Slater became intimately acquainted with one of the lieutenants, a young man of about his own age, with whom he had previously only exchanged a nod.

"We're both Englishmen, I think," observed the lieutenant.

"Oh, I thought so; I'm glad of it! What part of England do you come from?" inquired the other.

"Well, I've lived in Sussex mostly, but I was born in London, so I hardly know whether to call myself a Sussex man or a Londoner."

"Oh, what matter! It will be all the same a hundred years hence. I'm a Londoner myself, but London never did me any good."

"Is it long since you left the old country?" asked the lieutenant.

"Oh, yes; I left in the early part of '51."

"You were young then?"

"Yes; especially to come out on my own hook."

"Why, how was that?" asked the other, evidently deeply interested in the conversation, and who appeared to have an object in every question he put.

"Well, I ran away to sea, and glad I was to

get away from the old rascal of a stepfather, who drove me to it. He was a Methodist, too, the _____."

Mr. Slater silenced his imprecation.

"Did he live at St. John's Wood?" inquired the lieutenant.

His companion eyed him with amazement.

"He did."

"Was he a bookseller and news-vender, and used you to carry out the papers?"

The surgeon felt astounded, and a little ashamed of his antecedents. Who could the lieutenant be? Was he practicing mere guess-work, or did he really know something about the shop at St. John's Wood? He was certain that he had never seen his face before, but it was, nevertheless, possible that he might have been one of the neighbors or customers of Jabez Bunting. He, therefore, asked, without replying to the question,

"Why? Did you ever live at St. John's Wood?"

"Never."

"Then what do you know of me?"

"Was your stepfather's name Jabez Bunting?" asked the lieutenant, fixing his eye upon him.

Mr. Slater upon this felt convinced that his interrogator knew more than he had given him credit for. There could be no guess-work about the name of Jabez Bunting. He therefore candidly answered, "It was."

"You are doubtless surprised at my asking

you these questions, Dr. Slater, but your name, your age, and your description of your early life aroused my curiosity, and gave me good reason to do so. I know more about you than you know about me, and far more than you think."

The listener regarded the speaker with a look of intense interest, not altogether free from perplexity.

"The fact is, that you and I exchanged cradles in our infancy, and I ought to have been Thomas Slater, and you ought to have been Edward Coke."

The surgeon felt dumbfounded and mystified.

"Who are you, then?" asked the latter.

"Did you ever hear that Mrs. Slater—I'll not call her your mother—was once the nurse of the grandson of Sir Albert Coke?"

If his companion had been a dog he would have pricked up his ears.

"No, not exactly; but I've a faint recollection of the name. I remember my mother once saying, she'd send me to old Sir Albert, and I thought at the time she meant the old gentleman of Hades, or, to phrase it less politely, the —."

His companion took his pipe out of his mouth and laughed aloud. There was a flush of excitement on both faces.

"Well, when we were both infants, at the same breast, my mother substituted me for you. Your father, Joseph Coke, was abroad at the time, but your grandfather, who had never seen you, wrote

to Mrs. Slater, telling her to bring his son's child to his residence, Beechworth Hall. The idea then struck her to perpetrate this deception, for the sake of getting her own child adopted by Sir Albert. She took me, and left you. When your father returned to England, a few weeks afterwards, I had the small-pox, and when he saw me after my recovery, he merely said, 'How altered he is,' and attributed the change in appearance to my recent illness, without the slightest suspicion of the trick that had been played. Well, nothing was heard of this till one morning, in the spring of 1850—nearly fifteen years afterwards!—when Sir Albert received a letter from my mother's second husband, Jabez Bunting, disclosing the whole thing. You may imagine how I felt; we were at breakfast at the time, and the last morsel I attempted to swallow almost choked me.

"But are you sure that all this is true?" asked the other, whose wondering mind was hardly reconciled to a belief in the strange story.

"Perfectly sure. There's not the slightest doubt about it, or else you would not see me here. It's proved beyond question. My mother confessed all."

The expression of the surgeon's countenance rather indicated painful than pleasant surprise; a natural result of his reflecting more upon what he had lost in his youth than what he was likely to gain in his manhood.

"That was hard luck for me; but there's one

thing that lessens my regret, and that is, that you escaped the life that fell to my lot. I say that because I see you're a good fellow. Tell me, though, how did it all end?"

" Well, I was never happy at the Hall after that. Instead of having a private tutor, I asked to be sent to a public school, or to be allowed to enter some lawyer's or merchant's office, where I might be in a fair way to earn my own living. When Captain Coke came over from Ireland, to investigate the affair, I felt more guilty than my mother, and was ashamed to look him in the face ; but he was as affectionate as ever, and there was no change in the conduct of Sir Albert towards me.

" A month or two after that, he sent me, as his own grandson, to a clergyman's academy at Hastings, and I remained there a year. Then he wanted me to go to Eton, but I told him I'd rather go to sea, and, to make a long story short, he obtained a midshipman's place for me, in the Peninsular and Oriental Co's service. I served first on the China Station, then the Indian, and then the Australian, and rose to be third officer. But I got tired of it after six years, and resigned. That was on my return to England, at the beginning of '58. I had saved some money by that time, and could afford to look about me. During my absence, I received many letters from Sir Albert, and two or three from Major Coke—he had received his promotion before I left England—and I had answered them all. Several times,

in these letters, they had asked me to return home and study for some profession, but I felt better away under the circumstances. But when I returned, they both received me as affectionately as if I had really been the son of the one and the grandson of the other. The major was living in London then, and had retired from the army, but Sir Albert still remained, leading the same quiet life, at the Hall, reading and writing poetry, and improving the estate and the condition of the tenantry, and doing all the good he could for every body."

"Is his wife living?"

"Oh, no! That's a melancholy story. She ran away with a Mr. Cunningham, a London barrister, before Sir Albert succeeded to the title. They lived for a long time on the Continent after that, before they returned to England; and then, while on a voyage from Liverpool to Glasgow, on board the steamer Orion, the vessel struck on some rocks and sunk. Most of the passengers were drowned, and these among them. Ah! that marriage embittered Sir Albert's life more than any thing else in this world! She was his cousin too. But it's a long affair; and such a romantic history all through!"

The speaker then gave a hurried outline of this history, beginning with the flight from Cheltenham and the wreck on the Wicklow coast; the particulars of which he had learned from time to time from Sir Albert and others.

The surgeon grew more and more amazed.

A thought suddenly flashed upon him, and he exclaimed, with nervous apprehension,

" OH ! WHERE IS MY MOTHER ? Is she dead ?"

" Yes ; she died before you were sent out to be nursed with me—when you were only eight months old."

The listener hung down his head, and tears gushed from both his eyes. A tender chord had been touched, and he found it hard to restrain his emotion. Imagination had carried him back to his infancy—to his mother's arms, and brought vividly before him what he had lost and suffered by her death ! Alas, that a child should ever lose the natural blessing of a mother's love ! although, unhappily, some mothers are without any. There is nothing earthly that can replace it, and I feel bitterly as I write, for I myself have experienced that mournful loss.

" Have I any brothers or sisters, do you know ?"

" No ; you were the first and only child of your mother, and your father had no children by his second marriage."

" His second marriage !" repeated the other.

" Yes ; he was married again in 1851, to a Miss Smith, daughter of a London banker. She was an heiress."

" Where are they now ?"

" Still living in London ; 23 Cumberland Street, Hyde Park. Your father will be exceedingly glad to know that you're in the land of the living. He had quite given you up."

"I must go and see him after we return."

"If we ever do return," interposed the lieutenant; "but you can write. I'll write and tell him I've discovered you."

"Yes, that you may do. How long is it since you saw him?"

"Well, I was going to finish my story. I remained only four months in England that time, but before leaving I called at Jabez Bunting's shop for the sake of seeing my mother, and a nice scene we had on the occasion, I can tell you! I gave her such a lecture as son never gave mother before; and old Bunting declared that she deserved it all."

"Oh! and what did they say about me?" asked the other, with much curiosity.

"They said they'd given you up a long time, and thought you were dead."

"What did they think of my running away?"

"Why, that was what led to Mrs. Bunting telling her husband all about the affair, and his writing to Sir Albert. Then a lawyer was sent from Hastings to London to see about you, and find you out. A reward was offered for information of you, and police notices describing you were posted all about London."

"By Jove! And I was not found, I suppose? I should have thought Mrs. Bunting or somebody else might have tried the trick a second time, and found some other boy who would have done instead. That would have been the perfection of art, eh? But, go on with your story."

" Well, there's not much more to be said. Both Sir Albert and the major suggested that I should read for the bar, but I had no inclination for study, or a sedentary life, so I came out as passenger to this country to see what was to be done, for I found the field too crowded in England. I began to look about me as soon as I arrived in New York, and read the advertisements in the *Herald* every day, to see if there was any thing likely to suit me in the way of a partnership or speculation. I advertised, too, and, finally, paid five hundred dollars for a half share in the real estate patent right and general brokerage business. A little while after that, I took a third share in an ale and porter brewery in Centre Street, and so, between them, they kept me pretty busy. But the brewery didn't pay, and I sold out. I then began to think I might be doing better. I heard people saying, 'the merchants are our aristocracy here,' and I said, as that is the case, what is the use of going in for any thing second class. I answered an advertisement for a partner, with a thousand dollars capital, in a well-established mercantile business, and nearly decided to accept the chance, when I found out that the *merchant* I was dealing with was in arrears with his landlord, and in more than one place for his board, at six dollars a week. After that I met with a decent fellow, who treated me very fairly. I gave him six hundred dollars for a half share, and we traded as *Taylor & Coke, Merchants.* We

drove a rattling business till within six months ago, when we had to suspend payment. We compromised afterwards for ten cents in the dollar, and dissolved partnership. My interest in the agency still continues, but I'll be happy to sell it you cheap. When the war broke out, I determined to stand by the Union, so I paid the expenses of recruiting a lot of men, for the sake of getting a commission, and here I am First Lieutenant Edward Coke, of the Seventy-First Regiment U. S. Militia, and I mean to fight too. I learnt the broad-sword exercise when I was a lad, and I'm no bad hand at a shot."

" You appear to have had a hand at every thing ; to have been a sort of Jack-of-all-trades. You've never married, I suppose ?"

" No, not exactly ; that pleasure's to come. Have you ?"

" Oh, yes ; nearly two years ago."

" Well done, old fellow ; I congratulate you ! Any children ?"

" Yes, one ; a fine little fellow, ten months old."

The surgeon then gave a brief narrative of his career in the New World, after which the conversation reverted to the old ground.

" Then you've not been to England since you first came over ?"

" No ; but I've received letters from both Sir Albert and the major," answered the lieutenant.

" When did you hear last ?"

" About a year and a quarter ago."

"Then you don't know what may have happened in the mean time."

"No ; but I should have heard, I think, if any event of importance had occurred."

"Give me your hand," said the surgeon. "I never knew so much about myself before. The whole thing seems like a dream. But I'm glad you have told me my history—glad to have met you. And how singular it all is ! They may well say, 'truth is often stranger than fiction.'"

When the surgeon awoke from his short and disturbed slumbers early on the following morning, the strange story of the preceding evening seemed to his imagination still more like the vagrant fancies of a dream.

CHAPTER XLVII.

REMORSE.

WHEN Joseph Coke received the note which Mrs. Needham, the landlady, dispatched to him by one of her servants, immediately after the sudden illness of her visitor, he came to the house without delay.

The first words the landlady uttered were, "Poor thing—the doctor says she won't recover!"

She led Joseph into a small bedroom on the ground floor, where Adelaide lay. She was cold and insensible. Her limbs were rapidly becoming rigid, and the film of death was gathering over her eyes. Joseph averted his head from the painful sight, and, overcome by remorse, heaved a heavy sigh, and wept. A sense of wrong oppressed him, from which there was no escape. He saw the tender victim of his own injustice, and trembled at the sight.

"It was all through hearing of your marriage," repeated the landlady.

"Hush!" said he, starting at the mere mention of the fact in the presence of the dying one. It was too much for him to bear. It made his conscience writhe in suppressed fear and agony.

Something impelled him to draw near the bed-

side, but he struggled against it in sheer dread. At last, a low moan fell upon his ear, and thrilled through his veins. The blood rushed to his head, and almost curdled as it went ; his lips became compressed, and, with a sudden spasmodic effort at resolution, he advanced to the sufferer's side, and clasped her nearest hand. It had a strange, heavy, icy, lifeless touch, but his grasp tightened as he held it and bent over the body. There was another low, sepulchral moan, a feeble gasp, and all was over ! Joseph, with a look of terror, felt the change, relaxed his hold, and, afraid to look at the face of the corpse, ejaculated, with emotion,

“ I can stand this no longer ! ” and staggered out of the room.

With her death perished the secret of her marriage.

“ Of sackcloth was her wedding garment made ;
Her bridal’s fruit is ashes ! ”

Two days afterwards, a hearse and coach moved away from the same house to the Kensal Green Cemetery. A melancholy figure in black was the sole occupant of the one ; a coffin, on which was inscribed *Adelaide Wilberforce*, of the other. Thus the destroyer followed his victim to the grave. But let us not judge him too harshly—he repented.

On the same day, the nurse of the departed found her way to his house, to tell him that her mistress was missing. He told her the missing

one was dead, and made arrangements for her to take lodgings, and keep the child till he sent for it.

He then went to his wife, and said, candidly, "Fanny, when we married I had a child. Its mother is just dead, and I must find a home for it. I'll not ask you to find one, but I'll be glad of your advice. I speak of it more because I think it better that its existence should be known to you than for any other reason. You're not angry with me, are you?"

"No, I'm not angry with you for telling me, but——"

"Well, don't say any more; I'll explain——."

There was a cloud that almost burst into a squall, but a long calm and pleasant sunshine succeeded.

Meanwhile the child followed its mother to the grave. They lie apart in death, but a beautiful idea tells us that in spirit they are together. What a sublime mystery is that, and how grand is the prospect of eternity. *In caelo quies*—it is a happy reflection.

And what, reader, do you think of Joseph Coke? It is a question perhaps better left unasked. If I were to attempt an analysis of his motives, his impulses, his passions—to sum up in a word, his character, I should give no truer idea of the man than his acts have already conveyed. He was weak, selfish, unprincipled, and with little power of self-control. He had formed no habits of mental discipline, no settled

opinions upon the influence of morals over society and the individual, and he thought little of the duty owed by the latter to the former, or indeed of the common responsibilities of life. But I am afraid that, deficient as he was in these important respects, there are many millions like him. We are all more or less creatures of circumstances, and the unconscious slaves of our own evil natures. It is a grand but an exceptional thing to have a heart and understanding capable of rising to a proper conception and practice of our real duties in life, and so to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. But, while truth and honesty are gems that adorn their possessor, falsehood and injustice, that tend only to deface and degrade the character, are unfortunately preferred. It is a melancholy combination of human wickedness and folly. It is the way of the world however, and the world is full of all uncharitableness.

“ I have not loved the world, nor the world me,
But let us part fair foes ; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive
And virtues which are merciful ; nor weave
Snares for the failing ; I would also deem
O'er other's griefs that some sincerely grieve ;
That two or one are almost what they seem—
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream !”

Joseph Coke was a man blind to consequences, and as much subject to the caprice of every idle thought and circumstance as a feather is at the mercy of the gale.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE BATTLE.

IT was two o'clock on the morning of Sunday, July 21, 1861, when that portion of the army of the United States encamped at Centreville, in the State of Virginia, moved forward on the high road towards Manassas Junction. The moon was shedding her silver radiance far and wide, giving a look of bright tranquillity even to a scene astir with armed men, and as these, with measured tread, passed over the hill leading to the plain, beyond which lay the intended field of battle, their glistening bayonets, and compact columns presented a strange, weird, and imposing spectacle. The troops marched with an alacrity and enthusiasm which showed that they had something more than a soldier's common interest in the cause. It needed no one to tell that it was a patriot army. The Union was in every man's heart. A New York regiment led the advance, and another New York regiment, the Seventy-first, followed. The two that we know well were there. The march was slow and cautious after descending into the plain, for ravine succeeded ravine, and suspicious-looking clumps of bushes were neither few nor far between.

An hour after daybreak there was a halt, to

allow of rest and refreshment, after which the march was resumed. As a large clump of woodland covering a hill-side was approached, a heavy piece of artillery was sent on in advance, to throw one or two 32 pounders, by way of a feeler, but there was no response. The army—infantry, artillery, cavalry, a truly picturesque sight—advanced in a long and glittering line, which the eye could trace back to the town of Centreville, yet it extended still further. The bayonets glistened brightly against the clear background of the sky, the colors of the regiments flaunted gayly in the warm sunlight, the horses seemed to sniff the battle afar off. Over all, “music arose, with its voluptuous swell.”

At about nine o'clock, and when six miles from Centreville, a masked battery was encountered in a wheat-field, and the artillery at once met and soon silenced its guns. A retreat covered by infantry, and a sharp musketry fire ensued, but the engagement partook only of the character of a skirmish, with slight loss on either side. It, however, proved to be the commencement of a great battle, for just then another division of the army engaged the secession batteries at another point, and from that time the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry became incessant.

The atmosphere was hot, oppressive, sultry, and the sun shed his lustrous beams over the dry and baking earth.

At the discharge of the field-pieces the roads,

for miles around, threw up their dust in dense columns, which floated heavily through the air, choking and blinding both men and horses. As the day advanced the engagement became more general, and the firing quicker and louder; clouds of smoke darkened the field of battle, and, instead of the clear sunshine, a lurid radiance flashed athwart the prospect. The iron hail from the masked batteries carried death right and left into the Federal ranks, and these, in their turn, threw back, with fierce energy and terrible effect, the missiles of destruction, and the hot blood of the combatants made red the green herbage of their common country. The scene became terrific, and, under a less galling fire and more equal conditions, the legions of the First Napoleon once gave way to panic and fled.

The Secessionist troops occupied strongly entrenched positions behind batteries of rifled cannon, which were charged again and again by the Union army, but as fast as the enemy were dislodged at one point, they reappeared at another. Their guns, as well as their numbers and position, it was evident, were greatly superior to those of the Federal army, and they used them to the best advantage. In the face of all this, the gallant defenders of the Union fought with heroic courage.

The news of the battle had spread for many miles in all directions, and the roads in the neighborhood of Centreville were thronged with excited spectators.

Let us now view more closely this terrible spectacle of war, and listen yet more attentively to those angry, surging waves of battle which ebb and flow over the hitherto peaceful fields. The fight is raging in an open valley, sweeping down to the South, with a hill about a hundred feet high on either side, and the Blue Ridge Mountains rising to the right in the distance, and forming a dark background. The enemy's line extends over a distance of about eight miles, and, in nearly a crescent form. The batteries are so much concealed by the woods that cover the entire length of the southern position, that they are only to be marked by the curling smoke that issues from them at every discharge of their guns.

We see piles of dead and dying men, and some who have been shot in the lungs vomiting blood, and springing pitifully from the ground in their efforts to regain their breath; and struggling and crippled horses, that raise their heads as we pass, and, with dilated nostrils, cast a mournful look at their wounds. We see troops in action so exhausted, that their tongues actually hang out of their mouths. Their canteens are empty, and whenever any of their number discover a rill or moist place, they, in their distressing thirst, may be seen to throw themselves down, and lick the moisture from the wet earth. We see the Fifth Regiment enter the valley, and deploy to the right towards a slight knoll, then fall flat on their faces, while the shot from the bat-

teries passes over them in a dense volley. A battery, drawn by galloping horses, sweeps past them, to take a position. The regiment follows at a double quick.

Rifle-cannon shot, shells, and bullets fly thick and fast around us. We climb a tree to escape the danger, and in order to have an unobstructed view of the whole line. We can now see into the Southern entrenchments, where the men look like bees in a hive ; we can see the officers riding about, while the various columns are moving into position. Their batteries to the right and left are so completely masked, that even now we can only distinguish them by the flash of their guns. Occasionally a spent cannon-ball comes bounding over the ground near the tree, and a whiz and a crack in the branches reminds us that we are not beyond the reach of rifle-shot. A battery commences firing about thirty rods on our right, and we can see its shells exploding within the Southern entrenchments. The Union men cheer, and continue firing with great rapidity for an hour.

Glancing over the field, men and horses can be seen to fall near the Federal guns, and the infantry lines to open, as the cannon-balls speed on their errand of destruction. The valley for nearly half a mile in front of the Southern works is filled with infantry, extending to a patch of woodland on our right. The Union batteries occupy various eminences on the flank and rear, changing their positions from time to

time. The fire from the Union lines in this valley is tremendous, and, as they continue slowly advancing, firing, retreating to load, and then advancing again, the sight is terribly exciting.

For three long hours this fire has been sustained, and whenever any of the enemy show themselves on the flanks, they are driven back with slaughter. During all this time, too, the Union army has been subjected to a cross-fire from the Southern infantry stationed in the woods on our left. But hush! hark! The Union flag is displayed in these woods, and men from the Southern ranks call out, "Don't fire this way." There is sudden silence and sensation. The Union troops draw up towards the "Stars and Stripes," upon which the Secession flag is thrown out, and an unexpected volley is poured into their midst. They are driven back, but regain their ground again, and a fierce fire ensues.

A battery now moves forward at full speed, and takes a position near a house on our right. The Fire Zouaves are ordered to its support, But look! new masked batteries open fire upon it, and a quick shower of musketry comes from the same direction almost simultaneously. The artillery are driven back, and many of the men and horses killed. The Zouaves stand their ground, however, firing in lines, and falling on their faces to load. But troubles never come alone. Out dash the Black Horse Cavalry, and charge furiously with uplifted sabres. The

Zouaves meet them with a single fire of their muskets, and then rush upon them with their bayonets. See, some of them are dragging the riders from their saddles, and stabbing them with their knives, then, hurling them to the ground, they mount their chargers, and gallop over the field! What a wild, fierce conflict is this! The cavalry corps is cut to pieces, and few escape. But watch that horseman. See, he is in pursuit of an officer on foot! He fires, and shouts "Surrender!" The ball grazes the head of the pursued, who, at the same moment, makes a desperate spring into a clump of trees. The baffled trooper rides round to intercept him at another point, but the officer meanwhile succeeds in loading his piece, and, when the horseman appears, he fires, and the other falls sidewise, dragging the saddle with him, and the frightened horse gallops off with its dead rider dangling from the stirrups. The survivor of the two we know well. Let us look at him. Yes; it is Surgeon Slater of the Seventy-first. Hurrah! And what of Lieutenant Coke, where is he? His regiment has been all day in the thickest of the fight, and he is a brave fellow, and never shrinks from danger.

We have now been in the tree about two hours, and during all this time the wounded were being carried past into the rear. Yet still they come. The soldiers in couples with their muskets crossed move slowly on, bearing their wounded companions between them. But not always in this way, for here come two with a mortally

wounded officer in their arms. He is in convulsions and writhing in his last agonies. Another soldier has his arm round the neck of a wounded man, and the two are walking slowly towards the nearest hospital relief, the blood trickling from one of them at every step. This part of the battle scene is the most affecting of all. We find it hard to restrain our tears, for it is impossible not to feel, and feel acutely, for our suffering fellow-men.

We descend the tree, and tread our way over the field, to the left, while the bullets whistle and shells burst across our path, and the cannon-balls plough the ground in every direction. A musket-ball whizzes past our ear, so near that we feel the heat, and for a moment think we are hit. The ground is strewn with broken guns, swords, cartridge-boxes, haversacks, blankets, gun carriages, and much beside, all mingled with the wounded and the dead. Here lies a horse, and his rider under him, both killed by the one cannon-ball. Groans and cries for help are heard as we pass, and the scene is enough to appal the stoutest heart. Bearing off to the right, we skirt some low pine woods, where the corpses and wounded of the Secessionists may be counted to the number of nearly a hundred. Those of the Union army are fewer and in front. We see a few Northern men searching the bodies of their former adversaries for knives, revolvers, and money. One of these is in the act of counting some dollars just taken from a dead Carolin-

ian. We see a wounded Southerner at the same moment raise himself up, point his revolver at him, and fire. There is a sudden cry, and the dollars drop from the man's hand as he falls back dead. The next instant a shot from a Northern musket hastens the end of the other, and, in sheer vengeance a bowie knife is plunged into his heart. All this is terrible to witness.

Passing through these pine woods, towards the Federal centre, and addressing a cheering word to the wounded as we go, we observe a splendid black horse nibbling the leaves of a tree, and with one fore-leg shot off as clean as if cut with a knife, and bleeding in a stream. Dangling from the stirrups is its dead rider—a tall, handsome man, in a dark blue uniform, with a colonel's eagle on the shoulder. The picture is too pitiable for us to linger over. Alas, that such are the horrors of war, and especially of such a war as this!

Returning to our former position, we watch the ambulances conveying their loads of wounded to the hospital headquarters. From these blood flows like water from an ice-cart, and the mutilated limbs protruding from the rear have no semblance of humanity. It is now four o'clock, and the firing on neither side is as vigorous as it has been. But let us turn aside from this terrible scene, and look upon a picture, painful indeed, but comparatively tranquil.

In a low white frame house on the road-side, about half a mile from the scene of hostilities,

shelter for the wounded has been found. It is the house of a plain Virginia farmer, but he has not unwillingly yielded to the necessities of the war, which have converted it into a hospital. It was only a few hours ago pleasantly sheltered by trees, environed by a garden of blooming flowers, and separated from the outer world by rough but neat white palings. The presiding angel of the house is the farmer's eldest daughter, Emma, who, although a born Southerner, is now to be seen endeavoring to allay the sufferings of Northern soldiers with as much tender care and assiduity as if they had been always near and dear to her through life. She is a sweet girl, of not more than twenty, with dark lustrous eyes, brown, glossy, and abundant hair, a finely moulded and amply developed figure, and a complexion almost pale, clear, and transparent, with a full, ripe, and voluptuous lip.

She is naturally of a gay and merry disposition, but her mind and manner have now subsided into a calm, sympathetic, yet active, thoughtfulness. She goes about breathing words of hope and comfort to the despairing, and cheering with her consolation the last moments of the dying. She turns aside to wipe away a tear from time to time, but she summons fortitude enough to remain faithful to her task, and it is a severe test for a girl of her unsophisticated and sensitive nature. She feels all the woman in her aroused as she gazes on the scene around. It appeals irresistibly to her sympathies, and her

[REDACTED] only wish is, that she could do more, and save [REDACTED] as well as comfort.

[REDACTED] The bedrooms, the kitchen, the parlor, the [REDACTED] porch, and the shade under the trees, are filled [REDACTED] with wounded men, some moaning sadly, some [REDACTED] bearing their agony in heroic silence, and occasionally one asking faintly for a cup of water. Meanwhile, the surgeons, assisted by the old Virginian and his daughter, are busily employed in binding, trepanning, amputating, probing, and soothing. The whole family could not be more assiduous than they are, in relieving the miseries of this fearful day. The soldiers have broken in the fence, and overrun the house, and they are to be seen crawling round the well nearly opposite the front door. The flowers are no longer blooming in the garden, and loading the air with their sweet odors. They are trampled under foot by the troops, but, crushed and broken, they yet exhale a little of their former fragrance.

Alas, that what were rose-beds in the morning, should be turned into death-beds so soon ! We can count nearly fifty dead and wounded on the green sward, and can distinguish the former by their haversacks being drawn over their faces. The living utter loud groans, and some of them writhe in horrible contortions. We see among them men with both legs shot off, others with a thigh shot away, others, again, with horribly burnt flesh wounds, made by shells, and one fast bleeding to death from a large gaping wound in his back. They lie so thick, that we can

hardly step between them, and every step is in blood. As we walk among them some beseech us to kill them, and terminate their agony ; some are gasping feebly ; one is praying to Heaven and the Redeemer ; another is articulating mournfully the name of his fond but absent wife ; and another calls vainly for a surgeon, for there are here only three surgeons to attend all. We feel the blood chilling in our veins, and, for a moment, turn aside with an involuntary shudder, for the dying convulsions of these strong men are agonizing to behold.

Another sufferer is being carried into the grounds by a private and corporal. His features are pallid, and besmeared with blood, and he is evidently unconscious. He is, moreover, bleeding copiously from a severe flesh wound. Who is he ? "He's one of the Seventy-first."

We press forward, and bending over the body, recognize the first lieutenant. Alas, that he should have come to this ! But who comes next ? Thanks to Providence, it is another surgeon, and he is the doubly welcome Thomas Slater. He is just in time to save, for he himself has escaped unhurt, beyond a slight confusion of the ear, from the shot fired by the horseman.

At this moment, and after more than eight hours' hard fighting, a great rushing sound is heard in the midst of the cannon's roar. All eyes and ears, even those of the wounded, are turned towards the field of battle, and faces flush

at the thought of victory or defeat. Nearer and nearer it comes—wild, impetuous, thunder-like—and a few excited and nearly breathless civilians leap over the prostrate fences. “What’s the matter, any thing happened?” “Oh yes; after we’d won the day, fresh troops, far outnumbering ours, were led against us. Our artillery’s ammunition was exhausted in the previous contest, and it was ordered to the rear to replenish. As the caissons were rushing at full speed to the rear for this purpose, the movement was construed by the teamsters and lookers-on into a defeat, and now there’s a panic.”

The words are hardly out of the speaker’s mouth, when a shot from a rifle-cannon strikes the house, carrying death and ruin in its course. It has torn through one of the lower rooms killing one of the surgeons, and the patient over whom he was leaning. “Heavens and earth! what will become of us?” exclaims the old Virginian. And the groans and cries of the wounded mingle in a wild, distracting wail.

Of the rest, let history tell.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE INTELLIGENCE REACHES LONDON.

"WELL, the boy has turned up at last," exclaimed Major Coke to his wife, with great emphasis, one Monday morning, at breakfast, after he had glanced over the first few lines of a letter from the United States. "I'm very glad of that. By Jove, it's the most wonderful thing in the world. He's a surgeon in the American army. I must write, and tell him to come home at once."

The wife listened with surprise and interest. "Dear me!" she remarked; "how was he found?"

The major satisfied her natural curiosity by reading the letter to her. It was from the first lieutenant, and dated at Washington, a few days after his arrival there from New York, and contained an inclosure from the surgeon in which he identified himself with the boy missing from St. John's Wood.

"I wonder what my father will say to this?" he queried. "I've a good mind to go to him to-night, or what do you say Fanny to my going to America?"

"Oh, don't think of such a thing; what use would there be in you're going? Write and await an answer to your letter."

"Yes, yes. Well, I'll do so. Isn't it extraordinary? The history of our family would make one of the strangest romances I know of. It abounds in wonderful surprises, and startling situations, like a Surrey melo-drama. If I were to write it all down, nobody that didn't know the facts would believe it."

"Only to think of his becoming a surgeon! I wonder what put physic into his head, and how he succeeded in getting on so well in the world. But I suppose that's the way they do things in America. And married! Oh dear! That's the worst part of the business!" The delight of the father at having discovered his heir was, as a matter of course, much greater than that of the wife at having found a step-son.

The result of the major's deliberations was, that he telegraphed the intelligence to his father at the Hall, in advance of a letter from America on the subject, which reached him on the following morning. He then sat down and wrote letters to both the lieutenant and the surgeon, requesting them to return to England as speedily as possible.

The surprise and emotion of Sir Albert, on hearing the news, were fully as great as that of his son, and he fairly cried under the effect.

"What," said he, "the poor boy found alive after all this time! Poor boy! Poor boy! God bless him! And both in the United States Militia too. That these two should have ever come together, is the strangest thing in the world.

If one had been a magnet, and the other steel, they couldn't have been attracted closer to each other. Well, well, one lives to learn! Wonderful things occur now-a-days." He sent to Hastings for his attorney, the same that we have met before, to consult with without delay.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the baronet, after the other had perused the intelligence.

"What do I think of it? I think it's a hoax, or, if it isn't, I'm sure it's a trick to swindle you out of money. They'll want you to send funds to bring them across the Atlantic, and when that's done, you'll never hear any thing more about them."

"Oh, I don't think that. Remember you said the same thing when that letter came from Jabez Bunting."

"Well, I'm not so sure that I wasn't right, after all. Who knows? I've seen too much not to know an attempt at fraud when I see it. I'm a man of experience, as you know Sir Albert, and you'll excuse me when I say that I can see as far into a millstone as most people. Take my word for it, that they mean to cheat you."

From this fragment of conversation, it will be seen that people of experience sometimes become so very knowing in their own estimation that they suspect every thing and every body, and, following the maxim which tells them to believe every man a rogue, till they prove him honest, they do more harm and injustice to the

world, and are themselves often more egregiously mistaken, and absolutely defeated by their own precautionary machinations, than any victim of ignorance, folly, and stupidity it would be possible to pick out of a crowd. *Moral*—Believe a man honest, till you prove him a rogue. Otherwise, you do your fellow-man a wanton injustice, and we know the proverb—“ Give a dog a bad name and hang him.” If we ourselves wish to be respected, we must respect others.

*Oὐ αὐτῶν κακὰ τείχει ἀνῆρ ἄλλως κακὰ τείχων.
Ἡ δὲ κακὴ βουλὴ τῶν βούλευσαντις κακίστη.*

CHAPTER L.

THE ROMANCE OF WAR.

ITS term of service having expired, the Seventy-first returned to New York, and its members were disbanded on the 26th of July, but neither the first lieutenant nor the surgeon came with it. The former remained under the tender care of the farmer's daughter in the shattered house, and the latter lingered there to attend to his wounded companion. You may wonder that the lieutenant survived the shock which left him bleeding and insensible, but some of us are very tenacious of life, and it is not always those who appear most hopeless in condition that are really so.

Edward Coke recovered his consciousness soon after we last left him, and in the midst of a troubled and painful scene. He had merely been stunned, but he was weak from loss of blood, and his wound required careful dressing. The surgeon attended him with the most affectionate zeal, and second only in value were the attentions of the farmer's daughter. Second indeed! They were only second in value at first. Afterwards, they were—at least to the sufferer—every thing, and it is saying little, when I assure the

reader that they contributed greatly to his rapid convalescence, for the effect of the mind upon the body, especially during sickness, is, we well know, all-powerful. His mind centred upon her.

"What a fortunate man I am," he soliloquized, "to have such a beautiful angel to nurse me in this hour of peril and tribulation! I don't know what I should have done but for her."

"Emma, will you marry me, if I recover?" he said, one afternoon, nearly a week after he had been carried to the house, and raising his eyes to hers, with a gentle expression of endearment.

"Will you, Emma?" he repeated in a soft, loving voice. "Tell me. I think I should be so happy with you. I shall be able to take care of you then instead of you taking care of me. And I feel so lonely and desolate in the world, that I don't care to go into it again unless you come with me. Will you come, my dear? say yes, do, that's a darling. You don't mind my asking you, do you? eh?"

Emma was bashful, and felt embarrassed to reply. She affected not to treat the matter in earnest, but she yielded her hand.

"You'll give me this, won't you? Come, say yes, and make me happy."

She made an evasive answer, and told him to wait till he was well, and he would think better of what he had been saying. It almost chilled his heart to hear this, for he felt warmly in love with her, but a moment's reflection convinced him

that he had only to press his suit in order to be accepted.

"I might make a better marriage, as regards money and connections, I know ; but really, I feel so much in love with her, and she's such a kind, good, gentle creature too ! I'd give the world for her !"

Emma attended him faithfully and devotedly till he regained health and strength sufficient to proceed to Washington.

"Let's all go together," said he ; and it was arranged that the farmer should accompany his daughter to the Federal Capital, and there surrender her. To whom ? To Lieutenant Coke ; for it was settled that he was to have her. They had both a sincere affection for each other, and never, perhaps, did a wedding cause fewer regrets than theirs. It took place in the presence of a party of friends, in the city on the Potomac, and within a month from the day of the battle.

In this brief chronicle is included a long tale of love, and joy, and gratitude : and, humble as was the bride of the gallant soldier, he could not have found in this wide world a soul more capable than hers of responding to his own, or of making him feel the real happiness of married life. She was to him a congenial spirit, and he was to her all that she ever wished for. Happy couple ! Would that all the world were the same !

After this event, little time was lost in prepar-

ing for the trip to Europe. The letters from both Sir Albert and the major were becoming more and more urgent in requesting the return of the heir and his discoverer ; and now that both were released from military service, there was no obstacle in the way of their making the voyage. Moreover, Edward thought it would be of great benefit in restoring him to his former health and strength, and Thomas was of course eager to become the acknowledged heir of his father, and the sooner the better. Meanwhile, they retained the names by which they were generally known, and it was arranged that the wives of both should accompany them ; just in order that they might not lose the pleasure of each other's genial society, and that the ladies, as well as the gentlemen, might share in the enjoyment of a sea change.

"Travelling is expensive," said one of them, "but, never mind, it's paid for."

The major had remitted £100, towards paying the expenses of the journey ; a circumstance which the two men looked upon as the most satisfactory proof in the world that they would be heartily welcomed on the other side of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER LI.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

"WELL, we're off at last," said the bridegroom to the surgeon, on the 14th of September, as the Arago steamed away from pier No. 7, in the North River, on her voyage towards Southampton. Both families were on board—the bride, and the mother and her child being seated together conversing on deck, and the former appearing to regard the baby with that species of affectionate joy which a young wife is alone capable of feeling.

They gazed with emotions akin to sadness on the tall receding church spires that rose, as the Pyramids rise from the desert, over the Empire City, while the Union flags, from their pinnacles, seemed to wave a long good-bye to them all.

"Adieu, adieu!" exclaimed the surgeon's wife, as if in answer to the distant signals, and true as an echo to her imagination; and she raised her arm, and her handkerchief fluttered in the breeze as she spoke. It was her native city that she was leaving behind for the first time, and it might be forever. She turned to take a last look at the fading glories of the prospect. She endeavored to penetrate with a long, long gaze the mouth of the Hudson, and she fancied that

she could see almost as far as the Palisades, but it was her memory, and not her eyesight, that carried her so far. She lingered for moments, and as if those moments were hours, upon the steeple of Trinity. Her eye swept the lengthy city from the Battery to Murray Hill, with all its variety of architecture, and its crowded warehouses, and wharves lining the water-side. A long series of pleasant recollections crowded upon her, as she gazed. The bay was thickly dotted with vessels of all sizes, and almost every country, and ferry-boats were shooting to and fro between the city and various points of Staten Island and New Jersey, loaded with the busy actors in this great drama of life. As the vessel sped on its watery way, the forest of masts, stretching further than the eye could reach, up the East River, gave a fresh charm to the picture, and, turning to the other side, the white villas on Brooklyn Heights decked out the distance. The sun, in his noon tide glory, gave equally, to land and water, the passing splendor of his beams.

Grand, magnificent, sublime, divine orb! which nations have worshiped, through all time, as the King of the universe! What is the world without the sun? As man without woman, as night without day, as sorrow without joy, and death without life!

Onward — onward — till the sky is a dusky vault, and not a penciling of land pierces the horizon.

"The burning of that steamer you were on board of must have been an awful thing," said the surgeon to his companion that night, as they sat together smoking.

"Yes; more terrible than you can easily imagine, I can tell you," replied the other.

"You've never told me exactly how it was; at least, you've not described it to me. Now, I should think, with your graphic style, you might make a splendid picture out of that."

"Well, if you want further particulars, as the handbills say, I'll give you them. It was just this way;" and Edward Coke delivered his narrative in something like the following language :

'Ten days after crossing the equatorial line, we encountered a heavy gale from the north-east, which gradually increased during the two days following, when it blew a perfect hurricane, through which we labored under bare poles, that is, what remained of them, for our topmasts had been carried away with a crash at the outset. The wind veered to the southwest, and the hurricane subsided into a moderate gale by noon on the third day, while the vessel rolled deeply almost yard-arm to yard-arm in a heavy sea. It was three o'clock, and we were at dinner. Suddenly an alarm of fire was raised. A general rush on to the deck took place almost simultaneously, and smoke was seen issuing from the forehatch. The captain and chief officer, and myself, followed by

several of the crew and passengers, at once descended, in the endeavor to reach the seat of the fire, which was supposed to be of spontaneous origin among the cargo in the forehold ; but in a few minutes the smoke became so dense and suffocating, that we were driven up the hatchway again. Orders were given for all the passengers to assemble on deck. The forehatch was then closed, with the exception of two holes of about two feet square, one on each side of the hatch. Through these the hose-pipes of the engine-pump were put without delay, and all hands, crew and passengers, relay after relay, commenced working the engine-pump. Down soured a torrent of seawater from over the lee bow, and every man toiled with an energy little short of desperation. All sails except the main-top were taken in. For some time the smoke did not increase, and we confidently expected to be able to extinguish the fire ; but, after the lapse of half an hour, it became evident that the water did not reach the actual seat of the conflagration, and therefore that our only alternative and chance of preservation was to smother it. Quickly all the blankets, shawls, plaids, and woollen apparel in the cabins, were eagerly placed at our disposal ; and with these we entirely covered the hatchway, while the forecastle and forward parts of the vessel were stuffed up with old sails and such like. There was much anxious consternation on board, but no exhibition of frenzy ; the danger was not yet

made fully palpable ; and although the cheeks of many were blanched, and their hearts beat rapidly with fear and emotion, the feelings which raged within were outwardly suppressed. Still the suspense was agonizing.

'Meanwhile, the captain had hauled up the courses, and put the vessel before the wind, and had got the boats provisioned and ready to lower away at a moment's notice. The women and children, about seventy in number, were removed to the poop, where the captain had placed a quantity of old sails, carpets, and cushions, in order to make them as comfortable as possible under such terrible circumstances. The sun set dimly, and darkness took the place of light. It was in the month of January, and very cold. All that long and dreadful night, both passengers and crew continued to work without intermission, pumping tons of water down the hatches and fore part of the vessel ; holes were also cut in the deck, and other engine-pumps and buckets were set to work in the general pouring of water into the hold. The captain remained on deck during the whole time, cheering all hands, and bestowing words of hope and consolation on the ladies. I could not but admire his calm courage, surrounded as he was on the poop by so many weeping women and children. His assurance was, "We shall soon be all safe in the boats." I thought this small comfort at the best, and begged to assure them that it was all a mistake about the ship

being on fire ; it was merely something in the ship that had spontaneously taken to smouldering, which would soon either die a natural death or be compulsively drowned. I followed up this easy view of the case by administering every three hours a dose of port wine or cognac to each fair subject, according to age and constitution, which was attended with a corresponding return of good spirits on her part, and, as a matter of consequence, of much gratification on mine. I thought it very likely I should be a dead man within a few hours, and that very likely all would meet with a similar fate. But what of that ? I was not daunted by the prospect of death. There were plenty to survive me ; the world would never miss my shadow ; why then should I not enjoy life till the last minute ? I prepared to do so, and sung "*For now's the time to be jolly,*" with much gusto, and an effect which was very cheering to the majority, but which was much complained of by the ship's chaplain, who had just been exhorting every body to prepare for death. Certainly, our respective lines of conduct were very opposite ; but it was an unmistakable fact, nevertheless, that my mode of treatment was infinitely better than his in the cause of order, and as an incentive to every exertion being made to save the ship. Most of the passengers were, however, for a long time ignorant of the full extent of their real danger ; but the more intelligent of those on board knew that we were at

least seven hundred miles from the nearest land—that the ship's boats could not carry more than half our number—and that the sea was so high that no boat could be launched in safety; nor yet, if got clear of the vessel, could long live, heavy laden as it would necessarily be; we knew that our only chance of rescue was that of being picked up by some passing vessel. But then we had to combat with the painful fact that we were now out of the beaten track, the route of all ships—we were too far south—and we felt and struggled against the direful knowledge that in all human probability our destruction was certain, and simply a matter to take place a few hours sooner or later than we might suppose, and as the relentless hand of destiny might determine. Still we worked without flinching; but towards morning it became evident to all that very soon our efforts would be in vain; for, judging by the dense smoke now, finding its way into the first and second cabins, the fire was working its way sternwise among the cargo in the afterhold. The doors, windows, and other outlets of the second cabin were caulked up, and the seams of the bulkhead and doors of some of the state rooms in the poop-cabin pasted over with newspapers. The wings of morning overtook us, and brightly, gladly, rose the sun. Even this was a comfort and a joy, as hope-imbuing as it was beautiful; but, alas! it contrasted bitterly with our own dismal wretchedness and worse future. Men and

women wept and prayed again, and wavered between hope and despair ; now agitated with fear and by the prospect of an immediate and frightful death ; now gloomily lost in a ghastly resignation, looking out on the heaving ocean as their inevitable grave. The memory of the past came up in vivid distinctness before the minds of many, and made them more than ever tenacious of that life they were likely so soon to lose. What agony was pictured in the anxious countenances I saw ; what tumult of thought, what convulsive desperation here, and passive woe there ; what clutching of children to the maternal breast ; and, among the elder of the men, what restless, flashing eyes, and looks of exhausted strength and half-famished ferocity I can well remember ! I shall never forget that scene by sunrise ! My flesh almost creeps—my blood nigh curdles when I think of it !

' Still the sea ran high, and still we scudded before the wind, and still we worked with the energy of despair ; for now all felt that there was but little hope for us. At about noon the foreyard came down at a run, instantaneously killing one of the crew and breaking the shoulder-bone and otherwise wounding one of the steerage passengers. Many of those at work were now falling out from the engine and pumps, completely knocked up with the heat, smoke, and incessant toil. During our short spells of breathing-time how eagerly we scanned the ocean, you can well imagine. Several times I

found myself looking far away to where sky and ocean met like lovers' lips on the placid horizon, eager in the search for some faint penciling of a sail. But in vain! There was evidently no hope for us; and many—I among the number—became perfectly resigned to their fate, and awaited the final catastrophe with a firm composure. Once or twice, however, I instinctively gazed and started at the seeming sight of a sail; but another glance too sadly told me that it was only the sun lighting up the crest of some distant wave. The smoke and heat were now so suffocating and unbearable that we were driven from the topgallant forecastle, on which we had up to this time continued to pour water, and were unable to remain forward of the foremast; the decks also became very hot, and we expected every moment to see the flames burst through the bows; we were, too, in some dread of the foremast giving way, which would have precipitated our fate, as in its fall it must have torn up part of the deck through which the flames would then have burst upon us. Several including the captain and myself, pitched over bottles, containing papers whereon was briefly detailed the latitude and longitude, and our wretched condition and prospects. After this some of us went into the saloon to get something to eat; but no set meal had been served since the outbreak of the fire. I felt very wearied, and I remember having begged to be excused for my tarred appearance—my hands, face, and

clothes being covered with soot ; the captain also apologized for the manner in which he broke the preserved meat, that and biscuits constituting our repast ; so much for our politeness on the occasion. Although eating what we believed would be our last meal, we were all calm and even cheerful. The majority of those on board, especially the ladies, had eaten little or nothing since the first alarm of the ship being on fire. Horror had from the first overcome appetite, and many were laboring, fatigued, and emaciated, under the influence of strong nervous excitement, which it was painful to witness. Many had bidden good-bye to the world, and shaken hands with all they knew on board, convinced that they would stand no chance in the scramble for the boats ; they surrendered themselves to die without even a struggle, and remained seated in silence on the deck, with faces towards the ocean, looking grim and deathlike, on its dark and rolling waters.

“ Suddenly we were startled with the cry of “ A sail! a sail!” and instantaneously it was echoed along the ship. We were all on deck in an instant. Well I remember how I looked to windward, and how ill and disappointed I felt when, at the first eager glance I failed to perceive any thing, not even a penciling on the horizon ; nothing but the watery waste, and here and there a dark cloud hovering afar off. And vividly do I recall how at last we all saw the sail, a filmy speck to the naked eye, but gradu-

ally bearing down upon us. The rays of the sun just then shone out upon her. Some wept hysterically, and cheered, and prayed, and laughed, and clasped each other's hands, and cheered again. Rough stalwart fellows hugged each other, and wept like children ; and men who had probably never prayed before, muttered sincere and holy words. Those who had preserved the greatest indifference when death seemed so near, were now completely overcome. The whole scene was indescribable. I shook hands with at least a hundred, many of them rude, untutored men, but who had worked with exalted courage in the hour of danger, and who were as intense in their feelings of thankfulness as the best of us. Suddenly the flames burst through the fore hatchways. Women screamed, and men rushed about in dismay. The men, who had just been pausing at the pumps, were driven from their posts by the assailing element, and all was shouting and confusion. Dense volumes of smoke, through which streamed a tongue of fire, rolled along the decks, adding to the consternation, and enveloping those on the main deck in momentary darkness. The order was given to lower the boats. The excitement, fear, and suspense became dreadful. One woman took hold of and clutched me in a wild embrace, as of one drowning, and so fainted, still retaining her rigid grasp, with her head thrown back, and her hair streaming in disorder. Looking over the stern, I saw the body of a man rise to

the surface and sink again, after which he was seen no more ; he had just plunged overboard, maddened and despairing. Some bold fellow I saw swimming after him. A moment afterwards I ascertained it was his son. The ship still steamed onwards, her head now directed towards the approaching sail. Nothing could be done to save either father or son, so they both perished, unregarded, in the midst of the terrible scene. Every body was anxiously, desperately, endeavoring to secure his own safety. But God was for us all. The burning vessel was now stopped. The women and children were at once provided for in the boats, and lowered in safety from the after gangway. The flames came up steadily and with increasing force, bursting through the forecastle, but not yet spreading aft. The long boat was now lowered, with a full living freight. It was swamped immediately on reaching the water, and all on board, save three, perished. This was owing to the gear getting out of order, and so causing a delay of fifteen minutes in lowering the second life-boat to their assistance.

'The sea was still running very heavily, and the wind again blowing half a gale. By this time the vessel, which had been bearing steadily towards us since our sighting her, was almost within speaking distance, and evidently preparing to receive on board those already in the boats.

'We rent the air with a loud cheer from the

deck of the burning ship, which was heartily returned by those on board the sailing vessel.

' My recollections grow dim as I tell of my own escape from the scene of conflagration. All was hurry and excitement in getting away ; and on reaching the other vessel, the jolly-boat, in which we were, was dashed heavily against the ship's side, staving in her timbers and causing her to fill so quickly, that I had barely time to clutch the rope-ladder depending from the ship's side before she sunk, leaving me in the water holding on. I, however, soon pulled myself up, and made room for others to do the same, although two of our party, were drowned.

' No sooner were we on board, than every want was supplied, every attention bestowed upon us, as far as the resources of the ship would permit. The vessel proved to be an English barque, bound to the Mauritius.

' By seven o'clock in the evening, all the survivors were on board, the man wounded by the falling of the yard-arm excepted, who was reported to have been left in so helpless a state that his removal, as the sea was then running, would have only accelerated by a few minutes his inevitable death. I was exceedingly sorry to hear this, and would have gone back to the burning ship in the endeavor to find him, had I been allowed a boat; but in all probability he was then burnt up, as the flames had spread over the entire ship as far as the after-cabin, and were stealing rapidly towards the stern ; the foremast

and mainmast had already fallen, and the fire blazed high and bright, illuminating the heavens, and throwing out showers of sparks. Her bows were burnt down to within a few feet of the water-mark, and the gale was every moment urging on the devouring element in its lurid work of destruction. A few of those in the first cabin saved some portion of their luggage not in the hold, but the whole of the other passengers and the crew lost everything—there not being sufficient boat accommodation, nor time to allow of the saving of any thing but life. But all were very thankful for their deliverance. It was not till nearly midnight that the mizenmast went over the side; by that time the vessel was burnt down nearly to the watermark, from the mainmast forward, and after that she began blazing with renewed vigor, the flames bursting through the stern, which was soon carried away. I could not resist a feeling of horror creeping over me, as I saw this, the grandest scene in the progress of the fire, and thought of the poor fellow who had been left to his fate in one of the berths of that cabin; although, he had doubtless been eaten up by the flames hours before.

'In an hour afterwards, during which time I had remained on deck, steadily watching the burning wreck, it was suddenly removed from my view. At that moment it had sunk. This was the last scene in the tragedy of the ship on fire! After that all was darkness.

Twelve days afterwards, both speaker and listener were in Southampton.

"England," exclaimed the surgeon, with true British feeling, as he stepped ashore, "with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

"Ditto for me," said the other; "for, although I've been breaking the Queen's proclamation, by getting myself half killed in America, I'm as true as the compass to my native land! much as I've been away from it since my mother kindly sent me out for adoption. But, poor old soul, I forgive her. I'm sure she did it all for my sake—to make a fine gentleman of me, as she said, and I'm a beauty, I'm sure!"

"Ah, you're a queer fellow!" and his companion laughed as he spoke. "Come on to the telegraph office," and the two went to announce their arrival to Major Coke in London.

CHAPTER LII.

THE LAST LINKS IN THE CHAIN.

ON their arrival in London, the party drove to a hotel at Charing Cross, from which the foster-brothers, immediately after securing rooms, proceeded to the house of Major Coke, who was at home, awaiting their coming.

The visitors were ushered into the dining-room, where they found him alone.

"Oh, how do you do, Robert? I'm glad to see you!" he said, advancing, and shaking him warmly by the hand; but at the same time fixing his eye full upon the other.

He was on the point of exclaiming "Is this him?" when Edward said,

"Allow me to introduce your long lost son," and the surgeon and the father simultaneously advanced a step, and their hands met. A slight pallor and tremor of the lip was visible in the countenance of the latter, while the color of the former heightened under the embarrassment of his peculiar position.

"I'm glad to have found you," said the major; "a thing I had despaired of, I can assure you, after all these years. You have been made aware of the singular circumstances attending

your infancy, and the way in which their discovery took place, and, therefore, can imagine what we all felt about you. But you're at home at last, thank God, and I welcome you both."

"Thank you, sir," responded the surgeon. "I feel very sorry that you should have suffered so much anxiety on my account; but I ran away to sea because my home at Jabez Bunting's

"Ah! poor man! I've just heard of his death," interrupted the father.

"His death!" ejaculated the ex-lieutenant.

"Yes; he died a fortnight ago, I think."

"Oh, I wonder how my old mother is; I must take care of her."

"And I too; we'll go and see her together," put in the rightful heir, whose forgiveness obliterated every thing but the remembrance that she was his foster-mother.

At this stage of the conversation the door opened, and a tall, handsome woman of about thirty-eight years, with a kind expression of countenance, and manners at once denoting the lady, entered the room.

"Oh, they've come, I see! Excuse me, gentlemen;" and she advanced towards her husband's side.

"Oh, how do you do, Edward? I'm very glad to see you—very glad, indeed," she said to the ex-lieutenant, with whom she had become acquainted before his departure for America, and giving him her hand.

"Allow me, Mrs. Coke, to introduce to you your son," said the major, rising ; and the surgeon felt quite overcome. Her easy manner, however, quickly reassured him.

"Oh, I'm delighted that you've come ! Accept, I beg, our warmest welcome. I've felt, equally with your father, the greatest anxiety about you for a very long time, and now—— Oh, really, I can hardly tell you how very glad I feel ! You must make yourself quite at home here. Have you brought your wife with you ?"

"Yes ; she's at the hotel with Mrs. Coke."

"What ! Are you married ?" she asked, turning to Edward with a look of surprise.

"Yes ; I'm happy to say that I am. I married the Florence Nightingale of Virginia. I fell in love with her, while she was nursing me in her father's cottage, after the battle I was wounded in."

"Well, that was very romantic, I'm sure. I feel greatly interested in her. Is she young ?"

"Oh, yes ; only twenty."

"Well, you'd better come and stay here while you remain in town. We can accommodate you all."

The major seconded the invitation and it was accepted. The conversation continued without intermission for nearly three hours after this, and ranged over every topic connected with their personal and family history.

"I should like you to go with me to see my father at the Hall, to-morrow or the next day,"

remarked the major. "He's very anxious to see you both, and has taken the greatest interest in every thing relating to you.

The two took their departure with a promise to return with the ladies that evening. "We dine at eight!" were the last words of the genial step-mother, preparatory to the final "Good-morning."

"Well, that's all right," said one of them ; and they hailed a passing cab, and drove back to the hotel.

Of course, the wives—and the surgeon's wife in particular—felt very much interested to know the result of their visit, for they had been made familiar with all the facts in the case. The invitation to make a stay at the house was gratifying to both, but Emma thought she would enjoy the pleasure of declining it far more than accepting it.

"I would," she observed, "like to dine, but not to reside there under the circumstances."

"Well, upon reflection," said the husband, "I'm pretty much of your way of thinking. We'd only be in the way perhaps ; so I'll make an excuse. I'll say you're fatigued after the voyage, and we'll remain where we are for a few days."

The result was, that only the heir and his wife appeared at the family dinner on that day. But on the next it was graced with the presence of the other couple. Emma felt a little shy and embarrassed, not so much because she was among

strangers of greater social polish than herself, but owing to the peculiar position of her husband, who, although a frank, noble-hearted fellow, and the last in the world to perpetrate a deception himself, had been made the unconscious instrument of a cheat, which had inflicted a great wrong upon one present, and that one the son of their host. Women view these things differently from men. She looked only on one side of the picture, that day, at dinner, and she felt it difficult to even keep up the appearance of eating, for appetite she had none. She was sensitive, and, perhaps, to a fault.

On the second day following their arrival, the foster-brothers went together to the news-shop at St. John's Wood, over which was painted the name of BUNTING. They entered, and in a moment stood face to face with the widow, who, so far as her appearance was concerned, might have been still the wife.

"Oh, my boy, is it you?" she exclaimed, starting in terror and surprise at the sight of her son Thomas.

"It is," answered the ex-lieutenant, solemnly. "And this," pointing to his companion, "is the grandson of Sir Albert Coke, your foster-child. Do you recognize him?"

"Oh, I do, indeed! Is it really him?" and she burst into tears, under a withering sense of reproach.

"Well, I'm sorry for what I did," she sobbed out, "but forgive me."

"Stop crying ; regrets are vain," said the surgeon, sternly ; "I do forgive you with all my heart. We've not come here to upbraid you, but to help you, if we can."

"Yes, mother," said the other ; "we're both anxious to see you comfortably off now that you're left a widow again."

"God bless you, my boys!" she said, and at the same instant threw herself into the arms of her son, burying her face in his breast, while she pressed him to her own.

The surgeon, overcome with emotion, averted his gaze from the touching scene.

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On the day following, the major and the foster-brothers and their wives travelled by the express train to Hastings, from which they drove to the Hall. Sir Albert met them on the threshold, and gave them an affectionate greeting, while his bluish-gray eyes sparkled with unusual animation beneath his shaggy eyebrows. Eighty years had whitened his locks, and left him somewhat a martyr to gout, but he was still a fine old patriarch, with energy and intellect enough to have qualified him for a much more active sphere in life than he had latterly been employed in. He was contented, however, to remain a quiet country gentleman, and all ambition beyond the desire to go down to the grave with a good, albeit an obscure, name, seemed long to have forsaken him. How much of this was owing to his unhappy marriage, I leave to the judgment of the reader.

"And you are my grandson—my only grandson," he said, addressing the surgeon, after the ladies had been shown up-stairs ; "whom we all thought dead. Ah! your history is a very painful one, and I can hardly bear to speak of it before Edward ; but you're both Edwards now. I have known some strange things in the eighty years I have lived in the world, but what happened to you is the strangest of all. What did you think of it yourself? Did n't it surprise you?"

"Very much, indeed. I hardly knew whether to believe or disbelieve the story ; and when I awoke on the morning after I had heard it, for a moment, I thought it was a dream."

"Ah! you may well say a dream ; it *was* like a dream. But you're with me now, thank the Lord, and you have your grandfather's blessing, and, I need not say, a sincere and affectionate welcome under this roof." Then, surveying him from head to foot, and turning to his son, he said, "Dear me, how like you both he is!" He was thinking of the dead mother and the living father. "He has your figure and head, but there's something about the eyes and mouth that reminds me so much of poor Catharine. Don't you see it?"

Joseph looked with glistening eyes, and an expression of melancholy interest into his son's face.

"Yes," he said ; "there is a slight resemblance."

The party remained for several days at the

Hall, during which the ex-lieutenant had much to say to those whom he had known when a boy—and they were many. Although the visit was made as private as possible, it became the talk of the country for miles around, and the most singular stories were invented concerning the visitors and the event; and we know that it takes but a little thing to make a great noise in a rural neighborhood. The incidents, however, in this case were so numerous and romantic, and the family history of the Cokes so full of remarkable circumstances, that there was the widest scope for exaggeration and the wildest play of the rustic imagination. Was it, therefore, surprising that nearly the whole county, and part of an adjoining one, were busy gossiping and wondering?

It was near the end of November, in London, when, one morning, as Joseph Ebenezer Coke was riding alone along Birdcage Walk, his horse took fright, and, while plunging violently forward, came in contact with a costermonger's cart, and fell heavily, dashing its rider head-foremost on to the curbstone, and then, in its efforts to rise, trampling him under foot in a shocking manner. He was picked up immediately afterwards, bleeding and insensible, and conveyed to St. George's Hospital, where it was discovered that he had sustained, in addition to other severe injuries, a compound fracture of the skull. His

case was pronounced hopeless, and he died in three hours afterwards. His name and address had been ascertained from the cards in his pocket, and intelligence had been sent to the house in Cumberland Street, but Mrs. Coke was not at home when the messenger arrived. She returned shortly afterwards, however, and driving immediately to the hospital, was informed that her husband had just expired.

* * * * *

"Well, I'm an old man, it will be my turn to go next," said Sir Albert, when the melancholy announcement of his son's death came to him by telegraph. "Oh, dear, dear! my only boy!" and he cried, and raised both his hands to his head as he spoke.

He went to bed that night, and never rose again alive! He was found cold and lifeless when his servant entered the next morning to dress him.

A melancholy post-mortem examination, and a melancholy coroner's inquest, resulted in the melancholy verdict that the deceased died from natural causes.

Five days afterwards, two coffins were borne in the one funeral procession from the Hall to the parish church, and there interred in the family vault. They contained all that was mortal of Sir Albert and his son Joseph. A long line of coaches followed the solemn hearses with the raven plumes, and a still longer line of domestics, villagers, and towns-folk walked behind. The



long history of some eventful lives. I could have elaborated the theme volume upon volume, but I leave all that I have left unsaid to the imagination, as I leave all that I have said to the reflection, of whosoever has followed me to

The End.



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