

Tales for Young and Old

Various

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Produced by Roy Brown

TALES
FOR
YOUNG AND OLD

PREFACE.

When the older were considerably younger, and young in infancy, the following interesting Tales were written.

W. & R.C.

CONTENTS.

THE BRIDE'S JOURNEY
THE HOME-WRECK
LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT
LUCY FENNEL
BILLY EGG

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THE PLEDGE REDEEMED
THE TREE AND THE FOREST
THE THREE FRIENDS
THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER
THE BLIND MAN OF ARGENTEUIL
THE BRIDAL WREATH
THE DUKE OF NORMANDY
DUTCH ANNA
THE LOCKSMITH OF PHILADELPHIA

TALES FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

THE BRIDE'S JOURNEY.

BY MRS CROWE.

In the year 1809, when the French were in Prussia, M. Louison, an officer in the commissariat department of the imperial army, contracted an attachment for the beautiful Adelaide Hext, the daughter of a respectable but not wealthy merchant. The young Frenchman having contrived to make his attachment known, it was imprudently reciprocated by its object; we say imprudently, for the French were detested by her father, who declared that no daughter of his should ever be allied to one of the invaders and occupants of his beloved country. Thus repulsed, M. Louison had the good sense not to press his suit, and proceeded to Vienna, where he was installed in a lucrative office suitable to his wishes and abilities. Here, however, he could not altogether relinquish the expectation of being one day married to the fair Adelaide Hext, with whom he continued to correspond.

After the lapse of a few months, the aspect of affairs underwent a material change. Hext lay, as he supposed, and as the doctors told him, on his death-bed, and, pondering on the probable destitution of his family, he repented his rash vow, and stated to Adelaide that he should no longer oppose her wishes. M. Louison, procuring leave of absence for a few days, was speedily on the spot, and, with as little loss of time as possible, was united to the daughter of the seemingly dying merchant. As, in such circumstances, it would have been cruel for Madame Louison to leave the bedside of her aged parent, it was arranged that she should remain till the period of his decease, and then join her husband, who, in the meanwhile, was compelled to return to Vienna. The old man, however, recovered as soon as his son-in-law departed, and he now almost wished the marriage were undone; but as that was impracticable, he, with as good a grace as possible, saw his daughter set out on her journey to Dresden, whence she was to be escorted to Vienna by M. de Monge, a friend of her husband.

Nothing occurred to interrupt the journey of Madame Louison, for the intermediate country was tranquil, and she had the happiness of arriving safely under the roof of her husband's friend. This person was one of those who will act conscientiously in all situations of life, until they encounter an irresistible temptation to error. Such was the present occasion. Overcome with the beauty of his

unsuspicious guest, he basely attempted to divert her affections from her husband--an attempt which the noble Friedlander repelled with becoming scorn. To cut short a long tale, this mortification filled De Monge with vengeful sentiments, at the same time that his fears were awakened, as he could hardly doubt that the lady would acquaint her husband with his treachery. He affected to pass off his overtures as nothing more than a jocular trial of her resolutions, but secretly suffered from the torments of fear and resentment, insomuch that he was at length driven to the contemplation of a dreadful crime. The story is almost too incredible for belief, yet our authority assures us that the facts occurred as we propose to state them.

Having detained the lady in Dresden considerably beyond the day when she expected to set out, De Monge was at length compelled to allow her departure. Her escort through the partially-disturbed country in which she was to travel, was to consist of an individual who was well acquainted with the roads, and had frequently acted as a guide on the Italian frontier. Mazzuolo, as this man was called, was an Italian by birth, and gladly undertook a commission which promised him a rich harvest of booty. His bargain with the treacherous De Monge was, that if he made away with the life of Madame Louison while on the journey, and before she could communicate with her husband, he was to be at liberty to carry off all her baggage, which contained valuable articles to a large amount. The Italian stipulated that his wife, dressed in male attire, and a lad on whom he could depend, should accompany him.

Everything being settled, the morning of departure arrived. Adelaide had not seen her travelling companions till they with the carriage, into which she was handed by Mazzuolo, with all the deference that her beauty and elegant attire might naturally command. She wore a black velvet bonnet and Chantilly veil, a crimson silk pelisse trimmed with rich furs, a boa of Russian sable; and, over all, a loose pelisse, lined with fur. Mazzuolo and his wife thought that this augured well for the contents of her trunks.

The length of the journey, the dangers of the road, and the goodness or badness of the inns they should have to rest at, formed the subjects of conversation for the first hour or two. The stage was very long, and it was eleven o'clock before they reached their first relay of horses, by which time the young traveller had decided that she had great reason to be satisfied with her companions. The Italian was polite and entertaining; he had travelled a great deal, and was full of anecdote; and being naturally lively and garrulous, the design he entertained of taking away the life of his charge did not prevent his making himself agreeable to her in the meantime. With his well-seared conscience, he neither felt nervous nor saturnine at the prospect of what was before him--why should he indeed?--for the only part of the prospect he fixed his eye upon was the gain; the little operation by means of which it was to be acquired, he did not think very seriously of; besides, he did not intend to perform it himself.

When they stopped to change horses, a lad of about seventeen years of age, named Karl, nephew of Mazzuolo's wife, came to the carriage door: he seemed to have been waiting for them. Mazzuolo spoke to him aside for some minutes, and when they started again, the youth mounted in front of the carriage. The Italian said he was a lad they had engaged to look after the luggage, and be useful on the journey. He was, in fact, one who was hired to do any piece of work, good or

bad. He possessed no moral strength, could be easily led by the will of his employers; in short, was a very useful ally. He had a broad, fair, stolid German face; and from the glimpse she had of him, Adelaide thought she had seldom seen a more unprepossessing-looking person. His home had been a rude and unhappy one; his manners were coarse and unpolished, and his dress shabby.

The first day's journey passed agreeably enough. When they arrived at their night's station, Mazzuolo having handed out the ladies, bade them go up stairs and order supper, whilst he and Karl looked to the putting-up of the carriage. Agostina, or Tina, as her husband commonly called her, insisted very much on having a room for Adelaide adjoining her own, alleging as her reason that they were answerable for her safety. The bride thanked her for her caution, but added, laughingly, that she did not think she had much to fear. It was some time before the two men joined them; and then they sat down to supper, the lad Karl acting as waiter. As he stood beside his aunt's chair, and exactly opposite Adelaide, he appeared much affected by her beauty; but of this, of course, the lady took no notice. When supper was over, being fatigued, she retired to her room; and then the party that remained closed the door, and bidding Karl sit down and eat his supper, they held a council on her fate.

Mazzuolo opened the conference by mentioning that he had already given the lad a hint of what was expected of him, and Tina asked him if he thought he was equal to the undertaking. Karl said he did not know; whereupon they encouraged him with promises of a handsome share of the booty, telling him also that they would stand by him, and help him if necessary. But the question was, how was the thing to be done, and where? Whether on the road by day, or in the night where they stopped? In either case, there were difficulties; many parts of the road they had to pass were extremely lonely, and fit for the purpose; but then, how were they to get rid of the postilion? And as they had a fresh one at every stage, there was no time to win him to their purpose. Then, at the inns, the obstacles were also considerable, especially as the houses were generally small Tina suggested that whenever the bride dropped out of the party, she had only to resume her female attire, and the people would never miss her. 'Karl can take my place in the carriage,' she said, 'and I Madame Louison's. Thus we shall appear to be as many as we were; and there will be no discrepancy with the passport.' The hint was approved; but after an hour's discussion, they found it impossible to conclude upon any plan; the execution of their projects must be left to chance and opportunity--all they had to do was, to be prepared to seize upon the first that offered.

During the progress of this conversation, Karl made no observation whatever. He listened in silence; not without attention, but without objection, even although, in the different plans that were proposed, he heard himself always designated as the active agent in the murder. When the council broke up, the parties retired to bed--their present station being too near Dresden for their purpose. Next day they resumed their journey; and as their way lay through a gloomy forest, nothing but the presence of the postilion saved the young bride's life. The night was passed at a post-house, where there were so few rooms, that Adelaide had to sleep in the same apartment with the daughter of the owner: so here was nothing to be done either. The Italians began to grow impatient at these difficulties, and Mazzuolo proposed a change in their tactics. On the previous evening, the

weather being very cold, Madame Louison had ordered a fire in her chamber. She would doubtless do the same on the ensuing night; and all they had to do was to fill the stove with charcoal, and her death would follow in the most natural way in the world. They were to pass the night at Nuremburg; and, as soon as they arrived, Karl was sent out to procure the charcoal; but, after remaining away a long time, he came back saying the shops were all shut, and he could not get any; and as the inn at Nuremburg was not a fit place for any other kind of attack, Adelaide was respited for another four-and-twenty hours.

On the following day, in order to avoid such another *_contretemps_*, the charcoal was secured in the morning whilst they were changing horses, and placed in a sack under the seat of the carriage.

It happened on this day that the road was very hilly, and as the horses slowly dragged the carriage up the ascents, Madame Louison proposed walking to warm themselves. They all descended; but Tina, being stout, and heavy on her feet, was soon tired, and got in again; whilst Mazzuolo, with a view to his design against Adelaide, fell into conversation with the driver about the different stations they would have to stop at. He wanted to extract all the information he could--so he walked beside the carriage, whilst Madame Louison and Karl, who were very cold, walked on as fast as they could.

'You look quite chilled, Karl,' said she; 'let us see who will be at the top of the hill first--a race will warm us.'

The youth strode on without saying anything; but as she was the more active, she got before him; and when she reached the top, she turned round, and playfully clapping her hands, said, 'Karl, I've beaten you!' Karl said he had had an illness lately, and was not so strong as he used to be; he had gone into the water when he was very warm, and had nearly died of the consequences. This led her to observe how thinly he was clad; and when the carriage overtook them, she proposed that, as there was plenty of room, he should go inside; to which the others, as they did not want him to fall ill upon their hands, consented. With the glasses up, and the furs that the party were wrapped in, the inside of the carriage was very different to the out; and Karl's nose and cheeks, which had before been blue, resumed their original hues.

It was late when they reached their night-station, and, whilst the ladies went up stairs to look at their rooms, Earl received his orders, which were, that he should fill the stove with charcoal, and set fire to it, whilst the others were at table. The lad answered composedly that he would. 'And when you have done it,' said Mazzuolo, 'give me a wink, and I will step out and see that all is right before she goes to her room.'

Karl obeyed his directions to a tittle, and when all was ready, he gave the signal, and Mazzuolo, making a pretext, quitted the table. He found the arrangements quite satisfactory, and having taken care to see that the window was well closed, he returned to the supper-room. He was no sooner gone than the boy took the charcoal from the stove and threw it into the street; and when Adelaide came to undress, there was no fire. Cold as it was, however, she had no alternative but to go to bed without one, for there was not a bell in the apartment; and Mazzuolo, who had lighted her to the door, had

locked her in, under pretence of caring for her safety. Karl, having watched this proceeding, accompanied him back to the supper-table, where they discussed the plans for the following day. Whether would it be better to start in the morning without inquiring for her at all, and leave the people of the house to find her dead, when they were far on the road, or whether make the discovery themselves? Karl ventured to advocate the first plan; but Tina decided for the second. It would be easy to say that the lad had put charcoal in the stove, not being aware of its effects, and there would be an end of the matter. If they left her behind, it would be avowing the murder. This settled, they went to bed.

What to do, Karl did not know. He was naturally a stupid sort of lad, and what little sense nature had given him, had been nearly beaten out of him by harsh treatment. He had had a miserable life of it, and had never found himself so comfortable as he was now with his aunt and her husband. They were kind to him, because they wanted to make use of him. He did not want to offend them, nor to leave them; for if he did, he must return home again, which he dreaded above all things. Yet there was something in him that recoiled against killing the lady. Grossly ignorant as he was, scarcely knowing right from wrong, it was not morality or religion that deterred him from the crime; he had a very imperfect idea of the amount of the wickedness he would be committing in taking away the life of a fellow-creature. Obedience was the only virtue he had been taught; and what those in authority over him had ordered him to do, he would have done without much question. To kill his beautiful travelling companion, who had shown him such kindness, was, however, repugnant to feelings he could not explain even to himself. Yet he had not sufficient grasp of intellect to know how he was to elude the performance of the task. The only thing he could think of in the meanwhile was to take the charcoal out of the stove; and he did it; after which he went to sleep, and left the results to be developed by the morning.

He had been desired to rise early; and when he quitted his room, he found Mazzuolo and his wife already stirring. They bade him go below and send up breakfast, and to be careful that it was brought by the people of the house. This was done; and when the waiter and the host were present, Tina took the opportunity of knocking at Madame Louison's door, and bidding her rise. To the great amazement of the two Italians, she answered with alacrity that she was nearly dressed, and should be with them immediately. They stared at each other; but presently she opened the door, and appeared as fresh as ever; observing, however, that she had been very cold, for that the fire had gone out before she went to bed. This accounted for the whole thing, and Karl escaped all blame.

During the ensuing day nothing remarkable occurred: fresh charcoal was provided; but at night it was found there were no stoves in the bed-chambers; and as the houses on the road they were travelling were poor and ill-furnished, all the good inns having been dismantled by the troops, the same thing happened at several successive stations.

This delay began to render the affair critical, for they were daily drawing near Augsburg, where M. Louison was to meet his wife; and Mazzuolo resolved to conclude the business by a *coup de main*. He had learned from the postilion that the little post-house which was to form their next night's lodging was admirably fitted for a deed of mischief. It lay at the foot of a precipice, in a gorge of the

mountains: the district was lonely, and the people rude, not likely to be very much disturbed, even if they did suspect the lady had come unfairly to her end. It was not, however, probable that the charcoal would be of any use on this occasion; the place was too poor to be well furnished with stoves; so Karl was instructed in what he would have to do.

'When she is asleep,' said Mazzuolo, 'you must give her a blow on the head that will be sufficient to stun her. Then we will complete the job; and as we shall start early in the morning with Tina in female attire, they will never miss her.' Karl, as usual, made no objection; and when they arrived at night at the inn, which fully answered the description given, and was as lonely as the worst assassins could desire, the two men sallied forth to seek a convenient place for disposing of the body. Neither had they much difficulty in finding what they wanted: there was not only a mountain torrent hard by, but there was also a deep mysterious hole in a neighbouring field, that looked very much as if the body of the young traveller would not be the first that had found a grave there.

Every circumstance seemed to favour the enterprise; and all arrangements made, the two men returned to the house. Karl thought it was all over with him now. He was too timid to oppose Mazzuolo, and he had nobody to consult. Tina had found a weapon apt for the purpose, which she had already secured; and when they sat down to supper, considering the completeness of the preparations, nobody would have thought Adelaide's life worth six hours' purchase. However, she was not destined to die that night. Just as they had finished their supper, the sound of wheels was heard; then there was a great noise and bustle below; and Karl being sent down to inquire what was the matter, was informed that a large party of travellers had arrived; and as there was a scarcity of apartments, it was hoped the lady and gentlemen would accommodate the strangers by allowing them to share theirs. Consent was inevitable; so, like the sultan's wife in the Arabian tale, the victim was allowed to live another day.

'Now,' said Mazzuolo, 'we have only two nights more before we reach Augsburg, so there must be no more shilly-shallying about the matter. If there is a stove in the room to-night, we may try that; though, if the house be in a pretty safe situation, I should prefer more decisive measures. The charcoal has failed once already.'

'That was from bad management,' said Tina; 'we could be secure against such an accident on another occasion. At the same time, if the situation be favourable, I should prefer a _coup de main.' _

When they had arrived at their night's station, the absence of a stove decided the question. It was merely a post-house, a place where horses were furnished; the accommodation was poor, and the people disposed to pay little attention to them. Close by ran a river, which obviated all difficulty as to the disposal of the body.

'The thing must be done to-night,' said Mazzuolo; and Karl said nothing to the contrary. He also feared that it must; for he did not see how he could avoid it. His aunt said everything necessary to inspire him with courage and determination, and made many promises of future benefits; whilst Mazzuolo neither doubted his obedience nor his resolution, and spoke of the thing as so entirely within the range of ordinary proceedings, that the boy, stupid and ignorant, and

accustomed, from the state of the country, to hear of bloodshed and murders little less atrocious committed by the soldiery, and neither punished nor severely condemned, felt ashamed of his own pusillanimity--for such his instinctive pity appeared to himself.

But as he stood opposite Madame Louison at supper, with his eyes, as usual, fixed upon her face, his heart involuntarily quailed when he thought that within a few hours he was to raise his hand against that beautiful head; yet he still felt within himself no courage to refuse, nor any fertility of expedient to elude the dilemma.

When supper was over, Tina desired Karl to bring up two or three pails of warm water, and several cloths, 'for,' said she 'it will do us all good to bathe our feet;' whereupon Adelaide requested one might be carried to her room, which was done by Karl. He was now alone with her, and it was almost the first time he had been so, except when they ran up the hill together, since the day they met. When he had set down the pail by her bedside, he stood looking at her with a strange expression of countenance. He knew that the water he had fetched up was designed for the purpose of washing away the blood that he was about to spill, and he longed to tell her so, and set her on her guard; but he was afraid. He looked at her, looked at the water, and looked at the bed.

'Well, Karl,' she said laughing, 'good-night. When we part the day after to-morrow, I shan't forget your services, I assure you.' The lad's eyes still wandered from her to the water and the bed, but he said nothing, nor stirred, till she repeated her 'good-night,' and then he quitted the room in silence.

'Poor stupid creature!' thought Adelaide; 'he has scarcely as much intelligence as the horses that draw us.'

'Now we must have no bungling to-night, Karl,' said Mazzuolo; 'we will keep quiet till two o'clock, and then when everybody is asleep, we'll to business.'

'But what is it to be done with?' inquired Tina.

'There's something in the carriage under the seat; I brought it away the night we slept at Baireuth,' replied Mazzuolo; 'I'll step and fetch it;' and he left the room; but presently returned, saying that there were people about the carriage, and he was afraid they might wonder what he was going to do with so suspicious-looking an instrument. 'Karl can fetch it when they are gone to bed.'

As it was yet only midnight, Tina proposed that they should all lie down and take a little rest; and the suggestion being agreed to, she and her husband stretched themselves on their bed, whilst Karl made the floor his couch, and, favoured by his unexcitable temperament, was soon asleep, in spite of what was before him.

It was past two o'clock when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder. 'Come, be stirring,' said Mazzuolo; 'we must about it without delay--the house has been quiet for some time.'

Karl was a heavy sleeper, and as he sat up rubbing his eyes, he could not at first remember what he was awakened for, nor how he came to be upon the floor. 'Come,' said Mazzuolo, 'come, she's fast asleep; I

have just been to her room to look at her. You must step down now to the carriage and bring up the axe I left under the seat.'

Karl began to recollect himself, and awkwardly rising from his hard couch, shaking and stretching himself like a dog, he prepared to obey, indifferent to everything at the moment but the annoyance of being disturbed in his slumbers. 'If you should meet anybody,' said Mazzuolo, 'say that your mistress is ill, and that you are going to fetch the medicine-chest.'

By the time he got below, the motion and the cool air had aroused the lad, and with his recollection, revived his repugnance to the work before him; but he saw no means of avoiding it, and with an unwilling step he proceeded to the yard where the carriage stood, and having found the axe, he was returning with it, when he observed hanging against the wall, a large horn or trumpet. Now, he had seen such a thing at several of the post-houses on the road, and he remembered to have heard one sounded on the night they slept in the mountains, when the travellers arrived late, and prevented the projected assassination. Instinctively, and without pausing to reflect how he should excuse himself--for if he had, he could not have done it--he placed the instrument to his mouth, and lustily blew it: and then, terrified at his temerity, and its probable consequences, rushed into the house, and up the stairs, again to his master.

'The travellers' horn!' said Mazzuolo frantically. The lad was too frightened to speak, but stood still, pale and trembling. 'Wait,' continued the Italian; 'perhaps it may only be for horses, and they may go on again. I hear the people stirring.'

Feet were indeed heard upon the stairs, and presently a lantern gleamed beneath the window. 'I hear no carriage,' observed Mazzuolo. And for some time they sat listening; but there being no appearance of any travellers, he said he would go below and see how matters stood.

'Nobody is yet arrived,' said the master of the post-house in answer to his inquiries; 'but doubtless the signal was given by the avant-courier, who has rode on to the next station; and the carriage will be here presently. We must be ready with the horses.' As the travellers, however, did not arrive, but continued to be expected, the postmaster and the postilions remained up to watch for them; and when four o'clock came, Karl was bidden go to bed, as nothing could be attempted under such circumstances.

'Now,' said Mazzuolo, on the following day, 'we sleep to-night at Meitingen, which is our last station. I know the place; it is too busy a house for a coup de main;_ we must try the charcoal again; but this time we must be sure of our game.'

Karl hoped there might be no stoves in the bed-chamber; but it was a well-furnished house, and there were. Adelaide said how glad she should be to have a fire again, she had suffered so much by the want of one, and desired Karl to light hers early. It appeared, however, that the servant of the house had already done it. Mazzuolo said: 'So much the better. The stove will get well heated, and when you put in the charcoal, there will be no danger of its not burning.' And Tina suggested that that should not be done till just before Adelaide went to bed, lest she should perceive the effects of the vapour whilst she

was undressing.

The young traveller had never, on her journey, been in such high spirits as to-night. Well she might; it had been so prosperously performed, and to-morrow she was to meet her husband. She prattled and laughed during supper with a light heart; expressed her gratitude to the Italians for their escort; and said that, if Monsieur Louison could be of any use to them, she knew how happy he would be to acknowledge their kindness to her. 'Really,' she said, 'travelling at such a period, with so many valuables, and such a large sum of money as I have with me, was a bold undertaking!'

Mazzuolo, during the first part of her speech, was beginning to weigh the advantages of the commissary's favour against the dangers and difficulties of the assassination--difficulties which had far exceeded his expectations, and dangers which were of course augmented by the proximity to Augsburg--but the latter part of it decided the question; the money and valuables preponderated in the scale, and the good opinion of the commissary kicked the beam.

Partly from the exaltation of her spirits, and partly because the day's journey had been a short one--for the stoppage at Meitingen was quite unnecessary, they were within four hours of Augsburg, and might very well have reached it--Adelaide was less fatigued and less willing to go to bed than usual. She sat late; and it was past twelve when, having asked for her candle, Karl received the signal to go and prepare the stove. Mazzuolo followed him out, to see that the work was well done, and the charcoal ignited before she went to her room. When all was ready, her candle was put into her hand, and Mazzuolo having conducted her to the door, took the precaution of turning the key, which he afterwards put in his pocket. She rallied him on the strictness of his guardianship; but he alleged gravely that the house was a busy one, and she might perchance be disturbed if her door were not secured.

They listened till she was in bed, and then Mazzuolo said that they could not do better than go to bed too; 'for,' said he, 'the earlier we are off in the morning the better. There will be the fewer people up, and the less chance of her being missed.'

When Karl reached his room, he sat down on the side of his bed and reflected. He had observed that the last thing Mazzuolo had done before leaving Adelaide's chamber, was to see that the window was well closed. 'If I could open it,' thought he, 'to-morrow we shall be at Augsburg, and then I should not be told any more to kill her. I wish I could. They'll go away in the morning before she is awake, and so I should never be found out.' With this idea in his head, he went down stairs, and letting himself out, he crept round to the end of the house where her window was.

She slept on the first floor, and the difficulty was how to reach it; but this was soon overcome. In the stable-yard stood some high steps, used for the convenience of passengers when they mounted the wagons and diligences. These he carried to the spot, and having reached the window, he was about to break some of the panes, since, as it fastened on the inside, he could not open it, when it occurred to him that the noise might wake her, and cause an alarm that would betray him. The window, however, was in the lattice fashion, and he saw that by a little contrivance, he could lift it off the hinges. He did so, and

drew aside the curtain; there lay the intended victim in a sound sleep; so sound, that Karl thought he might safely step in without disturbing her. There she lay in her beauty.

He could not tell why, but, as he stood and looked at her, he felt that he must save her at all risks. The air he had let in might not be enough; he would take the charcoal from the stove and throw it out of the window; but what if she awoke with the noise and screamed? He hesitated a moment; but he remembered that this would be a safer plan than leaving the window open, as that might be observed in the morning from below, and he would thus be betrayed. So, as quietly as possible, he emptied the stove, and then, having sufficiently aired the room, he hung on the window again, and retired.

During the whole of these operations Adelaide had remained quite still, and appeared to be sound asleep. But was she? No. The opening of the window had awakened her: surprise and terror had at first kept her silent--a surprise and terror that were by no means diminished by discovering who the intruder was. Although she had always spoken kindly to Karl, and even endeavoured, by the amenity of her manner, to soften his rude nature, she had from the first moment disliked him exceedingly, and felt his countenance most repulsive; so that, when she saw him entering her room through the window, she did not doubt that he was come for some very bad purpose, probably to rob her, although the booty he was likely to get was small, since her trunks, with all her valuable property, were nightly placed under Mazzuolo's care for safety. Still, the little money she carried in her purse, together with her rings and watch, would be a great deal to so poor a creature; and expecting to see him possess himself of these, she thought it more prudent to lie still and feign sleep, than to disturb him. But when she saw that all he came for was to take the fire out of the stove, she was beyond measure puzzled to conceive his motive. Could it be a jest? But what a strange jest! However, he did nothing else; he touched neither her money nor her watch, though both were lying on the table, but went away as empty-handed as he came.

The amazement and alarm that so extraordinary a visit necessarily inspired, drove sleep from her eyes, and it was not till the day dawned that she so far recovered her composure and sense of safety, as to close them in slumber. Then, however, fatigue got the better of her watchfulness, and she gradually sunk into a sound sleep.

In the meantime, Karl, whose unexcitable temperament insured him his night's rest even under the most agitating circumstances, was in a happy state of oblivion of the whole affair, when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, and heard his uncle say: 'Come, come, rise, and make haste! The sun is up, and we must get the horses out and be off.'

Karl was as anxious to be off as anybody: the sooner the better for him; for if Adelaide should awake before they started, he, on the one hand, dreaded that he might incur his uncle's suspicion, and, on the other, that some new plot might be formed, which it would be impossible for him to evade; so, between the exertions of one and the other, the horses were out, the bill paid, and the carriage at the door, very soon after the sun had shown his broad disc above the horizon. Tina, in female attire and a veil, was handed down stairs by Mazzuolo; the waiter stood on the steps, and bowed, for the landlord was not yet up; they all three stepped into the carriage; the

postilion cracked his whip, and away they drove rejoicing.

In the meantime, Monsieur Louison had become very uneasy about his wife. He had received no intelligence since she quitted Dresden; for although she had, in fact, written more than once, Mazzuolo had not forwarded the letters. Day after day he had waited in impatient expectation; till at length, unable to bear his suspense any longer, he resolved to start on the road she was to come, in the hope of meeting her. When he reached the gate called the Gozzinger, his carriage was stopped by a berlin containing two men and a woman. It was loaded with luggage; and thinking that this might be the party he expected, he jumped down, and put his head into the window of the berlin, to ascertain if his wife were there. She was not: so, with a bow and an apology, he proceeded on his way. At Meitingen he stopped to change horses; and the first question that was asked him was, if he had seen a heavily-laden berlin, containing two men and a woman. On answering in the affirmative, he was informed that they had gone off with the property of a lady, whom they had left behind, and who was then in the inn; and in a moment more the young husband pressed his bride to his heart. But, eager to chase the thieves, they wasted no time in embraces, but started instantly in pursuit of them. On reaching the same gate where the berlin had been seen, the officers described in what direction the party had driven; and the police being immediately on the alert, the criminals were discovered and arrested just as they were on the point of starting for Vienna.

The ample confession of Karl disclosed the villainy of the Italians, and made known how narrowly the commissary had escaped the loss of his fair young bride; whilst, as he told his rude and simple tale, without claiming any merit, or appearing to be conscious of any, Adelaide learned that to this repulsive stupid clown she had three times owed her life.

The Italians were condemned to the galleys; whilst Monsieur Louison and his wife discharged their debt of gratitude to Karl, by first educating him, and then furnishing him with the means of earning his living with respectability and comfort.

De Monge was degraded from his situation, and the universal execration that pursued him drove him ultimately to America, where, under a feigned name, he ended his days in obscurity.

THE HOME-WRECK.

A few years since I visited Devonshire, to make the acquaintance of some distant relations, whom circumstances had prevented me from before seeing. Amongst others, there was one who lived in a decayed family mansion about six miles east of the pretty town of Dartmouth. Before calling on her, I was prepared, by report, to behold a very aged and a very eccentric lady. Her age no one knew, but she seemed much older than her only servant--a hardy old dame, who, during the very month of my visit, had completed her ninety-ninth year.

The mistress never allowed any one to see her, save a young and interesting cousin of mine. She seldom went out except on Sundays, and then was carried to church in an old sedan-chair by a couple of

labourers, who did odd jobs of gardening about the house. She had such an insuperable objection to be seen by anybody, whether at home or abroad, that she concealed her face by a thick veil.

These, with other particulars, were narrated to me by my cousin as we rode towards Coote-down Hall, in which the old lady resided, and which, with the surrounding estate, was her own property. On approaching it, signs of past grandeur and present decay presented themselves. The avenue leading to the house had evidently been thickly planted; but now only a few stumps remained to mark where noble and spreading elms once had been. Having arrived at the house, my cousin reined up at the steps of the hall, upon which she, in a low cautious voice, desired me to alight. Having assisted her out of her saddle, I was about to utter some exclamation of surprise at the extreme dilapidation of the place, when she whispered me to be silent; adding, that I must not stir until she had returned from within, to announce whether my visit would be accepted or not.

During her absence, I had full leisure to look around and note the desolate condition of Coote-down. The lawn--thickly overspread with rank grass--could scarcely be distinguished from the fishpond, which was completely covered with water-weeds. The shrubbery was choked and tangled, whilst a very wide rent in the wall laid open to view an enclosure which had once been a garden, but was now a wilderness. For a time the sorrowful effect which all this decay produced on my mind was increased by the extreme solitude which reigned around. This, however, was presently relieved by a cackling sign of life which issued from a brood-hen as it flew from the sill of a side-parlour window. On casting my eyes further into the landscape, I also perceived a very fat cow lazily browsing on the rich pasture of a paddock.

On turning round to view the house, new tokens of desolation were visible. Its shattered casements and worm-eaten doors, with tufts of weed growing at each corner, showed that for many years the front of the mansion had not been inhabited or its doors opened. One evidence of fallen grandeur was highly characteristic--over the porch the family-arms had been carved in stone, but was now scarcely distinguishable from dilapidation: a sparrow had established a comfortable nest in the mouth of the helmet, and a griffin 'rampant' had fallen from his place beside the shield, and tamely lay overgrown with weeds.

These observations were interrupted by the light step of my cousin, who came to inform me that the lady of the house, after much persuasion, had consented to receive me. Conducting me to the back of the mansion, my fair guide took me through a dark passage into a sort of kitchen. A high and ample 'settle' stood, as is usual in farmhouses, before the hearth. In one corner of this seat reclined a figure bent with age, her face concealed by a thick veil. In the other corner was an old cheerful-looking woman, busily knitting, and mumbling rather than singing a quaint old ballad.

The mistress of Coote-down made a feeble attempt to rise when my cousin presented me; but I entreated her to keep her seat. Having procured a chair for my fellow-visitor (for the old domestic took not the smallest notice of us, but went on with her work as if we were not present), I established myself beside the hostess, and addressed to her a few common-place words of greeting. She replied

in a voice far less feeble than I had expected to hear from so decrepit a person; but what she said was no answer to my salutation. She went on with surprising clearness, explaining to me the degree of relationship which we bore to each other, and traced my pedigree till it joined her own; continued our mutual genealogy back to the Damnonii of Cornwall, hinting that our ancestors of that period were large mining proprietors, who sold tin to the Phoenicians! At first she spoke with doubt and hesitation, as if she feared to make some mistake; but the moment she got to where our branches joined--to the trunk, as it were, of our family-tree--she went on glibly, like child repeating a well-conned lesson. All this while the old attendant kept up the unceasing accompaniment of her ballad, which she must have sung through several times, for I heard the first line--

'A bailie's daughter, fair was she'--

at least thrice.

Though I addressed several questions to my singular relation, she made no attempt to answer them. It seemed that what she had uttered was all she was capable of; and this, I learned afterwards, was partly true. Circumstances of her early life had given her a taste for family history, particularly that of her own, and her faculties, though otherwise impaired, still retained everything relating to what concerned her ancestry.

On our way back from this singular scene, my cousin remarked that it had saddened me. 'It would sadden you more,' she continued, 'were you to know the history of the domestic wreck we have just left behind.'

'That is precisely what I intended to inquire of you.'

'It is a deeply-affecting story; but'--and here the young lady blushed and hesitated--'I think it would not be right in me to reveal it. I believe I am the only person existing who knows the truth; and the means by which I obtained my knowledge would be deemed scarcely correct, though not perhaps exactly dishonourable.'

This avowal sharpened my curiosity, and I entreated her to say at least how she became possessed of the story.

'To that there can be no objection,' was the reply. 'In one of my rambles over the old house, I espied in a small escritoire a packet of letters bound up in tape, which was sealed at the ends. The tape had, however, been eaten by moths, and the letters liberated from it. Female curiosity prompted me to read them, and they gave me a full exposition of our great-aunt's early history.'

During the rest of my stay in that part of the country, I never failed to urge my cousin to narrate the events which had brought Coote-down to its present melancholy plight. But it was not till I called to take leave of her, perhaps for ever, that she complied. On that occasion, she placed in my hands a neatly-written manuscript in her own handwriting, which she said contained all the particulars I required. Circumstances have since occurred that render it not indelicate in me to publish the narrative, which I do with but little alteration.

In the middle of the last century the proprietor of Coote-down was Charles James Hardman, to whom the estate lineally descended from a long line of ancestors. He was from his youth a person of an easy disposition, who minded very little, so that he could follow his ordinary amusements, and could see everybody around him contented; though his habits were too indolent to improve the condition of his dependants by any efforts of his own. At the age of twenty-five, he married the heiress of a baronet belonging to the northern side of the county. She was a beauty and a belle--a lady full of determination and spirit; consequently the very opposite to himself. She was, moreover, two years his senior. As was predicted by those who knew the couple intimately, the match was not productive of happiness, and they had been married scarcely a year and a half when they separated. It appeared that this unpleasant step was solely the fault of the wife; and her father was so incensed at her rash conduct, that he altered his will, and left the whole of his property to Hardman. Meanwhile, it was given out that the lady had brought her lord a son, and it was hoped that this event would prove a means of reconciling the differences which existed between them. Despite all entreaties, however, Mrs Hardman refused to return to her husband's roof.

Ten years passed, and she lived so completely in retirement, that she deprived herself even of the society of her child; for when the period of nursing was over, she sent him to Coote-down Hall, where he was educated. At the end of that period her father died; and, to her great disappointment, instead of finding herself uncontrolled mistress of a large fortune, she discovered it was so left, that unless she returned to her husband, she would be unable to benefit by it in the smallest degree. Mutual friends again interfered, and, after some difficulty, persuaded her to meet Hardman at her father's funeral, which she appeared to have no objection to attend. The happy result was that a reconciliation took place, and she resumed her proper station as the lady of Coote-down Hall. It was, however, observed that before she returned, the little son was sent away to continue his education in a foreign seminary.

Privy to all these arrangements, and in fact the chief mover in them, was Hardman's attorney. Such was the squire's indolence of disposition, that to this individual he confided everything; not only the management of his estates, the receipt and payment of all monies, but the arrangement of his most secret transactions. But, Mr Dodbury bearing the character of a highly just and honourable man, no suspicion ever existed that he abused the absolute unbounded trust reposed in him in the slightest degree. Indeed, putting aside the native honesty of his character, his position in the district was so good, that it would have been very bad policy for him to jeopardise it by any abuse of the confidence reposed in him. Being the younger son of an ancient family, and a distant relation of Hardman, he was received in the best society. Dodbury was a widower, with an only daughter, an amiable and elegant girl. She was just budding into womanhood, when it was announced that the heir of Coote-down would shortly become of age, and that the event was to be celebrated with the utmost pomp. Many strange conjectures had for years been current to account for his being kept so long away from home; but they were partially silenced when it was known that the young man was on his way to his paternal roof.

Extensive preparations were made for his reception: all the tenantry,

not only of Coote-down, but those from the maternal estate near Ilfracombe, were invited to attend his debarkation at Dartmouth. The lawn, paddock, and parks were strewed with tents for their accommodation, and refreshments of the most expensive kind were provided without limit. Several distinguished and noble friends of both families were invited to join in the festivities; and though every corner of Coote Hall, as well as the surrounding farmhouses, were made available for sleeping-room, yet there was not a bed to be had in Dartmouth a week before the day named in the invitations 'for love or money.' It appeared that the neglect which had been shown to young Hardman for so many years was to be atoned by the magnificence of the fete to celebrate his return.

Dodbury's share in managing the affairs of the family had declined every day since Mrs Hardman's resumption of her proper position as his patron's wife. She was a woman of strong intellect, and perfectly able to superintend what had been before so much neglected by her husband. She had an ambitious spirit, and Dodbury doubted not that the grand reception-fete was organised for the purpose of carrying out some great project connected with her son.

The day of Herbert Hardman's arrival from France proved auspicious. It was a lovely day in the middle of June. When he landed at the village of Kingswear, opposite to Dartmouth, the fishermen saluted him with a discharge of all the firearms they could collect. His parents received him at the landing-place, his mother embracing him with every outward and public mark of affection. A long cavalcade followed the carriage in which he was conducted to Coote-down Hall, consisting of the tenantry, headed by the most distinguished of his father's guests.

At the entrance of the domain, new tokens of welcome presented themselves. The gates were plentifully adorned with flowers, and at a turn of the thickly-wooded avenue, an arch of garlands was thrown across the path. The lawn was covered with lads and lasses from the surrounding farms, who, when Herbert appeared, set up a joyous cheer, whilst the drawing-room windows of the house were filled with ladies waving handkerchiefs.

The hall of the mansion was lined with servants, who obsequiously bowed as Herbert passed them. When he made his appearance in the drawing-room, there was almost a struggle amongst the ladies for the earliest honours of salutation. One maiden, however, stood apart, drinking in deeply the attestations of favour with which the heir of the estate was received, but too timid to share in, or to add to them. This was Miss Dodbury. The gentlemen, most of whom had accompanied Herbert from the landing-place, now joined the ladies; and Mr and Mrs Hardman entered the room amidst the hearty congratulations of their guests.

The fashionable dinner hour at that period was much earlier than at present, and but little time elapsed ere the important meal was announced. Mrs Hardman led forward a tall, handsome, but somewhat haughty-looking girl, whom she introduced to her son as the Lady Elizabeth Plympton, desiring him to lead her to the dining-room. She attentively watched Herbert's countenance, to observe what effect the damsel's beauty would create on him; but to her disappointment she saw that her son received her with no more than the politeness of a young gentleman who had been educated in France.

Nothing occurred during the day worthy of remark. The usual toasts and sentiments were drunk at the dinner-table, and the usual excesses committed; for at that time it was thought a mark of low-breeding for a man to remain sober all the evening. Out-of-doors there were bullocks roasted whole, barrels of cider and butts of ale set constantly flowing, with dancing, cricket, and Devonshire skittles, and other country games and comforts for the amusement of the peasantry.

About a fortnight after the rejoicings had subsided, Mrs Hardman, while conversing with her son on his future plans and prospects, startled him by inquiring whether he had formed any attachment during his residence in Paris? The young man hesitated for a short time, and declared that he had not; upon which Mrs Hardman asked somewhat abruptly, what he thought of Lady Elizabeth Plympton?

'That,' returned Herbert, 'her ladyship is an extremely tall, handsome, proud girl, who would evidently glory more in breaking half-a-dozen hearts than in winning one.'

'Take care she does not break yours!' rejoined Mrs Hardman playfully.

'There is little fear of that, mother.' Herbert was right. He had seen, one of humble pretensions, but of unbounded worth, for whom he began to feel already a more than ordinary sentiment.

Months rolled past, and Herbert began to find his position at home far from agreeable. His father had sunk into a mere nonentity through his mother's superior energy. Hence, in her hands rested the happiness or misery of all connected with the household. It soon became evident that her grand project was to effect a marriage between Lady Elizabeth Plympton and Herbert; and when she found no inducement could warm her son's heart towards that lady, her conduct altered. From being kind and indulgent, she was exacting and imperious: an old and scarcely natural dislike of her son seemed to be reawakened, and which she now took little pains to conceal. It was therefore to be expected that Herbert should spend as little of his time at home as possible. He became a frequent and welcome visitor to the happy and well-ordered house of the Dodburys.

The sharp eyes of the mother were not slow in detecting the attraction which drew Herbert so frequently to the lawyer's house. Though grievously disappointed, she was cautious. Nothing could be done at present; for, though her son was manifestly 'entangled,' yet no overt declaration had been made, and there was nothing to act upon. She had the worldly foresight to know that opposition was food and fuel to a secret attachment, and abstained from giving grounds for the belief that so much as a suspicion lurked in her mind. In this way months rolled on, Herbert becoming more and more captivated. On the other hand, Miss Dodbury had striven against a passion with which she also had become inspired. Her father discouraged it, though tenderly and indirectly. It was a delicate matter for a man to interfere in, as no open disclosure had been made from either party; but this embarrassment, felt equally by the proud mother of the lover, and the considerate father of the girl, was speedily but accidentally put an end to.

An equestrian party had been formed to see, from Berry-head, a large fleet which had been driven by a recent storm into Tor Bay. Mrs Hardman had purposely invited Catherine Dodbury, that she might observe her son's conduct towards that young lady, and extract from it a sufficient ground for taxing him openly with a preference for her over the belle she had chosen. It was a lovely day, and the party was all life and gaiety, as almost all such parties are; for nothing tends to raise the spirits so effectually as equestrian exercise.

Herbert laughed and chatted with the rest of the ladies, and seemed to pay no more attention to Catherine than was due to her as the belle of the party, which she was universally acknowledged to be. As, however, they passed over the drawbridge of the fort, built on the terminating point of the little promontory, they were obliged to dismount. Herbert offered Catherine his arm, and Mrs Hardman narrowly watched them. Her son said a few words in a low tone, which caused the colour to mount into the young lady's cheek; the listener overheard her reply--'Mr Hardman, it can, it must never be!' and withdrawing her arm from his, entered the fort unsupported. These words at once pleased and displeased the ambitious mother. The girl evidently did not encourage her son's suit--that favoured the Lady Elizabeth project; 'but,' thought Mrs Hardman, drawing herself up to her full height, 'does a lawyer's daughter reject the heir of the Hardmans?'

The truth is, Hardman, the night before, had declared his love; it was on the drawbridge that he pressed her to give him hopes; but her reply repressed rather than encouraged them.

The servants had brought the horses into the fort, that, mounted, the spectators might see over the ramparts the noble scene which lay before them to greater advantage. The fleet consisted of a number of merchant vessels, with a convoy of king's ships, which were just preparing to sail out of the bay. When the men-of-war had spread their canvas and begun to move, a salute was fired, quite unexpectedly by the visitors, from the fort. Catherine's horse immediately took fright, and darted across the drawbridge with the speed of lightning. Herbert lost not a moment; but spurring his own steed, galloped away, taking a circuitous route, lest the clattering of his own horse's hoofs should impel Catherine's to run the faster. On she sped, and as long as she remained within sight, her friends trembled lest some frightful catastrophe should happen. Presently she darted out of view. Herbert, meanwhile, galloped to meet her, and at last succeeded; but, alas! When it was too late to render any assistance. On coming up, he found both the horse and its rider prostrate, the latter motionless and insensible. He lifted her from the ground, and took her into a neighbouring house. The usual restoratives were applied without effect, and it was not till a surgeon appeared and bled the patient that any signs of animation returned. It was discovered that the right arm and three of the ribs on the left side were fractured. It was necessary that the utmost quiet should be observed, lest any further and more dangerous injury might, unknown to the medical man, have taken place.

Though, therefore, the whole party assembled near the house, they were not allowed to enter it. Herbert insisted upon remaining with the father, despite Mrs Hardman's repeated strictures on the impropriety of his doing so.

Scarcely a week had elapsed, after the accident already recorded, ere it became a matter of gossiping notoriety that the young squire of Coote-down had fallen in love with the lawyer's daughter. In truth, he had not stirred from the vicinity of the cottage in which Catherine lay, that he might get the earliest information from the medical attendants concerning her condition. From day to day, and sometimes from hour to hour, he watched with intense anxiety. The symptoms improved daily; the anguish caused by the fractures having subsided, the patient was in progress of slow, but to all appearance, certain recovery.

Mrs Hardman now had sufficient cause to ground a strong opposition to the match her son was endeavouring to make. She spoke to her husband; but he, good easy man, could not, he said, see any objection to the alliance. She was of their kindred, and although poor, would doubtless make an excellent wife. The imperious and disappointed lady next applied to Dodbury. She placed before him the inequality in the position of Herbert and his daughter, and was very vehement in her arguments against the marriage.

'Your fears, madam,' said Dodbury calmly, 'are at least premature. However passionately your son may express himself in reference to my daughter, she, I know, feels what is due to herself, as well as to Mr and Mrs Hardman. She would never consent to become a member of a family in which she would not be cordially received. Besides, I have yet to learn that she reciprocates the attachment which you say Mr Herbert evinces for her.'

The correct light in which Dodbury thus considered the matter, induced Mrs Hardman to change her policy. After complimenting the lawyer and Catherine for their honourable forbearance, she went on to say that she unhappily had but little influence over her son. 'Would you, therefore, endeavour to point out to him the folly of his persistence in following a young lady whom he can never marry?' Dodbury promised to do so, and the lady departed so well pleased with the interview, that she wrote to Lady Elizabeth Plympton, inviting her to spend the ensuing month at Coote-down.

That day, after hearing the most favourable report of Catherine's recovery which had yet been made, Dodbury invited Herbert to dine with him. After the cloth was removed, the subject of the morning's conversation with Mrs Hardman was introduced. Herbert stammered and blushed: he was not prepared to talk about it just then, and endeavoured to change the topic more than once; but Dodbury kept to the point, till Herbert owned, in fervent and glowing words, that Catherine had completely won his heart, and that he would rather die than be forced into a match with another woman.

'All which,' replied the matter-of-fact man of parchment, 'is very spirited and romantic, no doubt. But let us look at the affair with calm and clear eyes. You profess to love my child with strong and unquenchable passion?'

'Profess! Do you doubt me?'

'I do not doubt that you are perfectly in earnest now; but my knowledge of mankind forbids my putting much faith in the endurance of the sort of feeling with which you profess--I cannot give up the word, you see--to be inspired. My child, so says the world, is

beautiful--very beautiful. Yours may be a mere passion for her beauty.'

'You wrong me,' replied the young man; 'I have known and admired her long enough to appreciate her intrinsic worth. Her image is as dear to me as my own life'

Dodbury bent on his young friend a long and earnest look of inquiry. He was a good reader of human nature. He saw that, as the lover spoke, his eye lightened with enthusiasm, his lips quivered with emotion, his cheeks glowed with blushes. 'I have little faith in these violent emotions,' thought the wary man of the world, as he leaned back in his easy-chair for a moment's reflection. 'Fierce flames burn out quickly. This affair surrounds me with difficulties.'

About a month after Miss Dodbury's complete recovery, her father opened the same topic gradually and delicately to her. Catherine had scarcely nurtured a thought which she had not confided to her father; being her only parent, she looked up to him as the directing source of all her actions. He was 'the king of her narrow world.' In discussing this matter, therefore, though overwhelmed with a maiden shame, she was not reserved. From what she said, the sorrowing father gathered that her maiden affections were twined around a man whom her own innate propriety and pride, not to include other obstacles, should prevent her from marrying. This disclosure gave Dodbury great pain. He determined to use more vigilance, caution, and prudence, than ever. His obvious course was to bring about, if possible, a reconciliation to the match with Mrs Hardman; but he refrained. The purity of the young lover's sentiments had yet to be tried. Time, he determined, should put that to the test.

Meanwhile, Lady Elizabeth had accepted Mrs Hardman's invitation. She and Herbert Hardman were constantly thrown together; and it was manifest, after a time, that despite the almost studied neglect with which he treated her ladyship, she entertained a strong feeling in his favour. This Mrs Hardman endeavoured by every means in her power to induce Herbert to reciprocate; but in vain--the attraction of Catherine Dodbury was too powerful. It must be owned, however, that his vanity was a little flattered by the haughty beauty condescending to feel a sentiment for him.

This state of things was too equivocal and uncertain to last. Catherine strove, as long and as firmly as maiden could strive, against her love; whilst Herbert fed his by every sort of attention it was possible to evince. At length Dodbury felt the necessity of some strong measure. He perceived that consent to the match was less likely than ever, since the tender regard which Lady Plympton had evinced. He, therefore, after a long interview with Mrs Hardman, penned a kind note to Herbert, in which he, with every expression of regret for the step he felt bound to take, forbade him his house, or any further communication with his daughter.

Though long anticipated, this was a bitter blow, Catherine strove not to check the master-feeling which had now taken possession of her whole thought and being, for she knew that was impossible; but, in the purity of her heart, she felt she could love on--more tranquilly, more calmly, now that all hope was abandoned, than when it was nursed in suspense. Deprived of Herbert's presence, she would love him as an imagined, ever-remembered being--an abstraction, of which, the

embodiment was dead to her for ever. With this _new said_ consolatory sensation she determined, without a tear, never to encounter his real presence again. She wrote him a note to that effect, and, accompanied by her father, went immediately to London.

Herbert was frantic. He upbraided his mother with unfilial earnestness. He appealed to his father, who consoled him by saying he was sorry that, as he always left these matters to his mother's management, he could not interfere; adding, that so far as he was a judge, the Lady Elizabeth Plympton was an uncommonly fine young woman.

After calm consideration, Herbert made up his mind as to what he should do. The estate was entailed; that made him comparatively independent; and he would endeavour, as well as his impetuous passion would allow, to live on in the hope that at length his mother would give her consent, and that Catherine would retract her determination. In pursuance of this plan, he apologised to his mother for his previous wrath, and treated Lady Elizabeth, during the remainder of her visit, with politeness; but it was a studied, constrained, and ironical sort of courtesy, which pained the unoffending but humbled beauty much more than overt rudeness. When the young lady was about to depart, he surprised his mother by the gallant offer of accompanying her and their visitor to her father's, near Plymouth.

These favourable symptoms Mrs Hardman reported to Dodbury, who, seeing his daughter's perfect resignation, thought it might be not imprudent to return home, especially as young Hardman was to remain at the Earl of Plympton's for a few weeks. He, however, carefully concealed the apparent attachment of Lady Elizabeth from his daughter. Accordingly they returned to their home, Catherine appearing but a slight degree saddened and changed in spirit. A feverish languor, however, of which she neglected to complain or to ask medical advice for, was making inroads on her health.

Mrs Hardman, after staying a week at the earl's, returned, congratulating herself on the seeming change which was gradually creeping over her son's sentiments. She allowed him to remain a month unquestioned; but after that time, family matters required Herbert's presence at Coote-down, and she wrote, desiring him to come home. To her surprise, her letter was returned unopened, franked by the earl. Herbert must have left Plympton Court then, and would doubtless be home in the course of the day.

But that day passed, and another, and another, yet no tidings of Herbert. Mr Hardman now became alarmed, and wrote. The answer was, that his son had started for Coote-down that day-week! Inquiries were set on foot in all directions. Every house was sent to at which the young man was known to visit. Advertisements were circulated throughout the country, and afterwards published in the London newspapers, for tidings of Herbert Hardman, but without effect. The most distressing fears were apprehended respecting his fate. His parents were distracted; and the only conjecture which could be formed was, that as war had just broken out with America, he had been kidnapped by a press-gang for the sea-service.

This was a last hope, and Hardman hung upon it as upon life. He wrote to the Admiralty, and, starting for Plymouth, made every inquiry likely to settle the doubt. Alas! though press-gangs had been busy at

their oppressive work, no such name as Hardman had been returned as having been one of their victims. The conviction slowly stole over him, that some fatal accident or rash determination had ended Herbert's term of life. The dislike of her son, of which Mrs Hardman had been suspected, now melted completely away into the fondest affection for his memory. She, however, did not entirely abandon the hope of seeing him again.

What, however, of Catherine all this while? Alas! a misfortune had overtaken her, in the midst of which the mysterious disappearance of Herbert had not reached her. While in London, she, by some unknown means, had contracted that fatal disease, then violently raging in the metropolis--the small-pox. For months her life was despaired of, and of course all knowledge of the absence of Herbert was kept from her.

Mr Hardman grieved to that excess, that he gradually sunk into the grave. His funeral was a melancholy spectacle, for all knew the cause of his demise. His good easy disposition made him extensively regretted. Mrs Hardman's native strength of mind, however, kept her up amidst her double loss. She found a great consolation in assiduously attending Catherine's sick-bed. Misfortune had schooled every particle of pride from her breast, and she was a prey to remorse. She accused herself--not indeed entirely without justice--of having caused the miseries, the effects of which she was now suffering. 'Would,' she exclaimed to Dodbury one day, 'I could recall the past!'

Catherine's recovery was protracted; and, alas! when she appeared in public, it was perceived that the disease had robbed her of her brightest charms. Her face was covered with unsightly marks. Still, the graceful figure, the winning smile, the fascinating manner, remained; and few, after the first shock of the change had passed away, missed the former loveliness of the once beautiful Catherine. A year passed. By slow and cautious hints and foreshadowings, the truth was revealed; but Miss Dodbury bore all with resignation. 'It is perhaps better for me,' she one day said to Mrs Hardman, 'that it is so. Had he loved and wedded another, I dared no longer to have cherished his image as I do. But now it is my blessed privilege to love him in spirit as dearly as ever.'

The hitherto proud, tearless woman of the world wept a flood when unconsciously, innocently, Catherine spoke of the lost Herbert. On one such occasion she threw herself on the girl's neck, exclaiming, 'Oh, what have I done! what have I done!'

Mrs Hardman never spent a day apart from Catherine. What a change of feeling one short year had wrought! Formerly, she looked on the girl as a bar to her ambitious projects; now, she could not lavish love and kindness enough to satisfy her sentiment of atonement towards the same being. One evening they were walking in that part of the park which overlooks the sea, when a sail appeared in the horizon, then another, and another. The sight of ships never failed to remind the mother of her son; for the presentiment regarding his disappearance never forsook her. 'Dearest Catherine,' she exclaimed, 'would that one of those sails were wafting him back to us.' The girl trembled, and Mrs Hardman begged forgiveness for an involuntary allusion which deeply affected her companion. 'But I must be forgiven for telling you that I cannot, will not, abandon every hope of seeing him again.'

If you knew the pictures of happiness I sometimes draw, in which you and he are the chief actors, I am sure they would please instead of paining you. I sometimes fancy him returned; I go through in imagination your marriage; I feel a real delight in fancying myself placing your hand in his at the altar; I--- Here the speaker was interrupted. Her companion, clasping her suddenly for support, had, overcome with emotion, fainted in her arms!

From that day Mrs Hardman forbore all allusion to her lost son.

That summer went by, and grief had made such inroads on Mrs Hardman's mind, that her health gradually declined. Catherine also was weaker than she had ever been for a continuance previous to her last illness. Besides the disfigurement the disease had made in her countenance, grief had paled her complexion and hollowed her cheek. Yet she kept up her spirits, and was a source of unflinching consolation to Mrs Hardman, who gradually weaned her from her father's house to live entirely at Coote-down, where Dodbury also spent every hour he could spare from business. He had recovered all his lost influence in the family affairs, and was able, by his good management, to avert from the estate the embarrassments with which his fair client's former extravagances had threatened it. Mrs Hardman was now gradually becoming a rich woman.

Ere the winter arrived, she expressed a wish to pay a visit to her late father's attorney, who lived at Barnstable. Dodbury offered to accompany her; but she declined this civility. She wished to go alone. There was something mysterious in this journey. 'What could its object be?' asked the lawyer of his daughter. 'Surely, if Mrs Hardman require any legal business to be transacted, I am the proper person to accomplish it.' Catherine was equally ignorant, and the mistress of Coote-down was evidently not inclined to enlighten her.

The journey was commenced. 'I shall return in a fortnight,' said Mrs Hardman. 'Should anything occur requiring my presence earlier, pray ride or send off for me.' These were her parting words. They did not surprise Catherine, for well she knew that an irrepressible presentiment kept possession of the mother's mind that the lost son would one day return. There was not a morning that she rose from her pillow, but the expectation of seeing her son before sunset existed in her mind.

Mrs Hardman had been away a week. Catherine had removed to her father's house, and was preparing to sit down to sew, as was her custom, when her father, returning from the office adjoining, brought her a letter. 'It is very odd,' he remarked, 'but amidst my business communications I find this epistle addressed to you. See, it is marked "sailor's letter." I imagine it must be intended for one of the servants.'

Catherine made no reply; a presentiment darted into her mind. Usually a quiet, calm girl, her nature seemed suddenly to have changed. She snatched the letter from her father's hand, tore it open, looked at the signature, and fell into his arms in an agony of emotion. Absorbed by her painful struggles, Dodbury overlooked the cause of them; and Catherine, with one intense, overwhelming thought burning within her, placed the letter before him. She tried to speak, but the agony of joy which she felt choked her. The father read the signature; it was 'Herbert Hardman!'

The reaction came, and Catherine for a time was calm. She said she could listen to the contents of the letter; and Dodbury began to peruse it. Hardman was alive and well; and a new tide of emotion gushed forth from the panting listener. With the ardent impulse of a pious heart, she sunk upon her knees, and uttered a fervent thanksgiving to the universal Protector. It was long ere she could hear more. There might be something behind--some dreadful qualification to all the rapture with which her soul was flooded. This thought was insupportable, and as Dodbury saw that his child must hear the whole, he read the epistle word for word. It was a strange narrative.

When Herbert left Plympton Court, he determined to stay a night at Plymouth. Walking on a place called Britain Side, near the quay, he was unexpectedly seized by a press-gang. They hurried him on board the tender, lying off Cat-down; and immediately draughted him to a small frigate, which was to sail the next morning, as part of a convoy to some Indian ships. Accordingly, they sailed. The frigate was commissioned to drop dispatches at Gibraltar, and arriving off that place she was obliged to lag some miles behind, to fulfil her orders. After having done so, and made all sail to rejoin the convoy, she was attacked by a Barbary rover of superior strength, was beaten, most of the crew captured, and conveyed into port. They were taken to the market-place, and sold as slaves. Herbert described these extraordinary events as occurring so rapidly, that it was not till he was established with his purchaser--a man of some property, who lived on an estate at the edge of the Sahara desert--that he had time to reflect on them. Hoping that some of the officers or crew had escaped, and would take means to ransom him, he worked on from day to day for a whole year. At last an Egyptian merchant came to visit his master, to whose servant Herbert entrusted a letter, addressed to the British consul at Alexandria. This letter was fortunately delivered, and after a time, his liberty was procured. The moment he got on board ship he wrote the epistle which was now being so eagerly devoured.

Dodbury sent instantly to Mrs Hardman such a letter as was calculated to break the news not too abruptly to her. No time was mentioned for Herbert's arrival, so that suspense and some degree of uncertainty tempered the joy both father and daughter felt in making this communication.

Dodbury busied himself in corresponding with the navy-office to obtain Herbert's release from the service; but to his mortification, a reply arrived, stating, as was announced before, that no such name was in the books. It was, however, added, that a person entered as 'H. Hard' was pressed on the identical day that Herbert was, and it was suggested that his name may have been misspelled. That, however, remained to be seen.

By the time Mrs Hardman arrived at Coote-down, a second letter, addressed to her, had come from her son. It was dated 'off Havre,' and mentioned the probable time of his reappearance in England. The mother's joy was intense; yet the news had not fallen like a shock upon her, as upon Catherine. Holding fast by the daily hope that her son would some day reappear, the event was vaguely expected. Hence she was filled with unalloyed delight. All the old gaiety and pride of her disposition returned, and her first thoughts were expended on

plans for once more receiving her son--now, by right of inheritance, the possessor of Coote-down--with a splendour to exceed that which welcomed him from France on attaining his majority. _Nor_ was Catherine for a moment forgotten. Every particular of the nuptials was sketched out, and every preliminary prepared. Never were two minds so filled with happiness.

Dodbury started off a little before the time Herbert was to arrive at Portsmouth. On arriving in London, he endeavoured to pave the way for Herbert's discharge, by clearing up the mistake about the name. Luckily, Lord Plympton held office, and a note from him to the proper authorities was of great service. How eagerly were the lawyer's letters to Coote-down looked for by its inmates! The first announced that, thanks to Lord Plympton's influence, everything had been arranged, and that, on producing Herbert, and proving him to be the representative of the name 'Hard' found in the list of seamen, his discharge would be granted. The second letter was dated Portsmouth. Herbert had arrived! He was much browner than heretofore, but more robust and manly. His manners had altered most: from bordering on the polite and finical, adversity and rough usage had made them more direct and blunt. The third communication was from London, and stated that the Earl of Plympton had insisted on Herbert making his lordship's house his home. Nothing could exceed the friendly warmth with which he had been received by the whole family, especially by the Lady Elizabeth. After some difficulty, the discharge was obtained, and the letter concluded by actually fixing a day for Herbert's appearance in the hall of his fathers.

The vastness of Mrs Hardman's preparations were equal to the greatness of her joy. The scene of the former reception was to be enacted over again, but with additional splendour.

The time came, and with it the long-lost son. Mrs Hardman met him on the hall steps, and clasped him in her arms with a fondness she had never evinced before. But he was impatient. There was another being whom he longed to fold in his arms. Mrs Hardman conducted him, impelled by impatience, into her dressing-room, where Catherine waited, trembling and expectant. Herbert rushed forward and clasped her in an embrace which seemed to pour forth an age of long-suppressed and passionate affection. The mother looked on in silent delight. She seemed to share in the lovers' slightest emotion.

The first raptures having subsided, Herbert gazed upon the face of his mistress. At the first glance he would have started back, had not the firm affection of Catherine's embrace detained him. From the most vivid signs of love and hope fulfilled, his countenance altered to an expression of doubt and disappointment. 'Catherine?' he said in a tone of inquiry--'_my_ Catherine?'

'Yes,' replied the mother sorrowfully. 'But how changed,' replied Herbert somewhat abruptly; 'how very much changed!'

A mass of thought and recollection, a revulsion of feeling, passed through Catherine's brain; but tears burst forth to relieve her. Herbert gradually released her from his embrace, and his mother stepped forward to support her. She gazed steadfastly at her son, and read in his countenance a presage which she dreaded to interpret. After a time Hardman withdrew to receive the congratulations of the guests, amongst the foremost of whom were Lord and Lady Elizabeth

Plympton. He had scarcely closed the door, ere Mrs Hardman placed her weeping charge gently in a chair, and sat beside Catherine, holding her hands to her bosom.

At this moment Dodbury entered to share his daughter's joy. But what a reverse was here! Tears, silence, despondency. He was amazed, disappointed; and anxiously inquired the cause. 'My son,' said Mrs Hardman calmly, 'was a little shocked at Catherine's altered appearance. Doubtless, when his first emotions of surprise are over, all the happiness we anticipated will be realised.' But she mistrusted her own thoughts: a dark presentiment had cast its shadow over her mind.

That night was spent in festivity, in which Catherine was too ill to join. She retired to her chamber, not to give way to unavailing grief, but to fortify her mind against the worst. Mrs Hardman's duties as hostess could not be neglected, and she mixed with her guests with the dignified affability of former years. In watching her son's proceedings, she had frequent occasion to bewail a coarseness and impetuosity of manner, which had doubtless been imbibed from his recent adventures. His attentions to Lady Elizabeth were as incessant and warm as on a similar occasion they were cold and distant. When the guests were retiring, he asked in a careless tone, 'By the by, mother, what has become of Catherine?'

The answer to this question implied an accusation of cruelty in the interview with Catherine. This brought a retort from Herbert, that time was when Mrs Hardman pleaded another's cause. 'True,' replied the mother, 'but since I have known Catherine's unmatched excellence, I have grievously repented that I ever contemplated _that_ alliance. Tell me, Herbert, at once, and honestly, have your feelings changed towards Catherine?'

'When I left her she was beautiful,' was the reply; 'now she is'----

'You need not finish the sentence,' rejoined Mrs Hardman. 'I see it all, and will urge you no further: our household's happiness is wrecked.'

The sorrowing lady sought Catherine's chamber. She took her in her arms, exclaiming, 'Catherine, we are women, but we must act like men.' A flood of mingled tears relieved the dreadful emotions which agitated the wretched pair. One moment's consideration showed them the worst--a future of hopeless despair. Hardman's love _was_, then, a mere fitful passion, lit up by Catherine's former surpassing beauty.

Upon her face and form, with their matchless loveliness, his fancy had fed since his banishment; his imagination, rather than his heart, had kept her image constantly before him. But when he beheld her in reality, so different from the being his memory-dreams had lingered over, his passion received a sudden check. When he beheld her pallid cheek, there was no heart-love to tell him it was grief for him which had hollowed and blanched her beauteous face. His lightly-based passion all but extinguished, instead of soothing the misfortune which the ravages of disease had brought upon her, gradually became colder and colder. In two months after his return the final blow was struck, and Herbert Hardman became the husband of the Lady Elizabeth Plympton!

From the day of the nuptials, Catherine Dodbury covered her face with a thick black veil, and no mortal had ever seen her face, except her faithful domestic, to the day of her death. She and Mrs Hardman retired to a distant part of the country, to leave the bride and bridegroom in undisturbed possession of the estate. Mrs Hardman did not long survive her son's marriage. On her death, it was discovered that all the property at her disposal she had left to her son--to be enjoyed after his death by Catherine--who, the testatrix never doubted, when she executed the will (for which purpose she made her solitary journey to Barnstable), would, if ever he reappeared, become Herbert's wife.

But how fared the married pair?

At first they lived happily enough; but, when the enthusiasm of love was over, other excitements were sought. They removed to London. Herbert became wildly dissipated, and his wife habitually expensive. The estate was soon impoverished, trees cut down, and the whole steeped in mortgages. Crime succeeded. By a legal juggle, Catherine was deprived of her reversionary rights; and when every penny was gone, the wretched Hardman ended his days in a debtor's prison. His wife followed him, leaving no child to inherit the estates.

Catherine had, during all this while, lived with her father till his decease, which took place just before that of Herbert. She then removed to Coote-down, which had come into her possession, failing nearer heirs--her father having been a cousin two degrees removed from the late Mr Hardman, senior. There she had lived on for years, without any attempt to improve the ruined property, and in the seclusion in which I saw her at my visit.

Such is the history of the 'Home-wreck,' whose effects I witnessed in my visit to Coote-down. Since then, however, things have materially changed. A very short time ago, I received notice that the heroine of the above events had sunk into the grave, leaving most of her property to my cousin and fascinating cicerone, who is now happily married. By this time the estate has resumed its former fertility, and the house some of its past grandeur.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

A TALE OF THE SIOUX INDIANS.

BY PERCY B. ST JOHN.

In the very centre of one of the thickest and heaviest woods of the American continent, where now stands a busy manufacturing town, there was, some forty years ago, an Indian camp occupied by a small band of the wild and warlike Sioux. They were not more than fifty in number, having visited the spot merely for the purpose of hunting, and laying in a store of provisions for the winter. It chanced, however, that, coming unexpectedly upon certain Assineboins, who also were outlying in the woods, following the exciting duty of the chase, a quarrel ensued, ending in a bloody contest, in which the Sioux were victorious. With rude tents pitched, without order or method, in an open glade of the forest, with horses tethered around, and little

dusky imps fighting with the lean dogs that lay lolling their tongues lazily about, there was yet a picturesque air about the place and its extraneous features, which would have captivated the eye of one in search of nature's sunshiny spots. Deeply embosomed within the autumnal tinted wood, a purling spring that burst from the green slope of a little mound was the feature which had attracted the Indians to the locality. Rank grass had once covered the whole surface of this forest meadow, but this the cattle had closely cropped, leaving a sward that would have rivalled any European lawn in its velvety beauty, and that, falling away before the eye, became inexpressibly soft as it sunk away in the distance.

The setting sun, gilding and crowning the tree tops in wreathed glory, was gradually paling behind the heavy belt of forest that enclosed the Sioux camp; the animals, both plumed and four-footed, that filled the woods, were seeking their accustomed rest; the squaws were busily engaged in preparing for their expected husbands their evening meal, just as a long line of grim and painted warriors issued from the shelter of the trees. A loud cry from the urchins that squatted round the purlieu of the camp, with a growl of friendly recognition from the ragged dogs, brought the women to the entrance of the camp.

The Indians came in in that silent and solemn manner which they are wont more particularly to assume after the occurrence of important events. To the no little surprise of the squaws, a prisoner accompanied the returning party, and all thoughts were effaced but those in connection with the promised scene of torture and amusement. It was a young man, faultless in form, with features which in any land would have been remarkable for their intellectuality and engaging expression. His round limbs, and his erect figure, well displayed as he trod unshackled and nearly naked, were the admiration even of his enemies. His eye was keen and piercing, his lips curled in an expression of scorn and defiance, while his inflated nostrils no less marked the inward struggle of his mind, as he scowled fiercely on his captors.

In the centre of the camp was a strong but rudely-erected log-house, that served the purpose of a council-chamber, and in this the prisoner, having been so bound as to render escape, unaided, a matter of impossibility, was left, while the warriors dispersed to their wigwams in search of refreshment and repose. A large fire burned in front of the council-hall, which gave forth so bright a glare, that any one leaving or entering its precincts could scarcely avoid being seen by those around. Several maidens, too, having no hungry husbands requiring their ministering hands, were congregated in front, conversing upon the probable fate of the Assineboin, and even in some measure expressing pity for his expected death, so far had his good looks and youth gone to create sympathy in the hearts of the fair Sioux.

'Let us see if the warrior weeps,' at length said one of the girls with a laugh; 'perhaps he will ask for a petticoat, and become a squaw.'

Curiosity induced the whole bevy to agree, and next moment they were all within the walls of the council-chamber, the warriors smiling grimly in their wigwams at this evidence of the universal feminine failing. A dim and fitful glare from the fire served to reveal the

form of the luckless Indian youth seated upon a log, his eye fixed upon vacancy. For a moment curiosity kept the whole party silent, and then, education and habit exerting their influence, the group began to put in practice those arts which might be expected to awaken in the prisoner an exhibition of feeling derogatory to his dignity.

'An Assineboin has no eyes; he is a burrowing mole,' said one tauntingly; 'he creeps about the woods like a serpent, and falls into the trap of the hunters: a beaver is wiser than he. He is very cunning, but he cannot deceive a Sioux: he is very brave, but he is a prisoner, and not a wound shows that he struggled. Go; it is a squaw whom my people have brought in by mistake.'

A general laugh was the reward of the speaker's wit, while the Indian moved neither eye, limb, nor muscle. The girl, irritated, opened upon him with all that volubility of tongue which so strongly characterises their race. It was, however, in vain. The sun in the heavens was not more unmoved--a marble statue would have been life behind him--not a look or sound, not a glance, testified that he even heard what was passing. Wearied at length with their vain efforts, the bevy rushed forth into the open air, and, joining hands, commenced, with loud cries and laughter, a dance round the fire.

A deep and heavy respiration was the only sign the Indian gave of consciousness--his quick and practised senses told him he was not alone.

'Son of the Evening Light,' said a low and gentle voice, addressing him by a name which was well known in her tribe as that of their most dreaded enemy, 'the morning will come, and it will find my brothers thirsting for blood.'

'The veins of Ah-kre-nay are very full,' replied the warrior calmly; 'they can all drink.'

'The Son of the Evening Light is very brave,' said the other hurriedly, and in tones which exhibited strong feeling; 'but life is very sweet. Would he hunt again in the forest?--would his hand once more strike the grizzly bear?'

Suspecting some deep and cunning artifice of his enemies beneath this unmistakable offer of escape on the part of the fair Peritana, the Indian was sternly silent; though the tones which truth assumes are so powerful and expressive, that he felt almost convinced at heart she was sincere. The young maiden probably understood his doubts, and therefore spoke no more, but with quick and ready hands placed a knife before him, and, cutting the bonds, left him free.

'My sister is very kind,' said the young warrior warmly, after giving vent to the guttural ugh! the jocund laugh and the romping of the dancers permitting conversation--'and Ah-kre-nay will remember her in his dreams.' With this the Assineboin turned towards the entrance of the wigwam.

The Sioux girl replied not, but, pointing to the throng without, and then passing her hand significantly round her head, folded her arms, and stood resignedly before the youth.

'Would the Sioux maiden leave her tribe and tread the woods with an

Assineboin?' said the warrior curiously.

'Peritana will die if the Assineboin warrior be found to have escaped, and Peritana would rather live in the woods than in the happy hunting-ground.'

The Assineboin now felt sure that his youth, his appearance, or, at all events, his probable fate, had excited the sympathies of his visitor, and gratitude at once created in him a desire to know more of his fair friend.

'Ah-kre-nay will not depart without his sister; her voice is very sweet in his ears, sweeter than the cluck of the wild turkey to the hungry hunter. She is very little; let her hide in the corner of the wigwam.'

'Peritana has a father, tall and straight--an aged hemlock--and two brothers, bounding like the wild deer--Ah-kre-nay will not raise his hand against them?'

'They are safe, when Peritana has folded her white arms round them.'

This point settled, the Indian girl handed the youth his tomahawk and knife, and then obeyed his commands with as much alacrity as if she had been his legal squaw. The warrior then resumed his former position, placing the willow-withes which had bound him in such a manner as readily to appear, by the light of the fire, as if they were still holding him firm.

This arrangement had scarcely been made, when a couple of grim warriors appeared in the doorway, after listening to the report of the girls. Peritana, closing her eyes, held her very breath, lest it should betray her presence to her people, and thus render all her bold efforts for him whose fame, beauty, and unfortunate position had won her heart, of no avail. The young warrior, too, sat motionless as a statue, his keen ear listening for the sound of the girl's breath. To his admiration and infinite surprise, her respiration had apparently ceased. The Sioux at this moment entered, and, glaring curiously at their enemy, as if satisfied with the survey they had taken, turned away and moved towards their wigwams. Silence now gradually took the place of the activity and bustle which had previously reigned. A sense of security lulled the Indians to rest. Every one of their enemies, save the prisoner, had perished in the fight, or rather surprise, by which the victors had mastered their unarmed foes. No thought was given to treachery within the camp.

Still, the young Assineboin knew that each moment he might be missed. He therefore listened with deep attention for the slightest sound; and some quarter of an hour having passed, he rose from his half-recumbent posture, and stood perfectly erect in the very centre of the wigwam. Peritana at the same instant stood at his side, coming from without: she had left the wigwam with so noiseless a step, that even the exquisite organs of the Indian had been eluded. Neither spoke, but the girl placed in the warrior's hands a short rifle, a powder-horn, and a shot-pouch, which he clutched with a delight which a sense of the danger of his position alone prevented him from manifesting openly. Slinging them in their proper places, Ah-kre-nay moved with caution to the door of the wigwam, and next moment was stalking firmly but noiselessly along the camp, followed by Peritana,

gazing mournfully at the habitations of her tribe. Suddenly, as they reached the outskirts of the wigwams, and were passing one of the largest and most conspicuous of the whole, a voice from within growled forth a hoarse demand of who was there?

'Peritana,' said the girl, in a voice which was choked with emotion, 'is not well; she seeks the woods, to drive away the bad spirit.'

During this brief colloquy the young brave had stepped within the deep shadow of the tent, his rifle ready cocked. As the girl ceased speaking, the head of an old warrior was protruded from the wigwam door.

'Thy sisters have been asleep since the dance was over,' said the aged Indian; 'why is Peritana awake?'

The girl saw her companion level his rifle--her agitation was intense. Her feelings were deeply moved on both sides.

'Father,' said she, and the rifle was raised instantly, 'Peritana goes to the woods; she will not tarry long. Her head is hot; she cannot sleep now.'

Satisfied with this explanation, the old Sioux retired once more within the tent, leaving the young warrior and his sad companion to reach the forest unmolested. Peritana was deeply moved at parting from her parents, and, but that she knew that death would be her portion on the discovery of her aiding the escape of Ah-kre-nay, would gladly have returned to where, as her father had told her, her sisters slept soundly. The die, however, was cast, and she was now in the woods, the companion of the runaway.

We must pass over a year of time, and take up our narrative at some distance from the spot above described. It was a deep dell on the banks of the upper waters of one of those streams that serve to swell the Ontario. Perhaps a lovelier spot was never discovered by man. At a place where the river made a bend, there rose from its bank, at some distance from the water, a steep but not perpendicular cliff, thickly grown with bushes, and spotted with flowers, while tall trees crowned the crest of the eminence. Of a horseshoe form, the two ends approached the edge of the stream, leaving, however, to the east a narrow ledge, by which the vale could be approached. The space between the water and the bottom of the cliff was occupied by a sward of velvety smoothness, while beneath the rock was a dark and gloomy natural cavern. The most prominent feature of the scene, however, was of human formation. It was an Indian hut, which doubtless rose in this spot for the purpose of concealment. No better place could have been found within many miles, as the portion of the river which flowed in sight, from its proximity to a fall, was navigable only to the smallest canoe, and was therefore never made use of by travelling-parties. The wigwam was of the usual dome-like shape, roofed with skins tastefully and elegantly adjusted, while a mass of creeping and flowering shrubs that entwined themselves around it, showed it to be no erection of a day. It was a model of cleanliness and neatness, while a fireplace at some distance out-of-doors, within the cavern, showed that, at least during the summer months, the inconvenience of smoke was dispensed with within its walls. The whole was wrapped in deep silence, looking as if utterly abandoned by every trace of humanity.

The sun was at its fullest height, proclaiming midday to the tenants of the woods and fields, when a rustling was heard at the entrance of the little dell, and an Indian bounded headlong within its shelter. The wild gleaming of his eye, the fresh wounds which covered his body, the convulsive thick breathing, the fierce clutching of his tomahawk and rifle, showed that he fled for his life, while the sound of many voices below the crag betokened how near his pursuers were to him. Shaking his empty powder-horn with a look of deep grief, the Indian warrior threw aside his rifle, now more useless than a pole of equal length, and, a fire of energy beaming from his eye, raised his tomahawk. It was, however, but for a moment--his wounds were too severe to allow any hope of a successful struggle, and next moment the brave stood unarmed, leaning against the entrance of his wigwam. On came the pursuers, with an eagerness which hatred and the desire of revenge rendered blind, and, as they leaped headlong down through the narrow gap between the water and the cliff, the wounded Indian felt that, with a firm arm and a good supply of powder and lead, he might have driven back his enemies in confusion. No sooner did the Sioux behold their former prisoner, Ah-kre-nay, standing with dignified calmness at the door of his own wigwam, than their self-possession at once returned, and the whole party surrounded him in silence, casting, meanwhile, envious but stealthy looks round his romantic retreat. An aged warrior, after a due period of silence, advanced and addressed the captive.

'Ah-kre-nay is very nimble; twelve moons ago he ran like a woman from the Sioux; to-day he ran again, but his feet forsook him.'

'Twelve moons ago,' replied the captive with exultation flashing in his eyes, 'Ah-kre-nay was in the midst of a nest of vultures--fifty warriors surrounded him; but the manitou blinded all their eyes, and the Assineboin cheated their revenge.'

'But Ah-kre-nay was not alone?' said the old warrior, deeply moved at his own question.

'The flower of the hills fled to the woods with him--her tongue was the tongue of a lying Sioux, but her heart was that of a brave Assineboin.'

'Where is my child?' said the old warrior, in vain endeavouring to penetrate the mystery of the hut's contents, and dropping his figurative language under the influence of excitement--'say, Son of the Evening Light, where is my child?'

The warrior gazed curiously at the old man; but folding his arms, made no reply.

The Sioux warrior paused a moment, and then turning to his young men, ordered them to bind the prisoner, and commence that long list of atrocious cruelties which ever precede the death of a victim among the Indians. The hut was scattered to the winds in a moment, and its wood served to commence the pile which was to play the principal part in the scene of torture. Ah-kre-nay looked on in silence, his lip curling scornfully, until the preparations were all made; he then took his place at the post with sullen composure, and prepared to suffer in silence all the horrors meditated by the Sioux. A grim warrior now stood forward with a keen and glittering tomahawk in his

hand, which he began waving and flourishing before the eyes of his victim, in the hope of making him show some sign of apprehension. In vain, however, did the old Sioux try every feint; now he would aim a blow at his feet, and as suddenly change to his face; now he would graze his very ear; and at length, enraged at the stoicism of his victim, he raised the gleaming hatchet, as if about to strike in earnest. The smart crack of a rifle was simultaneous with the attempt, and the tormentor's arm fell useless by his side. With habitual fear of the fatal weapon, the Sioux sought cover, and gazing upward, saw on the summit of the cliff Peritana--a babe slung in a cradle at her back--in the act of loading her rifle.

'Father,' cried she somewhat wildly, and pointing out how completely she commanded the pass of the dell, 'in the green days when Peritana walked not alone, you fed and sheltered me; warm was my wigwam, and sweet the venison: with which my platter was ever filled. Peritana is very grateful, but'--and she pointed to her child--' Peritana is a mother, and she sees her husband, the father of the Little Wolf, in the hands of his enemies. Her eyes grow dim, and her memory departs. She cannot see her father, but she sees the enemy of her husband; she forgets she was ever a Sioux, and remembers only she is now an Assineboin. If his enemies kill her husband, Peritana will use her rifle as long as her powder lasts, and then will leap into the water, and join Ah-kre-nay in the happy hunting-ground of his people. But a Sioux warrior will not forget he has a daughter,' continued she more tenderly; 'give her back the father of her child, and Peritana will bring a great warrior into the Sioux camp.'

The Sioux saw at once the force of her proposition. Certain death awaited many, if not the whole band, should they strive to ascend the pass in the face of an infuriated widow; while, should she prevail upon Ah-kre-nay to forget, for her sake, his hereditary antipathies, and join the Sioux band, a mighty advantage would accrue. When free, and acting with perfect freedom, it was probable that the young Assineboin would show but little resistance to this offer. In ten minutes after the appearance of Peritana on the cliff, her husband, who had been an attentive listener, stood fully armed at the mouth of the pass, free. He was just about to commence the ascent, when, determined to win the admiration of the Sioux at once, he turned towards them once more, and, standing in their midst, laid his arm affectionately on the shoulder of the chief, and cried: 'Come, Peritana; Ah-kre-nay is with his friends; let not his squaw be afraid to join him.'

Placing himself and wife thus completely in the power of the Sioux, without any agreement as to treatment, was a tacit reliance on their honour, which won upon them at once, and a loud shout of applause proclaimed that enmity was at an end; and in a few moments more the old Sioux warrior was gazing, with all the pride of a grandfather, upon the offspring of his favourite daughter. A few hours of rest ensued, during which Ah-kre-nay's wounds were bound up, after which the whole party went on their way rejoicing, and the Sioux numbered one great warrior more within their bosom. Thus, by the exertion of remarkable presence of mind, Peritana preserved herself a husband, saved the babe from orphanship, restored a daughter to her father, and added a brave soldier to the forces of her tribe. Weeping and wailing would have availed her nothing; undaunted courage gave her the victory. The facts of this tale are current still among the wandering Sioux, who often relate to their wives and young men the

famous deeds of the lovely Peritana.

LUCY FENNEL:

A TALE OF HUMBLE HEROISM.

In a small village near the town of Honiton, in Devonshire, there lived a widow and her son. The old woman had, till her sight failed her, not only earned a sufficient livelihood, but had saved a little money, by making that kind of lace for the manufacture of which Honiton is so widely famed. When, from the infirmities of age, she could no longer ply her vocation successfully, it happened fortunately that her son, by his labour as a farm-servant, was able to make up the deficiency. He was a fine spirited young fellow, who went through his laborious occupations with a good-will and cheerfulness which was so satisfactory to his employer that he determined to advance, whenever opportunities offered, so assiduous a servant and good a son.

Some two years before our story opens, it happened that a young woman, the daughter of a decayed farmer in the southern part of the county, came to superintend the dairy of Luke Damerel's master. It was not unnatural that the buxom lass and the young man should form a mutual attachment. As they were both very well-conducted persons, their love passages were looked upon with a favourable eye both by Dame Damerel and by the farmer's wife, Mrs Modbury, though neither openly sanctioned it, for prudence' sake. Luke and Lucy, however, loved on, as they thought, in secret, determining not to reveal their mutual affection till they should be placed in circumstances to get married. Things remained thus for more than a year and a half, when Farmer Modbury's wife died, and other circumstances occurred which induced him to promote Luke to a more lucrative and responsible situation on the farm. Shortly after the demise of his wife also, he found it expedient to give Lucy, in addition to her dairy duties, the sole charge of the housekeeping.

With the rise in his fortunes, Luke's thoughts were directed to the accomplishment of his dearest hope, and he revealed his passion to his mother, consulting her on the propriety of the step he wished to take; which was simply to marry Lucy, and bring her to live in the cottage. The old dame was not surprised at the proposal, for she expected it to be made from the day Luke's wages were increased. She had made up her mind what to advise, and did not shrink from advising it, although it would not be agreeable to her son. 'Luke,' she said, 'you must still wait. Your earnings are not sufficient to keep Lucy comfortably; and she, you know, would have to give up her place, which is now a good one. So you would not only be injuring yourself, but her also.'

Luke fired up at this, and unkindly hinted that his mother did not wish to have a companion to share their home. The old dame, though much hurt, denied that any such feeling swayed her, and advised him to consult Lucy herself. Dame Damerel had that confidence in the girl's good sense and prudence, that she was sure even Lucy would not consent to marry so soon as Luke wished.

In no very amiable mood the lover sought his mistress at the

farmhouse. He went into the kitchen, and not finding Lucy there, inquired of one of the maids where she was. With a sly ominous expression the girl replied 'that Miss Lucy was in the best parlour making tea for master.' This information gave poor Luke a sort of panic. He trembled, turned pale, and hastily retreated from the house. Discontented thoughts filled his mind. 'No doubt,' he said almost aloud, as he walked homewards--'no doubt she'll not consent when I propose to marry her, though I can keep her. Farmer Modbury will be a better match for her than a poor hard-working lad like me. But I'll see about that--it shall be now or never. If she won't marry me in a week, she never shall!' In truth, Luke had been feeling a pang of jealousy creep over him ever since Lucy was promoted to be Modbury's housekeeper; and that she should be admitted alone with him into the best parlour to make his tea, confirmed what were previously only suspicions. On entering the cottage, his wild looks almost frightened his mother; but he was silent as to the cause, and went sullenly to bed.

Farmer Modbury kept up the good old Devonshire custom of dining with all the people in his employment; and the day after, when Luke with the rest of his companions sat at the table, he watched the actions and countenances of Lucy and her master, to catch new causes for the tormenting feeling which possessed him. The meal concluded, he followed the girl to the dairy, as was his custom; for a short and sweet interview could always be snatched at that time. The present one was, however, the reverse. In a hard tone of voice, and with an abrupt manner, Luke inquired if she were ready to have him? The girl frankly answered, 'Of course I am, Luke; but what should make you ask the question on such a sudden!'

Luke's jealousy was a little assuaged by Lucy's open and confiding manner, and becoming more calm, he told her his plans. 'It will never do, Luke,' she replied.' Besides, my father, whom I must send to about it, would not consent. No, no, we must wait.'

'Wait! for what, I should like to know? To give master, I suppose, a chance of--of--'

'Of what, Luke?'

'Why,' said Luke, worked up into a sort of frenzy by the very thought--' why, of asking you to take poor dead-and-gone missus's place!'

The colour mounted to Lucy Fennel's face. She cast a reproachful look on her lover, and seemed ready to cry; but woman's pride came to her aid, and she left the dairy, as if afraid to hear another of Luke's terrible words. Had the young man not gone out immediately, he might have heard ill-suppressed sobs issuing from the room into which the maiden had shut herself. 'She is afraid to face me,' said Luke to himself as he crossed the courtyard. 'No, no, she can't deceive me, though she is trying.'

The directions Damerel gave to the workmen that afternoon were so injudicious, that his master happening to overhear him tell a ditcher to fill up a drain which ought to have been opened, gave him a severe reprimand. Luke received what was said with the worst feelings, continually repeating to himself, 'Ah, he has a spite against me now. He did not make that girl his housekeeper for nothing. I'm not

wanted here, I can see.'

When work was over, it happened that as Luke was returning to his own cottage he met young Larkin, a neighbouring farmer's son, who asked him to accompany him to Honiton, where he was going to 'see the sodgers,' a regiment being about to pass through the town on its way to form part of Plymouth garrison. To beguile the care which tormented him, he gladly consented, and having gone home to put on his Sunday clothes, was soon equipped for the evening's expedition. The two friends had to pass Modbury's parlour window, and it was tea-time. Luke cast an inquisitive glance towards it, and trembled when he saw the blind being slowly pulled up. Presently it revealed the figure of Lucy, very nicely dressed with a new and handsome cap. Something having prevented the blind from being drawn quite to the top, Lucy mounted on the window-seat to adjust it, and when about to descend, Luke plainly saw his master come forward, give her one hand, while with the other he assisted her down by the waist! Damerel grasped the tree he was resting against for support; a film came over his eyes; but a few rough jokes from Larkin recovered him, and hearing the military band in the distance, he endeavoured to forget his cares, and trudged on towards Honiton.

Meanwhile, the moment Lucy had finished her duties at the tea-table, she hastened to Damerel's cottage, in the hope, not of seeing her lover, but his mother, alone. The old dame, perceiving her pale and in low spirits, thought she divined the cause, by supposing the girl was sorrowing at the imprudence of the step Luke had proposed to her. 'Well, well,' said the kind old woman, 'things may not be so bad after all, Lucy. And since Luke has set his heart so much upon it, and you, I am sure, are nothing loath, we must try and manage it. I'll tell you what I've been thinking, girl. You see the great mischief will be your being obliged to give up your place at the farm; now, I know a plan by which that loss may be mended. You are a quick, handy maid; and suppose--suppose--and here the good old woman took Lucy's hands in hers--'suppose I teach you lace-making?'

These words poured a light into Lucy's heart which seemed to banish all her grief. The means of rendering herself independent of her present situation was all she wished for. She loved Luke tenderly, dearly, and with a fervent, virtuous desire, wished to become his wife. This wish had grown much stronger since her painful interview with him, not only because she wished to prove she was ready to sacrifice everything for his sake, but for another and more perplexing reason. Her master had paid her attentions that evening which left no doubt on her mind that he desired her for his wife.

When Mrs Damerel heard the news, she was much distressed. 'Oh, it is too bad!' she exclaimed, 'to think that my Luke should be the means of preventing you from marrying so well--you who are worthy of any man.'

'Do not think of that; I could not be happy with one I do not love. So now, dear mother--for I will always call you so--let me hear what plan you propose.'

'Well, instead of talking idly, as we always do when you come to see us, you shall let me teach you the lace-making. Come every night, and in a month or two I shall be able to put you in a way to earn quite as much as you do now at Farmer Modbury's. When this is the case, we

must see about getting yourself and Luke asked in church, for surely both your earnings put together will be enough to keep you comfortably.'

'But will not the farmer bear some enmity to poor Luke?'

'I will answer for him, girl, I have known him longer than he has known himself. I nursed him, and I can say with truth that a better-hearted man does not live. Should he again offer you any civilities, tell him the whole truth, and I'll warrant he will not repeat them.'

That evening Lucy tripped home with a light heart. When she retired to rest, she built many an air-castle of future happiness.

The next morning, as the home-servants of Modbury's farm were going to their daily toil, they found a crowd round Damerel's cottage door. On inquiring into the cause, they were told that Luke had in a fit of despair enlisted as a soldier, and that the news had wrought so violently on the feelings of his mother, that it was thought she could never recover!

The scene inside the cottage was painfully distressing. The old dame was lying on a bed with her clothes still about her, showing that she had not gone to rest the whole night. The village doctor was by her side, having just bled her, whilst everything strewed about the room indicated that the always revolting operation had but recently been performed. The neighbours, as they crowded round the door, denounced Luke's conduct as rash and heartless. In the midst of their denunciations they were joined by another, to whom every word they uttered was as a death-wound. It was Lucy.

Whoever has had the misfortune of often seeing women placed in sudden difficulties, or overtaken by an unforeseen misfortune, must have remarked that they occasionally act with unexpected firmness. They frequently show a calmness of manner and a directness of purpose, forming quite an exception to their every-day demeanour. It is after the danger is over, or the first crisis past, that they break down, as it were, and show themselves to belong to the weaker sex. Thus it was with Lucy. When she entered the cottage, she had a full knowledge of the death-blow which had been inflicted on her hopes of future happiness. Still, she seemed calm and collected. When she took the basin from the surgeon to bathe Mrs Damerel's temples herself, her hand shook not, and she performed the kindly office as neatly as if no misfortune had befallen her. When she went to the door to entreat the neighbours to stand away from it, that sufficient air might be admitted into the room, her voice, though rather deeper in tone than usual, was calm and firm. Had she not occasionally pressed her hand tightly against her brow, as if to cool its burning agony, you would have thought that she suffered no further anxiety than that which is usually felt whilst attending the sick.

It was, however, when she was left alone with the exhausted, almost senseless mother, that the tide of grief took its full course. Lucy wept like one distraught. Through the deep, black future which lay before her, she could see no gleam of hope or sunlight. She unjustly upbraided herself for having, however innocently, given Luke cause of suspicion. The weight of blame which she took to herself was almost insupportable. 'I have been his ruin!' she exclaimed, burying her

face in his mother's bosom.

When the old dame had strength to speak, she whispered Lucy not to give way, but to bear up against it. The past, she wisely said, was incurable; 'We must keep our senses whole for the future. While we keep heart, there is no fear of our seeing him again, yet.'

The story reached Farmer Modbury as he was sitting down to breakfast. He was deeply shocked even when he? knew no more than that Luke had enlisted; but when, on visiting the cottage, the whole truth was explained to him by Lucy, he felt both grief and disappointment. He was, however, determined not to abandon his suit as hopeless, and returning home, wrote to her father (he was a widower), explaining what had happened, and giving a frank exposition of his own honourable views as regarded Lucy. 'No doubt,' he concluded his epistle, 'she will soon forget this early and unhappy attachment.' Modbury was a shrewd man, and a clever farmer, but he knew very little about women's hearts.

From that day he was extremely kind and considerate to Lucy. Perceiving how much happier the girl was when she returned from visiting Mrs Damerel than at other times, Modbury diminished her labours by employing another dairymaid, so that Lucy might have more leisure, which he had no objection should be spent with the invalid.

One morning while Lucy was preparing the household dinner, a message arrived from the cottage. Her presence was desired there immediately. Lucy lost no time, and was soon in her accustomed seat at the bed-head. Mrs Damerel placed a letter in her hands. It was from her son. With beating heart Lucy opened it, and after time sufficient to master the emotions which the sight of Luke's handwriting caused her, she proceeded to read it aloud. It ran thus:

'MAIDSTONE BARRACKS, KENT.

'MY DEAREST MOTHER--I have at last found enough courage to take up my pen, hoping this will find you in good health, as it leaves me at present. I hope you have forgiven me for what I have done. I send you two pounds, part of the bounty I received for enlisting. Do not be afraid, my dear mother, that whilst I live you shall want.

'When I went to Honiton, I was persuaded to enlist, after the soldiers had passed through, by a sergeant of a horse-regiment, and I took the king's money; so I am now a private in the --th Dragoons. I am rough-riding every day, and expect to be passed as fit for regular duty soon, when I shall be draughted off to the Indies, where our head-quarters are. I should be very comfortable if it was not for thinking about home, so much. They have found out I am a good judge of horses, and know all about their complaints, so the sergeant-major told me yesterday I shall get on very well in the Indies, if I keep a sharp look-out.

'Dear mother, I shall see you again when I come back--I know I shall; and we shall be happy together; for now I have nobody else to care about upon the earth. I hope she will be happy, for she deserves all this world can afford, and I have always found Mr Modbury a kind master, so I am sure he will make her a kind husband. Dear mother, there is Tom Larkin, who promised me, after I had listed, that he and his sister Sarah would look in upon you sometimes, and help you. May

God bless you, my dear mother. My heart was well-nigh broken; but my comrades have been very kind to me, and I want for nothing. Good-bye, mother, and believe me your ever-affectionate son,

LUKE DAMEREL.

'P.S.--I do not know when we shall sail for the Indies; but in case, please to direct to Private Damerel, --th Regiment, Light Dragoons, Maidstone, or elsewhere; and the letter will be sure to come to hand. Once more, God bless you, and may God bless _her_ too, dear mother.'

To describe Lucy's feelings while she read this simply-worded epistle would be impossible. All the love and tenderness which she had felt for Luke during the time she had known him, seemed to be concentrated within her at that moment. At first she mourned the step he had taken as hopeless and irreparable; but, casting her eyes upon the lace-work she had the day before been doing, a sudden thought seized her. By means of _that_, something might be eventually accomplished. With these thoughts she quietly folded the letter, placed it on the table beside the bed, and resumed the lace-work, scarcely speaking a word.

Mrs Damerel mistook this action for indifference, and in her sincere desire for the girl's welfare, urged--not for the first time--plans and sentiments which, though well meant, were utterly revolting to Lucy. Luke had, she argued, no doubt behaved very ill, by rashly and without explanation tearing himself not only from her, but from every person to whom he was dear. On the other hand, Farmer Modbury's advances were very flattering, and she could hardly blame a girl who had been so cruelly treated, even by her own son, were she to accept the good-fortune that lay before her.

Still Lucy went on practising her lace-work, her heart beating, and her averted eyes swimming with tears. At length she exclaimed: 'Dame, you will break my heart if you ever talk in this way again. To you I look for comfort and strength in loving Luke, which I shall never cease to do. I, whether innocent or not, am the cause of depriving you of the comfort of his company, and I am determined to restore him to us both. You may think it impossible, but it is not. I have thought, and thought, and reckoned up everything, and am quite sure it can be done.'

'I cannot make out what you mean,' said Mrs Damerel.

'Why, that I intend, as soon as I am able to do it well enough, to take work from the town, to leave Farmer Modbury, and come and be with you. We can live on very little, and every spare shilling we will put into the savings-bank, until it amounts to a sufficient sum to buy Luke off.' She then industriously resumed her work. It was some time before Mrs Damerel could comprehend the full intent and meaning of the sacrifice the girl proposed. At first she thought it was a mere flighty resolution, that would not hold long; and even when she was made to understand that it was unshaken, she looked at the achievement as impossible; for at that time the prices for lace-work were falling, in consequence of the recent introduction of machinery.

About a week after this all her doubts vanished, for, on Michaelmas-day, when Lucy's term of service with Farmer Modbury expired, sure enough she brought her box, and declared she had come

to stay with her adopted mother. She had previously been to a master-manufacturer in Honiton with a specimen of her lace, and it was so well approved, that she obtained a commission for a large quantity on the spot. By this time the old dame had completely recovered from her illness, and was able to move about, so as to attend to the little domestic concerns of the cottage; Lucy could therefore give her undivided attention to her work.

Her proceedings were by no means agreeable to her father or to Modbury. The former wrote enjoining her by no means to leave the farmer's house; but the letter came too late, for she had already taken her departure. Modbury, however, in replying to an epistle in which Fennel had given him free consent to marry his daughter, expressed a thorough conviction of the firmness of the girl's purpose, and that at present it was impossible to shake it. Though she had left his roof he should continue to watch over her, and hoped, by persevering kindness and attention, eventually to win her affections. Under these circumstances, Lucy quietly established herself in Mrs Damerel's cottage.

At first she found it a hard matter to gain sufficient money for her labour to recompense the dame for her board and lodging, which she insisted upon doing every time she was paid by her employers. Still she wrought on, although her savings were small, and at the end of several months they bore a hopeless proportion to the large sum which was required. But time seemed a small object to her: she looked forward to the end, and in it she saw such a world of reward and happiness, that no toil would be too much to arrive at it. She had answered Luke's letter with her own hand, assuring him of her unshaken attachment, in spite of all that had happened; but unfortunately he had sailed for India, and it was sent thither after him, in obedience to the vague 'elsewhere' which had been added to the superscription according to his wish.

Slow progress was not the only trouble Lucy had to contend with. Modbury's attentions pained her as much as Luke's absence; the more so because they were so full of consideration for her welfare. She knew she never could return his kindness, and felt that she did not deserve it. She often told Dame Damerel that a show of hostility from the worthy farmer would not have pained her so much as his unremitting attentions.

Then, when the neighbours came in to gossip, they sometimes spoke against Luke. They would tell her that a man who would suspect her on such slight grounds, and act as he did, could never be true to her; that he would see some other whom he would prefer, and some day send home word that he was married; neither was it likely that he would ever come home alive from the Indies. These poisoned arrows, which were meant as comfort, glanced harmlessly from Lucy, who was invulnerably shielded by trusting love and hope. She would answer: 'very likely,' or 'it may be,' or 'there is no knowing what may happen in this world of trouble,' and still rattle about her lace-pegs over the pillow on which it was made with the quickness of magic. Amongst her visitors, however, there were two who invariably offered her better consolation; these were Larkin and his sister. Tom 'stuck up,' as he expressed it, for his friend Luke, and always put the blame of the enlistment on the wiles and arts of the recruiting-sergeant, who regularly entrapped him into the deed. Many a happy winter evening was spent in that humble cottage by Lucy and

her friends. Luke was never forgotten in their conversations; for there was the lace which was being unweariedly made for his release to remind them of him. When Modbury made his appearance (and this was very often) the subject was of course dropped.

A year passed away. Neither Lucy nor Modbury had made much progress in their several aims; scarcely a tithe of the requisite sum for Luke's discharge had been saved; neither could Modbury perceive that his suit advanced. Lucy's conduct sorely perplexed him. She always seemed delighted when he came in, and received him with every mark of cordiality; but whenever he dropped the slightest plea in his own behalf, tears would come into her eyes, and she entreated him to desist. He began to remark also, that besides the presence of the old dame, which was surely a sufficient safeguard against any warmth of manner he might be betrayed into, Lucy always contrived to have Susan Larkin with her. Should she be absent, Lucy would be telling Modbury what a good, industrious, excellent girl she was; which, indeed, was the truth.

No letter came from Luke, and there was no proof that he had received hers. Lucy began gradually to despond; for work became slack, and at times she only got enough to employ her half the day. Not to lose ground, however, she hired herself to the neighbouring farmers' wives to sew during her spare time, leaving Dame Damerel to the occasional care of Susan Larkin. While she was sitting at work during one of these engagements, she compared her own cheerless lot with the happiness which surrounded her. The farmer was reading the newspaper, his wife and daughter assisting her in the work she was doing. As she made this comparison, and thought of Luke, banished as it were from his home, and enduring perhaps severe hardships, she could scarcely refrain from weeping. Now and then the farmer read a paragraph from the paper, and presently exclaimed: 'Ah, our young squire has got safe to his regiment in India.' At these words Lucy trembled, but went on rapidly with her work, lest her emotion should be noticed. She had previously heard that the son of a neighbouring proprietor had bought a commission in Luke's regiment, and this was almost like having news of Luke himself. Presently the reader went on with the paragraph: "'We understand there has been a fatal disease which has carried off many of the'"----- The farmer made a pause here, and Lucy's heart sank within her. 'Oh, I see,' the old gentleman ejaculated; 'the corner is turned down--'"has carried off many"--yes--"many of the----horses."

This little incident produced such strong emotions in Lucy's frame, that though she felt, upon the whole, much gratified by merely hearing about Luke's regiment and its horses, yet she became too ill to proceed with her work, and found it necessary to return to the cottage.

Lucy soon altered her plan of engaging herself out; for the idea struck her, that if she were to make lace on a sort of speculation, and keep it by her till it was wanted, she would in the end make a greater profit. Having, when her father was in good circumstances, been partly educated at an Exeter boarding-school, she had acquired there some knowledge of drawing, and by exercising her pencil, she now invented some very pretty lace-patterns.

Lucy wrought and hoped on for another year. Still nothing was heard from Luke. A new calamity had fallen upon Lucy. Her father, a broken

and decayed man, had come to live near her, and was now nearly dependent on her for support. Both Modbury and Farmer Larkin gave him little jobs to do, for which they liberally recompensed him. The quantity of lace Lucy was employed to make was so small, that it just sufficed to keep her and her father; while her little capital, instead of increasing, was gradually absorbed by the purchase of materials for the stock her industry accumulated. Susan Larkin frequently visited her, and Modbury was seldom absent.

No ill-fortune seemed to depress the persevering girl. Even though she was working almost night and day, she still kept up her spirits. Indeed, at every new misfortune, a fresh accession of firmness and resolution seemed to nerve her. About this time her father died, invoking blessings on her for having been so good a daughter. After the first shock of grief had passed, she continued her task amidst the most hopeless circumstances. The lace-trade sunk lower and lower; still Lucy wrought on, under a strong presentiment that it would improve. She did not relax one hour's labour, although she was now receiving much less for it than when she began. She accumulated so large a stock, that at last every shilling of her savings was spent for materials. In exchange, however, she possessed a large quantity of beautiful lace, that, even if it sold at the present low prices, would have yielded a small profit. At last things became so bad, that a sale seemed unavoidable, disadvantageous as it might be. Lucy, now an object of commiseration amongst the neighbours, still retained her cheerfulness. That so much patience, modesty, and firmness of purpose should not meet its reward, seemed almost impossible; and fortune smiled on Lucy when nearly every hope seemed to have left her.

It is well known by what trifles in the mercantile world fortunes are lost and won. The detention of a ship, the non-arrival of a mail, has ruined hundreds; whilst some equally unforeseen caprice of fashion or similar accident has made as many fortunes. It happened, when Lucy had the greatest cause for despondency, that within a short period two members of the royal family died. Mourning lace was then much in request, and it happened that most of Lucy's stock was of that kind. Suddenly, commissions from Honiton flowed in, and Lucy was kept constantly at work, at wages much higher than before--her own stock acquiring fresh value while the price continued to rise. Young Larkin, who was a shrewd fellow, advised her to 'hold' it till the value increased still more. She took the advice, and at the proper moment sold it at a price she never hoped to realise. At the end of a week she found herself in possession of a sum which was, within a few pounds, sufficient to procure her lover's discharge from the army!

Poor Lucy could hardly believe her eyes when the manufacturer laid down the bank-notes before her. She pinned them carefully into the bosom of her frock, and hastened to tell Dame Damerel that all their troubles were over. The old woman's eyes glistened as Lucy unpinned her treasure and laid it on the table. It was counted, re-counted, and wondered over. What was to be done with it till the rest was procured? Who would take care of it?

This delight was, however, somewhat damped when they came to consider that, putting aside all uncertainty about his fate, it would be at least six months before Luke's discharge could reach him; then an additional half-year would elapse ere he could get back. It was a long time to wait. 'Never mind, dear mother,' said Lucy, 'the time

that has passed since he left seems scarcely a year, although it is three. It is only because the twelvemonth is to come that it appears to be so long. Still,' she said, considering and heaving a deep sigh, 'we have not got his discharge yet, and great as this sum is, some more must be earned to make up the rest.'

'Leave that to me,' returned Mrs Damerel.

Next day, when Lucy returned from the post-office, where she had taken a letter for Luke, she found another lying on the table, in Larkin's handwriting. On reading the superscription, she found it was addressed to the War-Office. 'Yes,' said Mrs Damerel in answer to her inquiring glances, 'it is all done now, Lucy; and this letter is to be sent off to tell the great people that we can have the money ready to buy our dear Luke off again.'

Larkin had, in truth, gladly supplied the small sum which was deficient. The letter was sent, and in less than a week an immense dispatch found its way to the village, which excited universal wonderment. It was a great oblong missive, with the words 'On His Majesty's Service' printed at the top. It had an enormous seal, and was directed to 'Mr Thomas Larkin.' A crowd of idlers followed the postman with this epistolary phenomenon, in the hope of getting some knowledge of its contents. Tom, however, when he read it, coolly put it into his pocket, and walked to the cottage without saying a word to anybody.

This letter seemed like a climax to Lucy's good-fortune, and 'begged to inform Mr Larkin that Corporal Farrier Damerel was on his way to England to superintend the selection of troop-horses, and that his discharge should be made out when he had arrived and performed that duty.'

Scarcely a month after the arrival of the official dispatch, a corporal of dragoons was seen trespassing on Farmer Modbury's fields, by crossing them in great haste without any regard to the footpaths. An old ploughman roughly warned him off, threatening personal ejection. 'What, Roger Dart!' exclaimed the soldier, 'is this the way you welcome a man home after a long absence?' The ploughman stared, and said he did not know him. 'Do you know,' rejoined the corporal with a trembling voice and anxious countenance--'do you know Lucy Fennel?'

'Of course I do,' returned Roger; 'everybody knows her, and, if I may make so bold, loves her too! Why, sure enough, there she is sitting--don't you see?--there, sitting at Dame Damerel's door making lace for the life of her.'

The stranger flew across the field, and the ploughman saw him bound over the hedge, take Lucy into his arms, and drag her, bewildered and enraptured, into the cottage. 'Why, dang me if it bean't Luke Damerel!' exclaimed the rustic, slapping the thighs of his leather breeches; 'how main glad the folks will be to see 'un!--I know what I'll do.' Whereupon Roger trudged across the fields towards the church. He happened to be one of the parish-ringers, and calling his mates from the fields, they all trudged off to the bell-tower, and rang out as merry a peal as ever was heard. The whole country was in a commotion; the news ran like wild-fire from lip to lip and from ear to ear, till the cottage was beset with visitors within and without.

But Luke heard no welcome, felt no grasp, but that of Lucy and his mother. As to Lucy, an intense happiness thrilled through her, which absorbed all her faculties, except that of feeling the full extent of her bliss.

This story of patience, endurance, and faith in humble life is almost ended. Luke's furlough only extended to a week, which he spent as an inmate of the farm, at Modbury's earnest entreaty; for he now gave up all hope of Lucy, and determined to help in rewarding her patience by promoting the match with his rival. At the end of that time, Luke was obliged to depart for Yorkshire, to meet the veterinary-surgeon and purchase horses, in which he was found of the utmost use; but this, together with his excellent character, operated most unfavourably for his discharge. The authorities were unwilling to lose so good a soldier. The interest of the 'squire,' however, whose son was a cornet in Luke's troop, was set to work, the hard-earned money paid, and the discharge obtained. Damerel got a farm let to him on advantageous terms, close to his native village, and was married amidst more noisy demonstrations by Roger and his company of ringers. Modbury had taken to wife Lucy's friend, Susan Larkin.

The last time I was in Devonshire I called on Mr and Mrs Damerel. They are an interesting old couple, who have brought up a large family in comfort and respectability.

BILLY EGG.

'Can you direct me to Mr William Egg's?' said I one morning to a smart shopman, who was loitering at the door of a showy haberdasher in the principal street of a town in Ireland, in which, for a few months, I once resided. I had been told by two or three persons that Billy Egg's was the best shop in the place; for that, he being a general dealer on a very large scale, I should be sure to get 'everything in the world' there. Moreover, I had been instructed that he sold good articles at a cheap rate; and being a stranger, I felt truly glad that I had been recommended to a tradesman on whom I could confidently rely. 'Can you direct me to Mr Egg's?' I repeated, seeing that the smart shopman was so much occupied either in admiring his window or his own person, that he had not at first attended to my question.

'I know no such person, ma'am,' he replied rather sharply; and as I now perceived that the house bore the evidence of fresh paint and recent alterations, it occurred to me that the smart shopkeeper might be a new-comer, and ignorant of the old residents. Nothing daunted, I next entered the shop of a neighbouring bookseller, and repeated my inquiries, but with no better success. I then made my way to that of a milliner; and though a young girl, who was busily engaged at her needle, looked up for a moment with an arch smile, and then turned away, as I plainly perceived, to repress a hearty laugh, her mistress dismissed me with the expression of her opinion 'that no such person lived in that town, nor, she believed, in any other.' I felt a little puzzled to know what the girl had found so ludicrous in my simple question, and wondered if my repeated disappointments had given me a forlorn air. 'At any rate,' thought I, 'this Mr Egg is not so generally known as I expected to find him. I had better walk up the street and try if I can discover any outward indications of his

abode.'

I spent a weary half-hour in this endeavour, and as it now seemed evident to me that no considerable shop could belong to the object of my search, I lowered my tone in addressing an old apple-woman, who sat behind a table covered with her stores at the corner of the street. 'Pray, can you direct me to Billy Egg's?' I asked, dropping the Mr altogether, and adopting the familiar term which had been used to me.

'Och, then, to be shure I will, an' welcome, if it was a mile off; but there it's just furnint ye--that big grand shop there, wid the big letthers gilt wid goold over the big windees.'

'My good woman,' I replied, 'I am afraid you must be mistaken; the name there is William Carter.'

'Och, don't I know that? but they call him Billy Egg, because all he has--and half the town that's his--came out of an egg.'

An exclamation of surprise escaped me, and the old woman continued--'Och, but well he desarves it, for he is a dacent man, and good to the poor; God bless him every day he rises, and make the heavens his bed at last!'

As I took part of her speech as a hint to myself, I gave her sixpence, and believing there was some story worth the hearing, I begged my new acquaintance to call on me in the evening and relate it, instead of hindering her business and mine by listening to it at that moment; although I suspect she would have been nothing loath to have given me the full and particular account there and then, for she told me she knew every circumstance 'consarnin' him and his.'

I proceeded without further delay to the 'big grand shop,' where I saw in the master the veritable Billy Egg. He was a fine portly personage, with a good open countenance, and it was evident he could not have acquired his nickname from bearing even the most remote resemblance to an egg. He served me himself with zeal and civility, and my purchases were soon completed.

In the evening, my old apple-woman was true to her appointment, and from her I gathered the following particulars: William Carter was a poor boy, the eldest of a large family, who, with their mother, were left destitute by the death of their father. Their poor neighbours were charitable, as the poor, to their credit be it spoken, so often are; and one took one child, and one another, until something could be thought of and done for their subsistence. William had made the most of the scanty schooling his father had afforded him, and could read a little. He was, moreover, a steady, hard-working boy; yet the only occupation he was able to obtain was that of tending a cow on the border of a large bog. In return for this service, he was comfortably lodged and fed, and for a time the clothes he had were sufficient. He was in the habit of saving any scraps of printed paper which fell in his way, and by means of these he somewhat improved in his reading; for while the cow was munching away, little Billy had ample time for his studies, without neglecting her either, for he made a point of looking out for the sweetest grass, and leading her to it.

By his care and attention, he gave such satisfaction to his employer, that by the time his clothes were worn out, he was allowed wages sufficient to replenish them; and his good-behaviour gave such confidence and respectability to his family, that a neighbouring farmer engaged one of his younger brothers in a capacity similar to his own. One day this farmer gave Billy a newly-laid goose's egg, thinking it might make him a good meal, and be something of a dainty, and as a sort of return for an act of good-nature and watchfulness on Billy's part, he having noticed that a certain gate leading to the kitchen-garden had been left open, took the precaution to close it, thereby preventing the incursion of a greedy sow and her interesting family, which would undoubtedly have played the part of the Goths in that flourishing spot. It is very likely that Billy's first impulse was to boil his egg and eat it; but a moment's reflection convinced him that this would be conduct very like that of the boy in the fable, who slaughtered the goose that laid golden eggs. But how to hatch his egg--for this was what he thought of--became now the question. The good woman of the house noticed that Billy was unusually silent at supper-time, and thought at first that some disaster must have happened. She learned, however, that the cow had her customary bed of soft heather, which it was Billy's pride to pick for her, and had been as carefully attended to as usual in every particular. We ought to mention that Billy was a great favourite with his mistress; and perhaps he had won her heart by the care and attention he had bestowed at every spare moment on one of her little ones, who was a very sickly, fretful child, but who, somehow or other, was always most quickly pacified by Billy. She soon learned the cause of his thoughtful silence, and kindly offered to remove two or three eggs from under a duck which was then sitting, and give their place to her cow-boy's single treasure. This was the foundation of William Carter's fortune; and it is worthy of remark, that both the gift of the egg, and the opportunity of hatching it, he owed to acts of thoughtful good-nature on his own part.

In due time the goslin appeared, and Billy fed it from his own scanty fare, taking it with him when he was herding. By Christmas it had become a large fat goose, and its owner was offered half-a-crown for it. But he had a higher ambition for it than this, and he was not to be tempted from his purpose by the prospect of present gain. The following spring he set her on twelve eggs, which she had herself produced, and by and by twelve goslins appeared. Our hero was now obliged to exercise some ingenuity in finding food for so large a family of dependents; but he accomplished his end by bartering away three of them, in exchange for permission that the remainder should feed in his master's yard, until they should be old enough to pick up their subsistence in company with their mother and the cow upon the common, and indulge in swimming there in the abundant pools. At the proper time, he sold the young geese for the largest sum he had ever seen in his life; for, though to have kept some of them might have proved an additional source of profit, he knew that he had only accommodation for one to hatch. A portion of his money he gave to his mother, but he placed a one-pound note in the safe-keeping of his kind mistress, and when spring again came round, he bought with it a year-old heifer, which he sent to graze on the mountains, paying with it a small sum, the remnant of his money, which he had reserved for this purpose. Old goosy again presented him with young ones, the sale of which enabled him to purchase fodder for his cow, when she was sent home at the end of the season. And now he built a little shed for her with fir sticks from the bog and heather sods, so that

perhaps she was better cared for than many a rich man's cow. We may be pretty sure, however, that Billy never neglected his master's business to attend to his own private affairs, or he and his wife would not have encouraged him in his plans, as they evidently did. It is not worth while to follow the fortunes of the prudent industrious little fellow step by step, or to declare precisely how he dealt in cows and geese. It may be enough to say, that at the end of six years he quitted servitude a richer man than ever his father had been; on which occasion he presented the venerable goose to his mother, to whose necessities and comforts he had for some time constantly contributed. So soon as he was thoroughly established in the world, he married; but not till he had provided a neat cottage for his parent, who had the happiness to enjoy for many years the prosperity of her son, and who lived to see the poor cow-boy a man among the most respected and esteemed in his native county.

'And so, you see,' said the old apple-woman in conclusion, 'it is a foolish thing to despise small beginnings. Thru as I am telling it ye, this is how Mr Carter got the name of Billy Egg, though, d'ye see, he never was called Billy _Goose_ --no, never.'

THE PLEDGE REDEEMED.

Towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV., a plant of Mocha coffee was brought to the king's garden, which very soon increased; and the genius of the government of that day thought that, by transplanting into their West India colonies this shrub, an immense source of riches might be opened to the country. The carrying out of this idea was entrusted to Chevalier Desclieux, who, provided with a young coffee-plant, set out from Nantes, thence to convey it to Martinique. Imbedded in its native mould, the precious exile was placed in an oak-wood box, impenetrable to cold, and covered with a glass frame so formed as to catch the least ray of the sun and double its heat; and in case the sun did not shine, a small aperture, hermetically sealed, could admit heated air, when it was thought proper to do so. We can imagine all the charges Desclieux received when he entered the ship in which he was to embark: but he did not need them; he saw at a glance all the distinction he would gain by this expedition, which would secure to his country an inexhaustible source of riches. It was then, with a really patriotic feeling, that he took the plant under his care, promising to devote himself to it as he would to his country, and to all the duties of his profession. And when the skiff, after having quitted the vessel, returned again to renew the charge, and to remind Desclieux once more that the plant must be watered every day, and that copiously, he pledged his honour that, rather than fail in this, he would himself die of thirst.

The ship sailed; the crew was composed of about one hundred men, and of some passengers about to settle in the Antilles, amongst whom was an amiable family, consisting of father, mother, and their only daughter Louisa, a beautiful and accomplished girl of eighteen. In a vessel where people are so much thrown together, meeting constantly for a length of time, destined perhaps to share the same death, but little time is required to form an intimacy which often ripens into lasting friendship; and thus it proved in the case of the parents of Louisa and Desclieux. Scarcely had they passed the light-house of Cordouan, glittering in the twilight of a lovely evening, when they

were already friends. Already this fresh and delicate plant, interesting as an exile, as a flower transplanted from its own soil, as a child torn from its mother, became a mutual object of attraction. It was thus that Louisa pointed it out to her parents as it lay on the deck in its glass case, exposed to the mid-day sun. She charmed the tedium of the voyage in hourly watching the progress which she believed visible in the feeble offset. She had felt interested in it from the moment Desclieux had shown her all the glory he was to gain by it for France, and then she had become attached to it; for it is a beautiful proof of the magnanimity of women--their love for all that is glorious. Even during the five days they had been at sea, the little coffee-plant had evidently increased--two small leaves of a most delicate green had appeared; and every morning Louisa's first thought after prayer was the cherished plant; but she could not see it till Desclieux had left his room, for he always kept the sacred deposit with him. Every evening he watered it abundantly, and then let hot air into the frame by means of the tube, as he had been directed: he kept it as close as possible to him at night, that even during sleep he might administer heat to it. Never did bird brood over its young more fondly--never did nurse cherish more tenderly the new-born babe.

As soon as Desclieux appeared on deck in the morning to lay his precious charge in the sun, Louisa immediately ran thither. She delighted to point out to her mother its growth during the night, a growth imperceptible to indifferent eyes; but she had become attached to it; and as the slightest emotions are visible to us in the features of those we love, though unperceived by strangers, so she discovered the least change even in the thickness of the stalk or the length of the leaves; and Desclieux, seeing the young girl thus attaching herself to what had been confided to him, and what he so cherished, felt touched and grateful.

They met with a terrible assault when close to Madeira. It was about the middle of a dark night, though not stormy; the vessel was gliding along noiselessly; and all on board were asleep except the officer on watch--and indeed he too perhaps slept, or he would have heard the noise of the keel cutting the waves as a bird's wing cuts the air, and he would have cried: 'Ship ahoy!' A ship was indeed quite close to Desclieux's vessel, and the token it gave of its vicinity was a cannonade which awoke up every one in a moment, both crew and passengers. It was a pirate vessel of Tunis, a poor chebeck, but formidable in the night--a time that magnifies every fear--and formidable, too, from the desperate bravery of the banditti who manned her. Believing themselves assailed by superior forces, the ship's crew prepared for a resistance as vigorous, as desperate as the attack. Better far to die than to be carried slaves to Africa! All the passengers were at prayer, distracted, trembling, or half dead. Louisa alone remained calm, for she was sustained by the thought that to her Desclieux had entrusted his precious charge. The fight commenced; the ship fired eight cannon on the chebeck; and it was time, for already the captain had boarded the French ship, but was immediately cut down by Desclieux's axe. A last discharge of guns on each side, and the firing ceased. The pirate felt its inferiority and retreated, while the conquerors continued their course.

Two hours of torturing suspense had passed since the terrible awakening, which but served to make the feeling of restored security the more delightful, and the remainder of the night was spent in

relating the events of the rencontre. Louisa's was not the least interesting: she had been regardless of danger during the combat, while watching over her charge; then she took it to Desclieux, who admired her the more--loved her the more; for courage, always beautiful, has a still greater charm when displayed by a woman.

It was a lovely morning, the sun was unusually bright and warm, and Desclieux left the plant on deck, the glass frame half raised to admit the fresh air and reviving heat, while he, with Louisa and her parents, sat near and enjoyed seeing it expand its pretty leaves, and, as it were, smilingly greet the sun's rays, which infused into it such genial warmth, and seeming to thank them for their care. But Desclieux's brow now kindled with higher thoughts. In this feeble offset he saw the pretty little starry flowers, then the perfumed berries, and the negroes gathering it abundantly, and then the ocean bearing vessels to France laden, with its produce. All this he could see in the few small leaves scarcely aboveground. Enthusiastically did he tell these bright visions to Louisa, and as she kindled in her turn, the coffee-plant became dearer and dearer to her, and she lavished as tender care upon it as she would upon a newborn brother. She seemed to have common sympathies with it, and if she felt that the heat might be too much for its slender stem, she drew over it little curtains of green silk which she had made expressly for it, just as a tender mother curtains the cradle of her infant. And then she read to Desclieux and her parents a long account of the coffee of Mocha, and pictured vividly to their imagination the tree to grow out of the nursling whose infancy they watched over. Sometimes the conversation took a different turn, and the parents of Louisa spoke, as if to an old familiar friend, of their fortune, of their family interests, of their views for the establishment of their only daughter; and Desclieux in return imparted to them his plans. By degrees these communications led to projects of marriage between him and Louisa. It was no unpleasing thought to either, and the very day they crossed the line, a declaration was made, and an engagement formed, and it was agreed that their union should take place immediately on their return to France.

We may well think that Louisa became more attached than ever to the plant, now become a source of distinction in which she would one day share: imagine, then, her consternation when, one morning, she beheld it languishing. She said nothing, hoping it might revive; but the next morning found its leaves still more withered. She did not trust herself to speak of it to Desclieux, who also had but too plainly seen it. At last, the thought occurred to him that whilst in the intense heat of the tropics, the plant would require more water; and therefore poured on it almost his whole allowance. The effect was immediate in restoring its life and verdure, and Louisa was again happy. The ship was still some hundreds of leagues from Martinique, when a violent tempest arose, apparently the last of a fearful hurricane which had raged through the Antilles. It was found that the ship had sprung a leak; the pumps were not sufficient: they were in imminent danger, and the necessity of lightening the vessel was so urgent that they were forced to throw overboard almost all the merchandise, a part of the ballast, and even several barrels of water. This last sacrifice was an appalling one: it was with a solemn feeling they made it, similar to that with which one hears the earth fall upon a coffin, or gives to the departed one the ocean for its tomb. Indeed, these casks of water carried with them the lives of many individuals, who had now no escape from a cruel death by thirst.

Desclieux, impressed, like the others, with this idea, only thought of his precious coffee-plant. However, they were not very far from port, and, with a favourable wind, might get in in a few days; and in effect the tempest being over, and the leak closed with great difficulty, a fresh breeze sprang up, and for a day and a night they sailed fast, and the stormy state of the atmosphere had produced on the coffee-plant the usual effect. It might almost have been said to have flourished the more for the tempest. Louisa and Desclieux contemplated it with a sweet joy, as at once the emblem and the omen of domestic happiness amid the storms of life. But, alas! the wind suddenly lulled--not the least breath to fill the sails, not a wave broke against the motionless vessel: an awful calm succeeded; and what is more terrible upon this scene of continual agitation than a calm unwonted and too often fatal? The dead heat of the tropics was felt in all its power by the helpless voyagers; they languished and fainted with a continual thirst; and, horrible to relate, the water was failing, for they had thrown so much overboard, that they were limited to a very small allowance--a cupful at most.

If men, notwithstanding their energies, sunk under the sufferings caused by the intense heat and burning thirst, what must have been the state of the poor little plant which faded away before the eye! It had its allowance also, but it was not enough; and every morning and evening Desclieux gave it his, only for which it would have died. Louisa was astonished to see the feeble plant yet bearing up; but Desclieux carefully concealed from her the means he was using, lest she also would deprive herself of water for it, and that he did not wish--he preferred suffering alone; and a long sojourn in the hottest parts of Arabia had in a great measure inured him to the climate, so that he did not feel it so much as others. The calm was uninterrupted, the remainder of the water was nearly exhausted, their situation was become dreadful, and there was no hope, in their case, of any relief from another vessel, for all were alike becalmed; and it was sad to see the ocean without a sail in the horizon, or, if there was one, it too was motionless. Their ration of water was now reduced to one small liqueur glass. One drop only, just to moisten his lips, and Desclieux poured the rest on the plant, now apparently dying.

'Alas! how you are changed!' said Louisa to him one day: 'how pale you have become. You are suffering: this heat is killing you.'

He knew it; but he had promised to water the plant, even though he himself was to die of thirst; and he was faithful to his word. One evening, when Louisa and her parents were questioning him, he thus answered in a feeble voice, 'You are right; I die of thirst, that my charge may live--it is my duty.' And saying these words, he laid his parched lips upon its withered leaves, as one would kiss the hand of an expiring friend, and continued: 'You have all promised to love me: if I do not live, be careful of this coffee-plant, which held out to us such brilliant prospects. I ask it of you as a favour, and bequeath to you the distinction I hoped to have gained by it.' At the moment they were distributing the scanty portion of water, and though he was perishing, he threw the whole of it upon the shrub--Louisa did the same. It was, as it were, a sacred bond between them--an indissoluble tie. I am convinced that many of my readers have frequently felt a lively and almost inexplicable pleasure in watering a flower dried up by the scorching sun, and, in seeing it revive, have felt as if benefited themselves. What pleasure, then, it must

have given to Desclieux and Louisa to see their plant raise its sickly leaves once more!

At length the wind began to rise lightly, and the vessel moved, though slowly. Desclieux was ill--in a burning fever; but he continued to share with the plant his allowance of water; and Louisa added hers. It increased their happiness that it owed its recovery to their mutual self-denial; and it seemed as if their household life had begun in a common endurance of suffering.

The breeze still freshened: and when the vessel anchored in the port of St Pierre, there was not a single drop of water on board. But the coffee-plant was saved; the colony enriched by it; Desclieux's pledge redeemed; and, three months after, Louisa was his wife.

THE TREE AND THE FOREST.

A STORY WRITTEN FOR THE YOUNG, BUT WHICH MAY BE READ BY THE OLD.

'What splendid trees!' said Monsieur D'Ambly, as he was passing by a fine forest of oaks.

'What a splendid fire they would make!' replied his son Eugene. Eugene had read a few days before in a book of travels the description of a wood on fire, and he could think of nothing else. He was an admirer of everything that was uncommon, everything that produced an effect or a commotion, and, like most children, he seldom carried his ideas beyond what he saw.

'If it would not injure any person,' said he, 'I would be very glad this forest would take fire; it would be a glorious sight. I am sure, papa, that its light would extend as far as the chateau.'

'Would it then be such a pleasant thing to see a tree burning?'

'Oh, a tree,' said Eugene, 'that would be hardly worth the trouble; but a forest would be magnificent.'

'Since we are on the subject of burning,' said Monsieur D'Ambly, 'I think it would be well to cut down that young lime-tree on the lawn opposite the chateau; it grows too fast; and if it should spread much more, it would quite intercept our view; I will therefore cut it down for fuel.'

'Oh, papa,' exclaimed Eugene, 'that lime-tree that has grown so beautiful since last year! I was looking at it the other day, and I saw shoots of this year as long as my arm.'

At this moment they came to a young poplar which had been blown down by a storm the preceding day. Its leaves were not yet withered, but its young shoots, though still green, began to lose their vigour; they were soft and weak, as if drooping from want of water; but in that case a refreshing shower would have restored it to health and freshness, whereas now it was beyond recovery. Eugene stopped before the poplar, and lamented it.

'Such,' said Monsieur D'Ambly, 'will in two days more be the state of

our lime-tree.'

'Ah!' cried Eugene, 'can you have the heart to say so?'

'Why not? A lime is not more valuable than a poplar, or an oak; and you would like to see this whole forest in a blaze.'

'Indeed, papa, that is a very different thing.'

'Yes; there is certainly a vast difference between a person cutting down a tree that incommodes him, and that he would then make use of for fuel, and fourteen or fifteen thousand that you would burn for your pleasure.'

'But I do not know those trees.'

'Neither do you know this poplar that you have just been lamenting.'

'But at least I see it.'

'You can as easily see all those that surround it. Look at this one, how strong and how straight it is!'

'Oh, what a fine oak! I do not think my arms could reach round it. See, papa, how high it is, and those three great branches which grow from it look like large trees.'

'It must be sixty or seventy years old: it will grow at least twenty more.'

'How enormous it will be then! I hope I shall see it.'

'But if it should be burned in the meantime?'

'I should be very sorry, now that I know it.'

'You would, then, only spare those trees from the fire which have come under your own particular notice: this is too common a case. Would it give you more pleasure to see this one burning?' said Monsieur D'Ambly, as he showed him another, divided into four enormous trunks, which shot from the same root.

'No, indeed. Look, it makes quite an arbour. Papa, some day when we have more time we will come and sit here, shall we not?'

'So, then, here are two that you would spare from the conflagration of the forest.'

'Oh, if I could but see it on fire, what a fine effect it would have from the windows of the chateau; I should think only of my two favourite oaks that I should be so sorry to see burning.'

'But all those you see equally deserve to become favourites, and those you cannot see are quite as fine; they have each in their different forms something that would interest you as much as your two favourite oaks, the poplar, or our lime-tree.'

'I do believe that if I were to think of every particular tree that composed a forest, it would take away all wish to see it burned.'

'That shows the necessity of consideration, my son, to avoid the risk of forming unreasonable wishes, to put them in practice, perhaps, when you grow up. You will probably never have a forest to burn, but you may have men to conduct: just think what might be the consequence of your forgetting that a district, a town, a community, is composed of individuals, as you just now forgot that a forest is composed of trees.'

'Ah, papa, in such a case I could not forget myself.'

'I knew some years ago,' said Monsieur D'Ambly, 'a very good, but rather obstinate man, of the name of De Marne. He had a quarrel with the director of a hospital established in a small town on one of his estates. The greater part of the property of the hospital was situated on this estate, and dependent on it, as was then the custom--that is to say, the hospital only held these lands on condition of paying certain rents to Monsieur de Marne, and of receiving two patients at his option. This right he held in consequence of his ancestors having given these lands to the hospital, and it descended to all the proprietors of the estate. The director began to dispute with Monsieur de Marne about the payment of the rent, and maintained that he had no right to send more than one patient to the hospital. Monsieur de Marne was exceedingly angry, and a lawsuit was the consequence; and it so happened that the person employed by Monsieur de Marne, in searching the papers which had been sent to him to prove his right, discovered, or thought he had discovered, that the ground which had occasioned the lawsuit belonged to Monsieur de Marne, and not to the hospital, because, said he, the ancestors of Monsieur de Marne only gave it for a certain time, and on certain conditions which had not been fulfilled; so that Monsieur de Marne ought to take possession of it. This would be the ruin of the hospital. The day Monsieur de Marne received this intelligence he was delighted; and the more so, as he had just learned that one of the patients whom he had sent to the hospital had died, in consequence of a relapse from having been discharged too soon. His widow, who was left destitute, travelled on foot to Paris, with her youngest child on her back, to implore the assistance of Monsieur de Marne. She cried bitterly as she related the last words of her husband, who said, when he was dying, "If Monsieur de Marne had been here, he would have had me kept in the hospital, and I should have recovered."

'As Monsieur de Marne listened, with tears in his eyes, to this recital, he exclaimed: "That villain of a director, I will be the ruin of him!" He forgot that it was the hospital he would ruin, and that he would thus put out perhaps a hundred patients, all as poor and as sick as poor Jacques, and whose condition, had he recollected it, would be equally grievous.

'The lawsuit was carried on with great vigour, not by Monsieur de Marne, who was detained by business in Paris, but by his law-agent, who, being interested in supporting what he had advanced, pursued it warmly; and fearing that Monsieur de Marne would relinquish his right, took care to keep back what was said in the country, of his folly and madness in trying to ruin a hospital which was such a public benefit, and the daily melancholy accounts of the state to which the patients were reduced, because the director, being obliged to give up a great deal of time and money to the lawsuit, had not

enough for the necessary expenses of the hospital. Had Monsieur de Marne known all these particulars, his kindly feelings would have returned--he could not have endured the idea of causing so much evil; but instead of that, his agent only entertained him with accounts of the ill doings of the director, and of the designs he had against him. Every letter he received made him more and more angry; and his hatred of one man made him, forget the claims of a hundred others, on whom he should have had compassion.

'At length he gained his lawsuit. He had for some days been endeavouring to procure admission for a poor woman, into the hospital of incurables at Paris. "Here are two pieces of good news," said he, as he read the letters which announced the success of each of his undertakings; and he wrote immediately to his law-agent, expressing his satisfaction at the manner in which he had conducted his suit, and to the person who had procured admission for the poor woman into the hospital of incurables, thanking him for his kindness.

'For some time he thought no more of the matter; however, he one day received a letter from his agent, telling him that the director had become a bankrupt, and had fled; that no one knew where he was; and to increase his dislike to the man, he added, that during three days that his flight was unknown, because he said he was only going into the country, the patients had neither bread nor broth, and that only for some charitable individuals in the neighbourhood who had sent them relief, most of them must have died; and that it was probable some of them would die from the effects of their sufferings, and from their dismay at hearing that the hospital was likely to fall to the ground. He said it had obtained some respite, as the gentry in the town and neighbourhood had given great assistance; but it was all insufficient, and they were obliged to discharge the least suffering; that they left the hospital in tears; and that several who lived in distant villages had fallen on the road from weakness and disappointment. All these details began to make Monsieur de Marne very uneasy. The agent added at the end of his letter: "Every one observed that the director had neither order nor economy: for a long time the affairs of the hospital have been in a bad state, and the loss of the suit has completed it." Then Monsieur de Marne felt his conscience reproach him for what he had done: he pictured to himself those unfortunate people leaving the hospital in tears, sinking with weakness and grief, and perhaps calling for curses upon him. He thought of the three days that they had been without either bread or broth, and he fancied he saw their pale and emaciated countenances, and began to consider each of them individually, as you just now began to consider the trees of the forest. There was not one of them that he would not have shed his blood to save. He could not endure the idea of all the evil which he had caused them, and endeavoured to throw all the blame upon the director. He wrote to his agent, desiring him to send relief to a considerable amount, and as soon as it was possible, he set off himself to this estate, where he had not been for a long time. On his arrival, he repaired to the town where the hospital had been: it was closed: the last patient had left it, and the house was to be sold to satisfy the creditors. Monsieur de Marne perceived that a great many people avoided him; the lawsuit had given them a very bad opinion of him, and the friends and relations of the director had contributed to increase it; indeed, the misery which had been caused to so many poor people had thrown an odium over the whole affair, and turned every person against him. The report spread that he was come to purchase the house and the rest of the

hospital lands; and one day, as he was passing through the streets, the children threw stones at him. He began to feel all the injury he had done, and a thousand circumstances perpetually reminded him of it. The son of Jacques, the poor man whose widow he had assisted, had broken his leg, and it remained quite distorted. Monsieur de Marne told his mother that she ought to have had it set. "That would have been easy," she replied, "when there was an hospital here; but now"-----and she stopped.

'He saw that the country people were neglecting to cultivate their gardens, which he knew had been profitable to them, and inquired the reason. "Oh," said they, "we used to sell our vegetables to the hospital; but now"-----and they stopped; and Monsieur de Marne saw that every one's mind was filled with a subject which it would be impossible for him ever to forget. He was about to quit the country, and even to sell his estate, when an epidemical disease broke out in the next village. It was prevalent there almost every year; and it was for that reason especially that the hospital had been originally founded by a man of wealth, who, having been attacked by the disease, made a vow that, if he recovered, he would found an hospital, into which all the poor of the village, and of a certain distance round it, should be received and taken care of. "When his benevolent object was completed, all the poor, on the first symptom of disease, repaired to the hospital, where, from the care and attention they received, they in most cases soon recovered; and it was also a great means of preventing contagion. This year the disorder was particularly severe, and the ill feeling towards Monsieur de Marne rose to a great height. He sent large assistance to the village, and endeavoured to mitigate the sufferings of the poor people; but he still heard it said as he passed along: "There goes Monsieur de Marne, who has come to restore some small part of the hospital land." If he visited a sick person, and inquired after his health, he would say: "I thank you, sir; it is tolerable; but I should have recovered much sooner at the hospital." Overwhelmed with remorse, uneasiness, and fatigue, he took the disorder and died, chiefly of grief, for having at any time forgotten that a hospital is filled with individuals, as you just now forgot that a forest is composed of separate trees.'

'Ah, papa! how melancholy that was,' said Eugene, who had listened with the greatest attention.

'My son,' said Monsieur D'Ambly, 'when you grow up, you will see even worse consequences arise from that want of reflection which makes us regardless of everything that does not come under our own observation, so that when objects are too great for us to see their details, we think nothing about them.'

At that moment Eugene, in a musing mood, took up a stone, as was his custom, to throw among a flight of sparrows which had alighted near him: he paused. 'Papa,' said he, 'I will not throw a stone at those sparrows, for I remember how sorry I feel when any person torments my sister's canary bird, and when I see the poor little thing trying to save itself in every corner of the cage: it seems to me as if each of those sparrows, were I to frighten them, would feel just as my sister's bird does.'

'That is precisely, my son, what you ought to do if ever you are entrusted with the interests of a number of persons at once; and that

you may be tempted to forget that the regiment you command, or the department you have to manage, is composed of men like yourself; and you should always put yourself, or those you love, in the place of each of them.'

They now reached home, and passed close by the lime-tree.

'Ah!' said Eugene, 'I must take my leave of you.'

'No,' said Monsieur D'Ambly smiling, 'it shall remain, provided you promise to remember, every time you look at it, that each tree in a forest is entitled to as much respect as your lime, and that in an assemblage of persons, whatever may be their denomination, each person's interest is of as much importance as your own.'

THE THREE FRIENDS: AN OSAGE LEGEND.

BY PERCY B. ST JOHN.

The tribe known as the Osages, or Wa-saw-sees, as they denominate themselves, wander perennially round the head waters of the Arkansas and Neosho, or Grand Rivers, hunting, fishing, and trading with the Americans at Fort Gibson, the outermost south-western fort on the frontier of the United States. Tall, even gigantic in stature, they have many qualities which excite the admiration and applause of their white brethren. Like most Indians, they are brave and warlike; but their peculiarity consists in rejecting the customs of the whites, particularly the use of whisky. Wearing their wild and primitive costume, they stalk amid the hunters, squatters, trappers, and trampers that frequent the neighbourhood of Fort Gibson, overtopping them in general by a head, but still more surpassing them in the essential virtue of sobriety and temperance--a failure in the exercise of which would doubtless soon remove them from the pre-eminence they now enjoy.

In a secluded valley, through which a stream that fell into the Neosho wound its way, lay some time back one of the villages of this nomadic tribe. The wigwams were about a hundred in number, scattered over the narrow plain, near the mouth of the valley, and surrounded by a rude picket. Built of bark and reeds, they were evidently constructed simply for the necessities of the summer season, during which the warriors chased the deer and buffalo for immediate consumption, and to lay up in store for winter. Overlooking the village was a grassy mound, that narrowed the mouth of the valley, and caused the rippling stream that flowed at its feet to turn abruptly from its course. From the summit of this hillock, the lodges wore the appearance of a huge congregation of bee-hives, while the eye rested pleasantly on many adjuncts to the scene, which rendered it agreeable and picturesque. The village was alive with a busy throng of women, few if any men being discovered; while children were seen at every point, adding still greater animation to the picture. The first were all actively employed. Some stood at the entrance of their wigwams, busily engaged in cooking; others were drying and packing the results of the hunting of the warriors; while others, again, were laboriously occupied in cleaning fresh buffalo-skins, preparatory to their being cured for use as robes. Not a married woman was idle. Not so, however, the maidens. They were yet enjoying

the sweets of a liberty which, however, despite the hardships incident to the married state in the wilds, they were no less anxious to sacrifice than are many bright-eyed beauties nearer home. The Osage girls--and many of them were exceedingly pretty--were congregated near the edge of the stream, in which dozens of little urchins were bathing. Dancing was usually their chief amusement; but on the present occasion they were spectators of a scene which possessed more immediate interest.

Somewhat apart from the maidens was a group, on which the Osage girls gazed curiously and enviously. Three Indian youths, all under twenty, nowise related by blood, but connected only by the bonds of friendship, stood on a rising bank in deep abstraction.

Nah-com-e-shee, Koha-tunha, and Mun-ne-pushee--for such were the names of the young men--had at an early age contracted for one another one of those peculiar affections which inexplicably arise sometimes between persons of the same sex, and which often are more sincere and durable even than love. So wedded were they to this feeling, as to have publicly declared their intention of never marrying, in order that their amity might suffer no division. Their hearts, they said, were so occupied by friendship, that love could not find the remotest corner to creep into. How many smiling faces were clouded by this strange announcement, we cannot say; but sure we are, if any had before suffered them to occupy their thoughts, this resolution increased the number of their admirers manifold. Indian girls have ways and means of setting their caps at young men, as the phrase is, as well as more civilised damsels, and the Osage maidens were not idle on this occasion. Besides, that many really loved the youths, the honour of the sex was concerned. It was not to be borne that friendship should triumph over love, and it may therefore be readily conceived what an artillery of bright eyes was reproachfully opened upon the three friends. They, however, remained insensible to all the attractions of female society; they joined not in the dance, nor told nor listened to the tale of love or war by the evening fire; but rode together, hunted together, trapped together, and earned the highest renown as indefatigable and bold huntsmen.

The ambition of the three friends, however, reached to higher flights than emulating the first hunters of their tribe. They wished to equal in renown the greatest warriors of the Osage nation; and it was a knowledge of the fact, that they were about to start on a marauding expedition, which created so great a sensation in the throng of maidens. The three youths had been deeply engaged in discussing their plans, and were, at the moment we speak of, uttering a silent prayer to the great Manitou for success in their undertaking. Tall, erect, and admirably proportioned, they presented an excellent group for a statuary. While their shaven heads were adorned with the helmet crest and eagle plume, they bore round their necks ornaments of the gayest kind. A magnificent cloak of buffalo-skin adorned their shoulders, while a spear, shield, tomahawk, bow and quiver, formed their arms. Leggings, moccasins, with wampum garters tied below the knee, completed, with the waist-cloth, their attire. Three fine horses were tied to an adjoining tree, showing that they were in every way ready for the expedition. It was still morning, and many miles of ground were to be crossed before night, the youths having signified their intention of making an excursion into the Pawnee Pict territory.

As soon as their silent invocation was ended, the Osage braves stalked gravely towards their richly-caparisoned steeds, and mounting

them, rode slowly from the camp. For some miles, their course was along a wide-spread rolling prairie; but soon the presence of trees gave sign of their approaching a river. It was not, however, until nightfall that they gained the banks of the Arkansas. Hitherto, their progress had been open and bold, being within the hunting-grounds of their own people; but now the frontier line of the Pawnee Picts lay before them, in the shape of the dark rolling waters of the Arkansas, and it was time to use caution and artifice. It was determined, as their horses were somewhat fatigued, and as they depended on them for escape in case of need, that they should seek repose upon the friendly side of the river, and cross the Arkansas in the morning. Their horses were accordingly tethered, a diminutive fire lighted in a deep dell or hole, and every other needful preparation made to pass the night. A frugal repast was consumed, and then each warrior leaned against a tree, and, smoking his pipe, gravely conversed upon the best mode of acquiring distinction and renown. Many opinions were given: but nothing less than surprising a whole Pawnee village, slaughtering the inhabitants, and returning to their homes loaded with scalps, appeared to the heated imaginations of the youths a sufficiently glorious enterprise to satisfy their ambition. At length the fatigues of the day overpowered them, and the three friends fell into a deep sleep.

The sun had just tipped with gold the summits of the trees, the wild-cock was crowing in the woods, the thousand choristers of the forest were pealing in rich harmony, when the Osage warriors awoke. They smiled grimly on one another, and then started, each man mechanically placing his hand upon the back and crown of his head. Their scalp locks, helmet crests, and eagles' plumes had all disappeared. Petrified with astonishment, they started to their feet. Who could have done so daring a deed? Not an enemy surely, or they would have taken the lives thus placed within their power. The friends wasted their thoughts in vain conjecture, and then, burning with indignation, turned to seek their horses. The long sweeping tails of these animals had also been cut off. That it was the Pawnee Picts, they no longer doubted; and fearful was the ire of the Osages at the contempt with which they had been treated. The trail of their night visitors was plainly marked, and led towards a copse, where they had evidently left their horses. It then turned to the river-bank, and was lost. Nah-com-e-shee, however, glancing his eye over the opposite plain, gave a cry of delight, and pointed out to his companions the flashing of spears in the morning sun.

To plunge into the river, to reach the other shore, and to ride madly over the plain in chase of their audacious foes, was the work of an instant. In vain, however, they strained their eyes to catch another glimpse of the retreating party, until again the flashing of the spear-heads was seen near at hand, and plunging over the next hillock, the friends found themselves in presence of--three lances stuck in the ground. If the Indians boiled with passion before, their rage now knew no bounds: they vowed, with little consideration for the possibility or probability of the matter, to exterminate every Pawnee Pict from the face of the earth. This resolution being unanimous, a halt was made, and a council of war held. Some ten minutes were passed in discussion, and then away went the Osages on the trail of their foes, just as they caught sight, in the rear, of a perfect cloud of horsemen pouring over the plain in the distance. It was a war-party of the Pawnee Picts, about twenty of whom came riding fast in pursuit of the three friends. A thickly-wooded ravine lay

about a mile distant. Towards this the Osages hastened for refuge, their souls bounding with delight at the prospect of a contest which now opened before them.

The ravine was soon reached. It was narrow, and on both sides thickly wooded, while several clumps of timber lay near its mouth. The Osages saw that the only hope of coping with a superior force was by defending the entrance; and, accordingly, dismounting from their steeds, turned them loose, and strung their bows. On came the Pawnee Picts, riding furiously over the prairie. The intentions of the Osages were too plain to be mistaken, and none of their pursuers ventured to brave the discharge of arrows which was ready for their reception; but, imitating the example set them, cast loose their horses, and sought the shelter of a copse. The unequal struggle now commenced, and loud war-whoops rung through the valley. Arrows flew constantly from foe to foe. The Pawnees, having a great superiority in numbers, succeeded oftenest in wounding their adversaries. Still they gained not upon them; the Osages, though soon severely hurt, preserving the same undaunted front, and returning their missiles with unabated vigour.

At length, however, their arrows were spent, and clutching their tomahawks, the friends, casting a glance of stern but undying affection on each other, prepared to die like men. On came the Pawnees, yelling the fearful war-whoop, and waving their hatchets on high. Already were a dozen of them within a few yards of the devoted trio, when their yell was echoed from the forest, and three of their foremost warriors lay low, slain by a flight of arrows from the top of the ravine. Back turned the Pawnees to their shelter, while the Osages, taking advantage of the confusion, snatched the usual trophy of victory from their fallen foes, and then, catching their steeds, mounted and fled. Guided by the trampling of horses, they rushed in pursuit of those to whose timely assistance they owed their lives. In vain, however, did they urge their steeds; their unknown assistants were not to be overtaken. For about an hour the three friends continued their ride, and then halted to bind up their wounds, and conceal themselves for the rest of the day.

The spot selected was admirably adapted for the purpose, being an open glade in the forest, surrounded on all sides by trees. Here they turned their horses loose once more, and lay down upon the grass, weary and faint. To find herbs, and with them to form a kind of poultice, fastened on with bark by means of ligatures of grass, was their first duty, and then the inner man was considered. None of them had tasted food since the previous night, and there was none in their possession. Nah-com-e-shee, being the warrior who was least severely wounded, and having picked up several Pawnee arrows, started into the forest in search of game. With the keen perception of an Indian, he selected that side which appeared a little inclined to descend, as it naturally excited his suspicion that a stream lay in that direction. This was the more probable, that a little purling spring that bubbled up in the green open glade tended thither. Nor was the warrior's sagacity at fault, for a smart walk brought him to the banks of a narrow and slowly-running river. Within sight of this Nah-com-e-shee concealed himself, and prepared to wait even for hours the passage of a deer or elk. His patience was not, however, put to so severe a test, as, ere long, a rustling in the bushes opposite attracted his attention. Raising his eyes from their fixed position, he saw the antlers of a buck rearing themselves over a thicket of brush, and

next moment a noble deer bounded to the bank to drink. An arrow pierced its heart from the Indian's unerring bow ere its lips had touched the water, and Nah-com-e-shee rushed eagerly towards the spot. Three mounted warriors were before him, and while he sought cover, captured and bore away the prize.

The Osage knew that it was useless to remain on the watch any longer, and, pursuit being madness, turned back and sought his companions, who were more indignant than ever at this new outrage. Repose was, however, absolutely necessary, and was now sought, all trusting to the keenness of their senses to awake ere they could be surprised. It was dark night ere they awoke, and then the three friends groaned with rage that was absolutely frightful. Each felt himself ornamented by a squaw's petticoat, thrown loosely over him. Burning with passion, they grasped one another's hands, and vowed terrible vengeance.

At this instant a dim light was seen through the trees, blazing up at a considerable distance in the forest. It was the fire of a camp, and the hearts of the Osage warriors were at last glad. They had been so often outwitted, that the utmost caution was used. Each divested himself of every unnecessary article of clothing, while their tomahawks were the only arms they preserved. Clutching these, they crept stealthily, and with a serpent's tread, into the forest. As they advanced, the glare of the fire grew brighter; and at length, when within a couple of hundred yards, they could plainly hear the green wood crackling in the full stillness of evening. A faint odour of broiled venison came pleasingly to their nostrils, and then three figures were plainly discerned round the fire.

Between the spot occupied by the Osages and the hostile camp lay a rough piece of ground, full of holes and natural ditches. Across this the three friends began to crawl, holding their breath, and clutching their deadly weapons, while their hearts beat with anxiety lest their victims should escape. Half the distance was passed over, and still more strongly was the cooking made evident to the hungry senses of the creeping Osages. Still the unconscious warriors moved not, but kept their backs turned to the approaching foe. They were evidently eating, and holding converse at intervals. At length, as the friends came still nearer, they appeared to finish their meal, and sunk gradually on the leafy ground to rest. The Osages breathed more freely, and advanced with less caution, until at length, when within half-a-dozen yards, they rose, gave the terrific war-whoop, and leaped madly upon the camp. It was vacant--their victims had escaped. The friends, amazed, were about to fly from their dangerous proximity to the light, when three distinct laughs were heard.

The Osages stood immovable, gazing at one another with a grim, half-angry, half-comic expression, and ere they could speak, three maidens disguised as warriors stood meekly one before each brave, a horse's tail in one hand, and the other trophies in the other. The friends tried their utmost to look angry; but the countenances of the girls were so meek, and yet so malicious, that the gravity of the braves was overcome, and they laughed heartily at the conclusion of their expected deadly struggle.

The girls then explained that, for reasons of their own, disapproving of the celibacy of the three friends, they had resolved to excite their admiration and interest, that they had followed them immediately after their departure, had crept on them in the night, and divested them of

their crests, &c., and played them every other trick which has been recorded in this legend. The warriors listened, and when they narrated how they had saved their lives in the ravine, seemed each struck with the same sudden conviction; namely, that the lives thus preserved belonged to the preservers, and at once made public their opinion. The damsels laughed gaily, and promised to entertain the notion, but recalled their lovers to a remembrance of their hungry state. Merrily and blithely supped the three maidens and the three friends that night beneath the greenwood tree; and when in after-years they met at eventide, all happy husbands and wives, with dusky boys and girls crowding round them, that it was the brightest moment of their existence, was the oft-repeated saying of the THREE FRIENDS.

THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER: A TALE

BY MISS ANNA MARIA SARGEANT.

Act well thy part--there the true honour lies.--POPE.

'I wish, papa, you would teach me to be a painter,' was the exclamation of a fair-haired child, over whose brow eleven summers had scarcely passed, as she sat earnestly watching a stern middle-aged man, who was giving the last touches to the head of a Madonna.

'Pshaw,' pettishly returned the artist; 'go play with your doll, and don't talk about things you can't understand.'

'But I should like to learn, papa,' the child resumed: 'I think it would be so pretty to paint, and, besides, it would get us some more money, and then we could have a large house and servants, such as we used to have, and that would make you happy again, would it not, papa?'

'You are a good girl, Amy, to wish to see me happy,' the father rejoined, somewhat softened by the artless affection of his little daughter; 'but women are never painters--that is, they are never great painters.' The child made no further comment, but still retained her seat, until her father's task was accomplished.

The chamber in which this brief dialogue took place was a meanly-furnished apartment in a small house situated in the suburbs of Manchester. The appearance of the artist was that of a disappointed man, who contends doggedly with adversity rather than stems the torrent with fortitude. Habitual discontent was stamped on his countenance, but ever and anon a glance of fierceness shot from his full dark eyes, as the thought of the position to which his talents ought to have raised him would flit across his brain. A greater contrast could scarcely be conceived than existed between the father and child: the latter added to the charms of that early period of life a face and form of exquisite beauty. Her dazzling complexion, rich auburn hair, and graceful attitudes, accorded ill with the rusty black frock which was the mourning habiliment for her maternal parent, and the expression of her features was that of natural joyousness, tempered, but not wholly suppressed, by thoughtfulness beyond her years.

Leonard Beaufort had once been, as was implied by his daughter, in a different station to that he now occupied. He was by birth and education a gentleman; but partly owing to his own mismanagement and extravagance, and partly from misfortunes altogether unavoidable (though he chose to attribute his reverses wholly to the latter cause), he found himself suddenly plunged from competence into utter destitution. He had hitherto practised painting as an amateur, but now he was forced to embrace it as the only means afforded him of supporting his family, which at that time consisted of a wife and two children. He was not without some share of talent; but unhappily for those who depended on his exertions, he was too indolent to make much progress in an art which requires the exercise of perseverance, no less than the possession of genius; and after struggling for more than three years with the bitterest poverty, his wife and youngest child fell victims to their change of circumstances. Little Amy was thus left motherless, and would have been friendless, but for the care of a neighbour, who, pitying her forlorn condition, watched over her with almost maternal regard. Mrs Lyddiard was the widow of a merchant's clerk, who had no other provision than that which was afforded her by her own labours in a little school; but from these humble means she was enabled, by prudent management, to give her only child Herbert--a boy about three years the senior of Amy--a tolerable education, which would fit him to undertake a similar situation to that which his father had filled.

Towards this amiable woman and her son, the warm affections which had been pent up in the young heart of our little heroine, since the death of her mother and infant brother, now gushed forth in copious streams; for, though she loved her father with a tenderness scarcely to be expected, and certainly unmerited by one who manifested such indifference in return, she dared not express her feelings in words or caresses. Beaufort would usually devote a few of the morning hours to his profession, and then, growing weary, throw aside his pencil in disgust, and either wander about the neighbourhood in moody silence, or spend the rest of the day in the society of a few dissolute persons of education, with whom he had become acquainted since his residence in Manchester. The indolence of the parent had, however, the effect of awakening the latent energies of the daughter's mind; and young as she was at the time we introduce her to our readers, her thoughts were engaged upon a scheme which, if successful, would, she deemed, reinstate them in competence. This was for her to become possessed of a knowledge of her father's art (secretly, since he had given a check to her plan), and she believed she could accomplish it by watching his progress, and practising during his long absences from home. As Mrs Lyddiard warmly approved of the proposition, it was immediately put into execution; and Herbert, who was also made a confidant, volunteered to purchase her colours and brushes; for she dared not make use of her father's, for fear of discovery.

The performances of the young artist for the first twelve months, as might be expected, did not rise above mediocrity; but by increased perseverance and a determination to excel, she rapidly improved. The disposal of a few of her pictures furnished her with the means to procure materials for others; but she still studiously concealed her knowledge from her father, intending to do so till her skill approximated in some degree to his.

Eight years thus glided away, and the beautiful and artless child had now become an elegant and lovely young woman. Her nineteenth birthday

was approaching, and she determined to prepare a specimen of her abilities to be displayed on that occasion. She selected Lear and Cordelia for her subject, thinking it would tacitly express the affection which had instigated her desire to acquire a knowledge of her father's profession. She completed her task, and the Lyddiards were lavish in their praises of the performance. Herbert declared it to be quite equal to any her father had done, and his approbation, it must be acknowledged, was highly valued by the fair artist. On the evening before the eagerly-anticipated day, Beaufort came home at an unusually early hour, and what was of rare occurrence, in excellent spirits.

'I've sold that piece from Shakespeare I finished last week to a gentleman who is, going abroad,' he said, addressing his daughter with unwonted confidence and kindness; for it was not often that he deigned to make her acquainted with anything connected with his profession.

'What, the Prospero and Miranda I admired so much, papa?' Amy asked.

'Yes; and he wants another to pair it done within a fortnight, so I must rise early and labour hard, for the days are short; but I was better remunerated than commonly, which makes it worth my while to put myself to a little inconvenience.'

'You will like to have your coffee at six to-morrow morning, then?' Amy observed.

'Yes, child, not a moment later.'

The coffee was prepared to the minute, and, contrary to the expectation of the daughter, her father was up to partake of it; for it was not an uncommon case for him to talk of executing a painting in a hurry, and then be more than usually dilatory in its performance. In this instance, however, he seemed in earnest, for, after having hastily swallowed his breakfast, he sat down to sketch out the piece. Amy silently withdrew from the room, not daring at present to broach the subject which was uppermost in her thoughts, and employed herself with her domestic duties till the time when she deemed he would require her assistance in mixing his colours, which was her usual task.

'It won't do; the design is bad,' the artist petulantly exclaimed as his daughter re-entered the apartment, and he dashed his pencil to the ground.

'What won't do, dear papa?' Amy gently inquired.

'I've spent the whole night deciding on a subject, and now that I have sketched it, see that it's not suitable,' he pettishly made answer.

'What is it, papa?'

'Coriolanus and his mother.'

'Well, in my opinion, that would be very appropriate. As the other was a father and daughter, here is a mother and son; but if you don't like it, what think you of Lear and Cordelia?' Amy's voice faltered,

and she dared not raise her eyes from the sketch which she affected to be examining.

'I'm not in a mood for painting to-day: I'll try tomorrow.'

'But your time, you said, was short,' Amy ventured to interpose.

'Well, if I can't get it done, he must go without it,' was his irritable reply. 'I'm not going to be tied down to the easel, whether disposed or not, for such a paltry sum.'

'I thought you told me that this gentleman would remunerate you handsomely?'

'Handsomely!' the artist scornfully repeated; 'it is better than I am usually paid, but not a fiftieth part of what I ought to receive. See how some men, not possessed of half my talent, succeed! but they have the patronage of the great to aid them.'

'And perhaps brighter days may yet dawn on you, dear father!' pleaded the daughter.

'Never!' and Beaufort rose in haste to attire himself for departure.

'Papa,' cried Amy, gently catching his arm, 'will you just stay for a few minutes; I have something to say to you;' and a deep flush of crimson suffused her cheek as she spoke. Beaufort turned hesitatingly. 'It is my birthday,' she pursued--'I am this day nineteen.'

'That is no subject for rejoicing, girl,' he doggedly observed.

'I have been looking forward to this period with intense anxiety, meaning then to make you acquainted with a subject which has long engrossed my thoughts,' she timidly said.

'No foolish love affair, I hope?' Beaufort almost fiercely demanded, looking sternly in his daughter's agitated and flushed countenance as he uttered the words. 'Perhaps,' he sarcastically continued, without giving her time to reply--'perhaps you deem yourself marriageable at the matron-like' age of nineteen, and have selected some country boor for my son-in-law?'

This speech was directed at Herbert Lyddiard, and Amy felt it; but her thoughts were at this moment occupied by another subject of absorbing interest. 'No,' she returned with modest dignity; 'I have at present no desire to alter my condition, but I have for years been intent upon bettering yours. I may be presumptuous in supposing it possible that any effort of mine could do so; but I was resolved to make the trial, and this shall speak for me.' As she concluded, she drew from a closet the picture she had so anxiously prepared, and displayed it to her parent's astonished gaze. Beaufort could not speak, but stood for some minutes immovable, with his eyes fixed on the piece, as if doubting the reality of what he beheld.

'Amy,' he exclaimed, 'is it possible that this is your performance?'

'It is, father.'

'And you have had no teacher?'

'Yes, you have been, my teacher. For eight long years I have been your pupil--a silent but a most attentive pupil. I owe all my knowledge to you.'

'It is admirable,' he murmured, 'and the very thing I want; as like my execution as if I myself had done it.'

'Do you say so, my father?' Amy exultingly exclaimed. 'Do you say so? That is praise beyond what I had ever dared to hope for;' and, for the first time in her life, she threw herself into her parent's embrace.

Beaufort re-examined the work. 'Did you intend it to pair my Prospero and Miranda?' he asked.

'I did, though not with the idea of its ever being sold as such. I greatly admired your father and daughter, and thought I would attempt a similar piece. I thought, to'--she stopped for a moment, then blushing added--'I thought it an appropriate offering from one who desires to be a Cordelia to you.'

The sale of his daughter's picture was a fresh era in the life of the artist, as it was the means of introducing him to several persons of rank and influence, who were at the time visitors at the house of the purchaser. Though Amy's picture was more highly finished than her father's, no one guessed that the Lear and Cordelia, and the Prospero and Miranda were not done by the same hand. Amy had caught her father's bold style, but added to it a delicate softness which he, from impatience, not want of ability, usually omitted. The calls upon her time were now incessant; for Beaufort grew more indolent than ever when he found that she cheerfully took so large a portion of his labour off his hands. He would frequently sketch an outline, and then leave it for her to finish, without regarding the inroads he was by these means making on his daughter's health. Meanwhile, he spent the profits of her toil in luxuries, in which she shared not; still allowing her the miserable pittance which barely kept want from their dwelling, and would not permit of her making, either in her home or her person, an appearance above the humbler class of mechanics.

'We will bid a joyful adieu to this hateful town, and settle again in London,' the artist exclaimed, as, late one evening, he entered his house in an excited state, after a visit to one of his new patrons.

'Are you in earnest, papa ?' Amy asked, whilst the colour forsook her cheek.

'In earnest, girl?' he repeated, 'to be sure I am. I think I have droned here long enough, and it is time that some change took place for the better. The purchaser of my last picture is a young baronet who has just come into possession of a princely fortune, and, by a little flattery, I have so far got myself into his good graces, that he has promised to provide money to enable me to make a suitable appearance in town: he says, too, that amongst his acquaintances alone he can procure me sufficient employment, which shall be liberally remunerated. 'Tis true,' Beaufort laughingly added, 'he has no more taste for paintings than his valet, and perhaps not so much; but that matters not: he thinks that he has, and it is not my place

to undeceive him; for, as he is rich and influential, he may be a valuable friend to us.'

Amy listened without making any reply.

'You are silent, girl?' her father resumed; 'I thought you would be delighted with the intelligence. Will you not be glad to exchange this miserable hovel for a handsomely-furnished house? And you shall have masters to instruct you in dancing, singing, and music; for I expect that you will now have an opportunity of getting settled in the rank of life in which you were born.'

Still Amy replied not.

'Well, you are the strangest girl I ever met with,' Beaufort pursued, in tones indicative of rising wrath; 'but I see how it is. I have suspected as much for some time. You would rather marry a beggarly clerk. I can tell you, however, that Herbert Lyddiard is no husband for you, and I positively forbid you to hold any further intercourse with him or his mother.'

'Oh, father,' cried Amy in the agony of her feelings, now finding utterance, 'can you require me to be so base as thus to treat a friend who has been to me like a mother?'

'I have no personal objection to the woman, nor to her son either, had I not reason to believe that he aspires to an alliance with you,' he rejoined; adding: 'Now hear what I say, girl; I start for London to-morrow, and shall send for you in a few days, during which time I shall get a house prepared for your reception. Here are the means to provide suitable apparel for the position we shall resume in society; and I expect that you hold yourself in readiness to depart at an hour's warning.'

Amy dared not oppose her father's commands, and took the offered purse in silence.

As might be expected, the knowledge of Miss Beaufort's intended departure drew from Herbert Lyddiard a full confession of his long-cherished love; and Amy could not deny that it was reciprocal, though she thought it right to make known to him the cruel prohibition her father had enjoined. The mother strove to console the young couple, by representing that it was probable that some change might take place which would induce Mr Beaufort to withdraw his opposition to their union, and counselled Amy for the present to yield implicit obedience to her father's commands. 'You are yet very young, my dear children,' she said, 'and that directing Providence which has hitherto smiled upon your early attachment, will not, I trust, see fit to sever you.'

The dreaded summons came within a week, Beaufort not thinking it safe for her to remain longer than necessity obliged in the neighbourhood of her humble lover's residence. He received her in an elegant house in the vicinity of Portman Square, which in this brief time he had handsomely furnished and provided with servants. Amy entered it with a sickening heart; and, as he led her from room to room, demanding her approbation, she felt more disposed to weep than to rejoice.

'Amy,' he said, when they were quite alone in the room designed for

his studio, 'you are to reign mistress here; but be careful never to drop a hint regarding the humble manner in which you have lived for so many years; no one must surmise that we have been in poverty, or our ruin is certain. I intend giving an entertainment to my friends a few nights hence, and then I shall introduce you to society; meantime I expect that you will provide yourself with elegant and appropriate attire for the occasion; for on you much of my success may depend.'

'On me!' Amy exclaimed in astonishment; then recollecting herself, she added: 'If you mean on my exertions, father, you may still depend upon them.'

'No, I do not mean your exertions, though at present I must avail myself of your assistance; but I mean by the manner in which you receive my friends. Amy,' he continued, looking steadily in his daughter's face, 'you are possessed of uncommon beauty; you are doubtless aware of it. Herbert Lyddiard has not failed, I daresay, to tell you so. A beautiful young woman is at all times a powerful attraction, and to me it is everything, to extend the circle of my acquaintances.'

Amy's cheek, which had been flushed by the former part of this speech, turned deadly pale at its conclusion. How could she, who had all her life been shut out from society, entertain her father's male guests--she, a retiring and almost ignorant girl, without one female friend or adviser? She did not speak; but Beaufort saw that powerful feelings were agitating her breast, and strove to laugh away what he termed her foolish fears.

'A few evenings will dispel all your *_mauvaise honte_*,' he gaily said. 'I will hear of no silly objections;' and, thrusting a purse of gold into her hand, he left the room.

Amy could scarcely realise the truth of the position in which she stood. The events of the last few days seemed like a dream; but if so, it was a dream from which she would have been glad to have awakened, and to have found herself in her former humble home. She could not but fear that all her father possessed was held upon a very uncertain tenure, and, what was worse, that it was obtained by dishonourable means. This idea was strengthened when the gala evening arrived, and our heroine was introduced to her father's principal patron, a vain and weak-minded man, who listened to his host's extravagant adulation with evident complacency, though to every one else it was palpably insincere. Beaufort insisted on his visiting his studio, to give his opinion of the grouping of a historical piece he had sketched out for Amy to fill up. The baronet, thus flattered, suggested some alterations which would have made it absolutely ridiculous; and the artist would actually have complied, had not his daughter, who had been requested to be present, interposed; and her guest gallantly acquiesced in her judgment.

From this period a new trial awaited the unhappy girl, for Sir Philip Rushwood now became her professed admirer. Beaufort had planned this affair from the moment of his first introduction to the young man, though he had warily concealed his wishes from Amy. He had contrived to display, as if by accident, a miniature portrait he had once taken of his daughter; and as he pretended unwillingness, to make known the name of the original, the curiosity of the baronet was naturally excited. On finding that the beautiful young woman he so much admired

was the artist's daughter, he became anxious to see her; but her father was determined that a meeting should not take place until Amy was in a situation to set off her natural charms, and was removed from her humble lover. Little suspecting the scheme which had been laid, she met Sir Philip with feelings of gratitude; but they were exchanged for sentiments bordering on disgust when he became a suitor for her hand. There was nothing vicious about the young man--he was the dupe, not the deceiver; but to a mind like Amy's, filled, too, as it was with the image of Herbert Lyddiard, his attentions were intolerable. The open encouragement he now received from the father, however, emboldened him to persevere, and he professed to look upon her marked disapproval as nothing but maidenly diffidence, and proceeded to address her as though a positive engagement existed between them.

Amy now spent her days either at the easel, or in receiving instructions from the masters her father hired, and her evenings in entertaining his guests. He appeared not to have an idea that prudence required that some matronly lady should become the chaperon of his isolated child, much less that her heart could yearn for feminine society. To one who was naturally so sensitive and timid, the task was exquisitely painful; yet she dared not murmur, or a volley of abuse would have been the result. Nine months thus passed away in splendid misery, during which period Beaufort had often indirectly expressed his wishes that his daughter would accept the overtures of the baronet; but on the morning of her twentieth birthday, he called her into his studio, saying that he had a matter of importance to consult with her upon. Poor Amy guessed too well the subject he was about to introduce; but she was appalled when, in a few hurried words, and with a voice almost choked by agitation, he told her that it depended on her decision, respecting the acceptance of Sir Philip Rushwood's suit, whether he was to give her away at the altar as a bride, or be himself dragged to a prison.

'But why, father, should there be so dreadful an alternative?' she eagerly asked.

'Because I have nothing but what I owe to him. On his credit this house has been furnished, and his trades-people have supplied our table. Your very apparel has been purchased from sums of money I have from time to time borrowed from him--for I have not yet met with the increased sale and handsome remuneration for my pictures I was led to expect. Indeed, many of those you supposed to be ordered, were pledged for a tenth part of their value. If, however, you become his wife,' he proceeded, 'we shall never want; for his fortune is immense, and he is easily persuaded to part with it; but if you refuse, his vanity, which is his ruling passion, will be so deeply wounded, that he will withdraw his assistance from me, and our ruin is inevitable. I have amused him with hopes of success and assurances that you will smile on him at last, in spite of your girlish coquetry, till he is incensed at the delay; and he last night told me that he would be put off no longer, but have a positive answer _from your own lips_ this very evening.' Amy pressed her hands upon her burning brow in unutterable anguish. 'Yes,' her father resumed, 'this very evening you must set your seal to our destiny. It remains for you either to open a brilliant career before me, or to shut me up in a prison in disgrace. I ask you not to give _me_ an answer. Your bane and antidote are both before you; but remember that on the decision of your lips to-night our mutual welfare depends.'

As Beaufort concluded, he rose from his seat and hurriedly left the room, whilst poor Amy remained panic-struck, and scarcely comprehending the extent of her wretchedness. Her energies were, however, aroused, and directed into a fresh channel; when, a few minutes after her father's departure, a servant placed a note in her hand, bearing the well-known characters of Herbert Lyddiard, which she said had been delivered at the door by a meanly-dressed young man. She almost flew to her chamber to peruse the contents, which, though written by Herbert, were dictated by his mother. She stated that her son, having lost his situation in Manchester by the death of his employer, had been induced to remove to London, with the hope of obtaining a more lucrative one in that city; but, being disappointed in his expectations, that they were consequently reduced to the greatest distress. Her health, she concluded, had suffered so severely from intense anxiety and privations, that, believing herself to be dying, she solicited, as a last request, one brief visit from her beloved young friend.

Amy Beaufort possessed a mind which never sunk under difficulties whilst there was any active duties to perform, and in less than half an hour she was in a hackney-coach on her way to Mrs Lyddiard's residence, bearing with her, besides a few articles of nourishment for the invalid, a large packet containing some of the early efforts of her pencil, which she, with prompt thoughtfulness, imagined might be disposed of, if only for a trifle, to aid her unfortunate friends in their present exigence. She had a few guineas left from her father's last gift; but she now shrunk from using them even for so sacred a purpose. The coach stopped at the door of a large but mean-looking house in a narrow crowded street, and her inquiry if Mrs Lyddiard lived there, was answered in the affirmative by a ragged boy, who asked if he should carry her parcel. Amy followed him, not without some apprehension, up three flights of dark steep stairs; but her fears were relieved when, her gentle tap at the door to which her guide pointed, was answered by the well-known voice of her early friend.

The meeting was affecting in the extreme; but Amy did not find the invalid reduced quite so low as her imagination had pictured. Though a few months only had elapsed since they parted, each had a long tale of trials to tell, and that Amy had to relate was rendered doubly distressing by the confession she was forced to make of a parent's delinquency. At length she spoke of the decision which was expected from her that night.

'And how do you intend to act?' asked her companion in breathless anxiety. 'I feel that I dare not offer you counsel. I am too deeply interested; for it would be draining the last drop of earthly bliss from my cup to see you wedded to any other than to my son.'

'I never will, Mrs Lyddiard,' cried Amy energetically, rising at the same time from her kneeling position beside the bed of the invalid. 'I feel myself justified in making this resolution. I have been an unwilling, nay, I may say an unconscious agent in a scheme of dishonour; but I should be culpable if, by any act of mine, I furthered it, even though the motive should be to save a parent from disgrace and a prison. Still, my father claims my dutiful regard, and so long as my personal exertions and self-denial can afford him aid, I will never desert him.'

'You have spoken nobly, my dear Amy,' Mrs Lyddiard exclaimed, her eyes brightening, and her pale cheek flushing with pleasure. 'Your own upright heart is your best adviser, and Heaven will aid your filial piety.'

As our heroine prudently wished to avoid a meeting with her lover, she left the house earlier than she otherwise would have done, and returned home to prepare her mind for the trial which awaited her. She resolved to decline the baronet's suit respectfully, yet firmly, alluding with gratitude to the services he had rendered her father; and she hoped much, notwithstanding the anger he had evinced, from the natural mildness of his character. She had not, however, been long in her chamber, when she, to her surprise, received another summons from her father, who she had imagined to be from home. The dark frown which clouded his brow too surely indicated the state of his feelings. 'You may spare yourself the trouble of refusing Sir Philip Rushwood, Miss Beaufort,' he sneeringly remarked, as she tremblingly took a seat by his side; 'you will not have the opportunity of displaying your triumph.'

'What do you mean, papa?' Amy interrogated, wholly at a loss to understand the import of his words.

'Oh, you are in utter ignorance that your vagabond suitor, Lyddiard, left a billet for you this morning,' he resumed in the same sarcastic strain; 'and you are quite unconscious that you were carried in a coach to his residence; but the lynx-eye of jealousy watched you, and you have converted a friend into a foe. It is I, however,' he fiercely added, 'who must suffer the penalty of your disobedience and duplicity, and either die in a prison, or become an exile from my country. I prefer the latter, and must leave you to reap the fruits of your own self-will.'

'Oh, my father!' Amy almost wildly exclaimed, throwing herself at his feet, 'had you given me time I should have explained everything to you connected with my visit to Mrs Lyddiard; but I entreat you not to add to the dishonour you are already involved in by flight. Surely the debts you have contracted are not to so large an amount but they may be liquidated in time by our mutual exertions. Let us descend to the sphere from which we have so lately risen, if by that means we can honourably overcome our difficulties.'

'Talk not to me in this manner,' Beaufort angrily interposed: 'I will not brook the disgrace your obstinacy has brought upon me; and you have yourself alone to blame that you are not the mistress of a princely fortune. Go to your beggarly lover, if he will receive you when penniless and homeless--the tie between _us_ is broken,' And with these words he rose to quit the room.

'Do not leave me, father !' Amy shrieked forth, clinging around him to prevent his departure. 'I will share a prison with you, if such be the dreadful alternative. I will labour for your support; but do not--do not leave me.'

Beaufort shook her from him with a violence which threw her to the ground. 'Go, wretched girl!' he vociferated as he descended the stairs; 'you have been _my_ ruin.' It was the last words he addressed to her--they met no more.

Scarcely allowing herself to believe that her father would not repent of his determination to leave the country, Amy awaited with intense anxiety the event of the evening. The shades of twilight fell, but he appeared not. The guests he had invited arrived; still he did not return. She was obliged to send an apology for her absence; for she was really ill, and felt unequal to the trial of meeting the baronet in her present agitated state of mind.

The morning brought a confirmation of her worst fears. A rumour of Beaufort's sudden flight had gone abroad, owing to his absence from his guests; and the consequence was, that creditors poured in from all quarters. Amy met the emergency with a presence of mind she was herself surprised at. Her first care was to have all the effects sold, that the debts might be liquidated as far as possible; but now, to her unspeakable concern, she discovered that her father had carried off the principal part of the plate and small valuables. She next met her late suitor, Sir Philip Rushwood, and after soliciting an account of the sums due to him by her parent, declared her intention of refunding them from the labours of her own hands. 'I may perhaps make trial of your patience by some delay, Sir Philip,' she said; 'but so far as my receipts will allow, no one shall be the loser from having placed confidence in my unhappy father. Had I accepted your addresses, you would have had reason to despise me; but I am not so base as to form a union in which my heart has no share.'

The baronet was astonished. He had hitherto formed a mean opinion of the female character, having been incessantly beset by manoeuvring mammas with marriageable daughters ever since he became possessed of his fortune. His desire to win the beautiful young artist, who never appeared so lovely as at this moment, increased; but he felt that he dared not urge his suit after this declaration.

Amy now sought the home of her early friend; and, deserted by her only natural protector, thought herself justified in consenting to become the wife of Herbert Lyddiard when circumstances would admit of the union taking place. She employed herself indefatigably at the easel; and Sir Philip Rushwood having with some difficulty discovered the mart at which her pictures were exposed for sale, bought them up (though with the strictest secrecy) as fast as she produced them, paying considerably more than the price she hoped to obtain for them. Herbert was at this period so fortunate as to obtain a situation, which, though not very lucrative, yet afforded him the means of providing the family with a more comfortable home; and as Mrs Lyddiard's health rapidly amended with her improved circumstances, no further obstacle opposed the marriage of the young couple. Amy's only anxiety now arose from the uncertainty of her father's fate; for she could gain no further intelligence of him than that he had fled the kingdom, having obtained a passport under a feigned name.

The ready and profitable sale of her paintings enabled our heroine to set aside sums for the liquidation of her father's debts earlier than she expected. Herbert volunteered to become the bearer of her first payment to Sir Philip Rushwood; and as his manners and appearance were those of a gentleman, he was shown by the footman into the dining-parlour, to wait a few minutes till his master was at liberty. The young man started on entering the apartment, for he, to his astonishment, perceived it to be hung around with the pictures Amy had executed since her residence with them. He was examining them

more minutely, that he might be certain he was not mistaken, when the baronet appeared.

'You are admiring those paintings, sir,' the latter observed. Herbert bowed assent. 'They were executed by a lady who is no less distinguished for her virtues than for her beauty and talent,' he added, his features glowing with animation. 'And should you become a purchaser, you will confer an obligation on me.'

'Happily for me, sir, _I_ possess the fair artist herself,' his visitor smilingly interposed.

Sir Philip drew back in amazement, and Herbert proceeded to explain the object of his mission.

'I cannot take the money, Mr Lyddiard,' the baronet returned with evident emotion. 'The loss of a few hundreds is of no real importance to me; and do you think that I could suffer that noble young woman to toil incessantly to pay the debt of an unprincipled parent? No, I am not so mercenary. Miss Beaufort refused me as a husband, but she must allow me the pleasure of becoming her friend. You need not be jealous, sir, of the title I am solicitous to assume, for it was for your sake that she rejected me; but whether as a maiden or wife, I shall deem myself happy in being permitted to serve her.'

'I am most grateful for your kindness, Sir Philip,' Herbert returned; 'but I cannot avail myself of it with respect to the money. Mrs Lyddiard is, I know, too desirous to rescue, as far as possible, her unhappy father's character from disgrace, to suffer a debt of his to remain uncanceled.'

Thus urged, the baronet reluctantly took the sum; determining, however, to return it through some medium which would not compromise the independence, or hurt the feelings, of the person he was so anxious to serve; and he had soon an opportunity of proving the sincerity of his professions, by using his interest in procuring Herbert an appointment far superior to that he at present filled.

It was nearly three years subsequent to the period at which Beaufort quitted England, that his daughter received the sad intelligence of his death. He had been a miserable wanderer on the continent for that space of time, and he breathed his last in a lazaretto at Naples. It was not till he lay upon his dying bed that he could summon courage to address his deserted child. When all earthly hope was over, and the awful realities of a future state presented themselves to his appalled vision, he thought of the misery he had caused one who had ever been an affectionate and devoted daughter to him; and as this epistle expressed the deepest penitence for the errors of his misspent life, Amy clung to the hope that it was sincere.

Thus Leonard Beaufort, with genius which would have done honour to his profession, died a miserable outcast, through its misuse; whilst his noble-minded daughter, by industry, integrity, and perseverance, rose by slow but sure degrees to competence, and enjoys that peace known only to those who pursue a virtuous course.

THE BLIND MAN OF ARGENTEUIL.

A NORMAN TRADITION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

At Rouen, in the antique-looking library of a vast and gloomy hotel, sat a venerable old man, seemingly engrossed in meditation and study. He was Laurence Bigot of Thibermesnil, king's counsel to the parliament of Normandy, a wise magistrate, and a learned and virtuous man. At five in the morning he was wont to commence his daily employment, and after giving sage and just advice to the parliament, the indefatigable old man would devote himself, as now, to other toils, which seemed to him like amusement; namely, laying the foundation of a rich collection of books and manuscripts, which afterwards became celebrated, and, though now dispersed, is not forgotten. Bigot was employed in examining an ancient manuscript which he had lately obtained. His son, Emerie Bigot, and a young companion, Etienne Pasquier, were reading Horace at another part of the library.

The studies of all three were interrupted by the sudden entrance of a magistrate--at least his costume bespoke him so; but at this moment his extreme paleness, changed features, and humiliated manner, made the lieutenant of Rouen appear like one of the criminals that daily trembled before him; for he was a severe and upright judge.

'I have been foiled, I confess it,' cried he to Laurence Bigot. 'I am guilty, but do not condemn me unheard.'

The king's advocate listened calmly, while the young men, with the curiosity of their age, paid eager attention to the lieutenant's recital, which was as follows:

'A citizen of Lucca, named Zambelli, went on business to England, where he settled. His affairs prospered greatly. At fifty years old, having made his fortune, he felt a desire to end his days at Lucca, near a brother whom he tenderly loved. He wrote to his family, who were delighted at the news. Soon another letter, dated Rouen, announced his arrival there from England, and that he should reach Lucca in about two months. This space of time was requisite for the transaction of his business at Paris, and his journey onward. He was daily expected at Lucca; but two, three, six months passed by, and he arrived not; nor, what was stranger still, did any other letter from him reach his family, whose anxiety was extreme. Cornelius, his brother, went to Paris in search of him. He visited all the houses whither Zambelli's commerce was likely to lead him. Many persons had seen, or believed they had seen, Zambelli. An individual bearing that name had claimed the payment due to bonds of a considerable amount: the merchants showed the signature "Zambelli" at the bottom of the receipts. "All these signatures are forged," cried Cornelius. "Describe the person of the forger, so that I may bring him to justice." But it was in vain; for no one could recollect precisely the appearance of a man who had been seen so short a time.

'It was plain that an audacious robbery had been committed--perhaps a murder. Cornelius went from Paris to Rouen, where he visited successively all the hotels in the place. At one of them Zambelli had been seen. He had left it for Paris, accompanied by a valet. This valet had been little noticed: besides, six or eight months had passed since the departure of Zambelli; and how could one domestic excite attention among the numbers who had inhabited this hotel, the

most frequented in Rouen?

'It was at this time,' continued the lieutenant of police, 'that Cornelius brought his complaint before me. Like him, I felt assured that a great crime had been committed between Rouen and Paris; but how could it be proved? How could the criminal be discovered? At last a sudden thought struck me. Six or seven months since, a goldsmith, named Martel, had opened a shop at Rouen, where he was entirely unknown. There was something strange in his manner, and the expression of his face: he said nothing of his parents or family; and those who hazarded questions on the subject, received from him evasive answers, given with ill-disguised embarrassment. Struck with his business being the same as Zambelli's, and acting under an involuntary presentiment, I sent a person, who, under pretence of making purchases, entered into conversation with Martel, in which, as if by chance, he introduced the name of Zambelli. At this name Martel grew pale, and showed signs of inquietude, looking anxiously at his questioner. This strengthened my suspicions: I resolved to satisfy myself; but here, I confess, the excess of my zeal led me into error.

'By my orders a sergeant went to Martel to demand payment of a bond for four hundred crowns, which I had fabricated under a false name. Martel, when he saw the bond, cried out that it was feigned, and refused to pay it. When taken to prison by the sergeant, Martel, following his first impulse, accompanied him with the security of a man who is certain he owes nothing; but soon, stopping suddenly in great agitation, he said: "I am quite easy as to the bond; it is entirely false, and I can prove it. But is there nothing else against me? Have you heard of anything?" The sergeant having feigned astonishment, and protested that he knew nothing, Martel became calm, and followed him with a firmer step to the jail, where his name was registered among the list of prisoners. An hour afterwards, he was brought before me. "It is now no time for pretence," said I in an imperative tone. "Yes, the bond is false; but as you have betrayed fear, I must tell you that there are other things against you. A citizen of Lucca, named Zambelli, is dead, and you are his murderer. Deny it not. I have proofs--certain proofs. But calm your fears: Zambelli was a stranger; no one here cares to avenge his death. With some sacrifices on your part, we can hush up this sad affair; only you must confess all with sincerity--your life is the price of it."

'Petrified by the assurance with which I spoke, and glad to purchase with gold the life which hung on a thread, Martel cried out: "I see--I see it is Heaven's doing, since that which no eye witnessed, save my own, is revealed. I will confess all: let my fortune save my life!" He was about to begin, when the appearance of the notary, whom I had sent for to take down his confession, roused him as out of a dream. He perceived the snare, and when I commanded him to begin, he said firmly: "No, I have nothing to tell; I am innocent."

'All my efforts to induce him to confess were vain. I sent him to prison. But now he protests against his incarceration, declares the falseness of the bond, and accuses publicly the sergeant and myself.

'This is my error. You, my lord, cannot doubt the purity of my motives; but what will the parliament say--always so severe towards inferior officers. Must the services of thirty years be blotted out, because I was carried away by excess of zeal? My lord advocate, you know all; now judge me as you will,'

'Be encouraged!' said Laurence Bigot. 'The parliament is acquainted with all, and pardons you. The Chamber assembled to-day to judge this matter. I have spoken for you with the warmth of a man who esteems and respects you; but your thirty years of service and integrity have pleaded more eloquently than I could do. The proceedings which Martel dared to commence against you have been stayed for three months: the suit relative to the murder of Zambelli is brought before parliament, and Martel is transferred to the Conciergerie. Every search shall be made to discover the body of the murdered man; for though I firmly believe that you have discovered the assassin, yet there are no proofs. For you, lieutenant, though pardoned, you are not guiltless. Listen!' said the old man, turning to his son and to Etienne Pasquier, 'you are both destined to wear the toga of justice--you, Emerie, perhaps to succeed me; and you, Etienne Pasquier, probably to distinguish yourself in the judgment-seat at Paris, or some foreign court. Remember that none may do evil that good may come! Above all, a judge should not seek to discover the truth by means of a lie, and do himself what he punishes in others. Such means are unworthy of a magistrate.'

Three weeks from that time there was great excitement in the village of Argenteuil. The inhabitants had suspended their labours, quitted their houses, and gathered together about the door of the Hotel du Heaume. By their earnest conversation among themselves, and their eager questioning of those who came out of the hotel, it was clear that something unwonted was going forward there. In short, the large room of the hotel was for this day transformed into a justice-chamber, where Laurence Bigot, assisted by the magistrate of Argenteuil, questioned numerous witnesses about the murder of Zambelli.

How many efforts had this zealous judge made since he quitted Rouen on his search for the traces of the crime! He visited many villages, questioned numerous officers of police; but all in vain. When he was about to return, in despair of accomplishing his object, he was informed that, some months before, a corpse had been discovered hid in a vineyard near Argenteuil. Bigot hastened thither, and the state of preservation of the remains enabled him, on viewing the body, to decide clearly that it was that of Zambelli, according as he had been described by Cornelius his brother.

The magistrate began to read the evidence aloud, when he was interrupted by a piercing cry; and a blind man, whom no one had as yet perceived, presented himself before the assembly. It was old Gervais, a wandering beggar, born in the neighbourhood, well known, and much liked. When his way led through Argenteuil, he was always admitted to the hotel, and having arrived that day, he had seated himself unnoticed, in his usual place in the chimney-corner. He had sprung forward with a loud cry when, in listening as the magistrate read, he heard of a corpse being discovered among the vines. But what could a blind man, and one so long absent from Argenteuil, have to communicate? Laurence Bigot regarded with a kind of respect the serene and venerable countenance of the old beggar.

'Unfortunate man,' said he, 'what can you have to tell us?'

But after his first involuntary movement, the blind man. Appeared embarrassed and undecided. 'Ah, my lord,' said he, 'may I speak without danger of my life?' and he turned his white head on every

side with a terrified air.

'Speak freely,' said Bigot; 'fear nothing.' Then the old man related how, many months since, he was leaving Argenteuil on his usual pilgrimage, and had gained the high ground beyond the village, when the violent barking of his dog caused him to listen attentively. A man's voice, feeble and suppliant, was distinctly heard. 'Monster!' it said; 'thy master, thy benefactor--mercy! Must I die so far from my country and my brother! Mercy, mercy!'

Then the blind man heard a fearful cry, like that of a dying man in his last agony, and all was silence. After a time he distinguished the steps of one who seemed staggering under a heavy burden. 'Influenced by a sudden impulse,' said Gervais, 'I went forward, asking what was the matter, and who had been moaning so.'

"Nothing, nothing," said a voice in an agitated tone; "only a sick man who is being carried home, and has fainted on the way." And the voice added, in a lower and menacing tone: "You may thank God that you are blind, or I would have done the same to you." I knew then that a horrible crime had been committed, and was seized with terror. All things conspired to overwhelm me with fear; for immediately a dreadful storm arose, and the loud thunder seemed to pursue the murderer. I thought the world was at an end. Trembling, I continued my journey, resolving never to reveal what I had heard; for the criminal may belong to these parts, and the life of a poor old blind man is at the mercy of every one. But when the judge spoke of a corpse being found so near to the place where I heard the voice, I could not avoid a sudden exclamation. I have now told all; God grant that no evil comes to me from it!

During this relation Laurence Bigot appeared absorbed in a deep reverie, which lasted long after the blind man ceased to speak. Then addressing Gervais: 'Old man,' said he, 'I wish to ask you a question; reflect well before answering it. Do you remember exactly the voice that you heard that day on the hill, which replied to your questions and threatened you? Do you think that you could recognise it again--recognise it so as not to confound it with any other?'

'Yes, my lord advocate,' cried Gervais immediately: 'yes! even as I should recognise the voice of my mother, if she were living still, poor woman!'

'But,' said the judge, 'have you considered that eight or nine months have passed since then?'

'It seems but a few hours ago,' answered the blind man. 'My terror was so great, that even now I seem always to hear the voice that cried for mercy, and that which spoke to me, and the awful thunder.' And when Bigot still doubted, Gervais, lifting his hands to heaven, said: 'God is good, and forsakes not the poor blind. Since I lost my sight, I can hear wonderfully. Call the people of Argenteuil; they will tell you how they amuse themselves with embarrassing me, and saying, in counterfeited tones, "Who speaks to thee?" Ask them if they have ever succeeded in deceiving me!' The people cried out that all that the blind man said was true; his knowledge of voices was wonderful. Some hours after, Laurence Bigot departed for Rouen, and everything went on as usual in the village of Argenteuil. Bigot conveyed Gervais with him to Rouen.

In the sixteenth century, the great hall of audience of the Norman parliament was renowned for its beauty. The ceiling was of ebony, studded with graceful arabesques in gold, azure, and vermilion. The tapestry worked in fleurs-de-lis, the immense fireplace, the gilded wainscot, the violet-coloured _dais,_ and, above all, the immense picture in which were represented Louis XII., the father of his people, and his virtuous minister and friend, the good Cardinal d'Amboise--all united to give the great hall an aspect at once beautiful and imposing. The effect was increased when, on days of judicial solemnity, a hundred and twenty magistrates were seated in judgment there, with their long white beards and scarlet robes, having at their head the presidents, attired in ermine mantles, above whom was a painting depicting the legislator Moses and the four evangelists.

It was in this magnificent hall that the parliament assembled, by a special convocation, on Christmas-eve, in the year 16--. But this time they were attired in black robes, and their serious countenances showed they had a rigorous office to perform. This secret meeting of parliament excited great curiosity throughout the whole town. The murder of the merchant of Lucca, the arrest of the presumed criminal, the discovery of the body of his supposed victim, the unhoped-for testimony given by a blind man at Argenteuil, furnished an inexhaustible subject of discussion for the crowd that thronged the avenues of the palace. Every one agreed that the day was come which would liberate an innocent man, or dismiss a murderer to the scaffold.

The parliament, after many long debates, had decided that the blind man of Argenteuil should be heard. Gervais appeared before them. His frank and circumstantial deposition made a deep impression; but some doubt still remained. It was a fearful thing to place a man's life at the mercy of the fugitive reminiscences of a blind man, who could only trust to his hearing. It seemed almost impossible that Gervais should recognise faithfully a voice which he had heard but once only. The parliament determined to prove him, and to bring before him successively all the prisoners of the Conciergerie, Martel among the rest. If, after having heard them speak, the blind man spontaneously, and without once hesitating, should recognise the voice which had struck him so powerfully, this evidence, united to others, should be held conclusive. It was not without design that Christmas-eve was chosen for this strange trial, unheard-of in the annals of justice. To have brought up the prisoners together on an ordinary day, would have awakened their suspicions, perhaps suggested to them various stratagems, and thus left the success of this novel experiment to chance. On Christmas-eve the order excited no surprise, as it was customary on the eve of high festivals to bring all the prisoners of the Conciergerie before the parliament, who sometimes, out of respect to the day, liberated those criminals who had been imprisoned for trifling offences.

Above all, as it was necessary to make the blind man understand the almost sacred importance of the judgment with which Heaven had invested him, a solemn oath was administered by the president of the assembly. The old man took the oath in a truthful, earnest manner, which left no doubt of his sincerity, and the trial commenced. Eighteen prisoners were brought up, and answered the questions proposed to them, but the old man never moved; and they, on their

part, on perceiving the unknown man, evinced no sign of alarm. At last the nineteenth prisoner was introduced. Who shall paint his horror and stupefaction at the sight of Gervais! His features grew contracted, his hair rose up, and a sudden faintness overpowered him, so that the turnkeys were obliged to lead him to a seat. When he recovered a little, his involuntary and convulsive movements seemed to show the poignant remorse of a guilty and tortured soul, or perhaps the horrible regret of not having committed a second crime, and finished his work.

The presidents and judges anxiously awaited the result. At the first words that Martel uttered, in reply to the president's questions, the blind man, who, ignorant of his presence, had hitherto remained quiet and immovable, suddenly bent forward, listening intently; then shrinking back with horror and fear, cried out: 'It is he!--it is the voice that I heard on the heights of Argenteuil!'

The jailer led away Martel more dead than alive, obeying in this the president's order, who in a loud tone had desired him to bring out another prisoner. But this command was accompanied by a sign which the jailer understood, and some minutes after, he again introduced Martel, who was interrogated under a false name. Fresh questions elicited fresh replies; but the blind man, shaking his head with an air of incredulity, immediately cried out: 'No, no; it is all a feint; that is the voice which conversed with me on the heights of Argenteuil.'

At last the horrible mystery was cleared up. The wretched, criminal, trembling, despairing, stammered out a confession, which was now almost needless, since the magistrates were fully convinced of the truth which had been wonderfully elicited by the sole witness who could declare the crime.

But a few hours passed, and Martel lay in a gloomy dungeon of the Conciergerie, whilst in a public place, not far from the prison, were made the preparations for execution; for at this period the scaffold followed the sentence so rapidly, that a condemned man never beheld the morrow's sun. Ere nightfall all was over. The wretched man died penitent, confessing his crime, and denouncing the cupidity and thirst of gold which had led him on to murder.

In fifty years from this period, Laurence Bigot had been long dead. Emerie his son had succeeded him in his office. Etienne Pasquier had become a learned and reverend old man, with silver hair. He was then composing his curious and interesting *Recherches sur la France*, and there related the almost miraculous discovery of a murder long since committed--of which discovery he had in his youth been an eye-witness. It is from his statement that this history is taken.

THE BRIDAL WREATH.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF UESIGLIO.

'This wreath must be finished before the evening. Down with those tiresome hands; you jumble together all my leaves; you give me one colour instead of the other: you are spoiling all I have done. Be it known to you, however, that I am determined you shall not leave Padua

until I have put the last leaf to our garland.'

These pettish words, qualified by the sweetest of smiles, were addressed by a beautiful girl of sixteen to a young man who was sitting beside her, and taking a mischievous pleasure in disturbing her work; now catching hold of her hands; now removing out of her reach something that she wanted; now playing with her long and luxuriant hair, which floated negligently on her shoulders: affectionate interruptions, which left a doubt whether the name of brother or lover better suited them. But the light which flashed from, the eyes of the youth, and seemed to irradiate the countenance of the maiden, showed that his emotions were more rapid and ardent than those inspired by fraternal love. They were seated at a table strewn with shreds of cloth, gummed cotton, green taffeta, little palettes of colours, small pencils, and all the necessary apparatus of artificial flower-making.

'Well, then,' replied the youth, 'I will do as you wish; but what haste with a wreath that is not to be used till Heaven knows when? Ah! if you were to wear it tomorrow, I would then assist you with hands, eyes, heart, mind--with my whole being.'

'What matters it? What harm will it do these flowers to wait for us? I promise you to keep this garland so carefully, that it shall look quite new on the day when it shall encircle my head; and then it will seem to all others but an ordinary wreath: but to us--to me--oh, what charms it will have! It will have been born, as it were, and have grown with our love; it will have remained to me in memory of you when you were obliged to leave me for a time; it will have spoken to me of you when absent; will have a thousand times sworn love to me for you. I shall have consulted, and kissed it a thousand times, till that day in which I shall be yours! Do you hear that word, Edoardo? Yours--yours for ever! never more to leave you!--to be divided from you only by death!'

'That will indeed be a blessed day--the loveliest day of our life! The desire of devoting all the powers of my mind to your happiness will then become a right. Poor Sophia, you know not yet what happiness is: so young, so good; you have hitherto met with thorns only in your path. Poor Sophia, I desire no other glory in this world than that of being able to make you feel the sweet that Providence in pity mingles with the bitter of human existence. There is no sweetness in the life of mortals that is not the offspring of love.'

'Yes,' added Sophia, 'when love is united with constancy. But what are you daubing at, Edoardo? You are actually putting red on orange leaves. Where have you learned botany? And what does that rose signify? Is not this a bride's wreath, and are not bridal wreaths always made of orange flowers? Do you know what I mean to do with those roses? Ah, you would never guess. I shall make of them a funeral crown. Here, take these leaves, and reach me the palette. You have positively learned nothing all the time you have been seeing me make flowers.'

A servant entered the room, saying, 'There is no post to Venice either to-day or to-morrow: the Signor Edoardo cannot set out before Friday.'

'Friday!' exclaimed Sophia, 'vile day!' and with a clouded

countenance she silently resumed her self-imposed task. Edoardo, on the contrary, seemed glad of the delay.

'No matter; but,' he added, 'is not this a trick of yours--a plot concocted by you and Luigia to prevent me from leaving Padua?'

'You mistake, Edoardo; I would wish rather to hasten your departure.'

'I am very much obliged to you,' replied Edoardo, half vexed. 'What do you mean? If you do not explain your words I shall be very angry.'

'The explanation--the explanation, Edoardo, is here in my head, but not in my heart. The explanation, Edoardo, is that I love you too much, and I am not pleased with myself. Yes, but there are sorrows, Edoardo, which sadly wear away our life; but these sorrows are a need, a duty, and to forget them is a crime. My poor sister, the only friend I have ever had, that poor saint, the victim of love, dead through the treachery of a man hardly two years since: on memory of her I have lived for eighteen months; but I even forget her when I see you, when I speak to you. Perhaps I do not bestow on my mother as much attention as her unhappy state requires. Alas! there is no reproach more bitter than this: "You are a bad daughter!" And this my conscience reproaches me with being a thousand times. Thus, Edoardo, I am wanting in my duties. I am a weak creature: a powerful, and too sweet sentiment threatens to take entire possession of me, to the detriment of the other sentiments that nature has implanted in our heart. Go, then, Edoardo; I have need of calm--I have need of not seeing you. Suffer me to fulfil my duties, that I may be more worthy of you. When you are far away, I shall have full faith in you. But if your father should refuse his consent to our union?'

'Leave those sad thoughts. My father wishes only to please me, and it will be sufficient for me to ask his consent to obtain it. Even should he refuse it, in two years the law will permit me to dispose of myself as I choose.'

'May Heaven remove this sad presentiment from my mind; but it makes me tremble. Oh! if you return with the desired consent of your father! oh! if my mother, as the physicians gave me reason to hope, should then be well! we shall be the happiest of mortals.'

The sound of a silver bell, heard from a chamber close by, took away Sophia from her occupation. She rose hastily, saving, 'My mother! oh, my poor mother! Adieu for a while, Edoardo.'

Edoardo Valperghi was the son of a wealthy Venetian merchant. He had received a grave but unprofitable education, it being that which is wholly directed to the intellect and nothing to the heart. He was studying in one of those colleges in which the system of education is as old as the walls of the edifice. He had been told that he had a heart, but no one had spoken of how it was to be directed to good. He had been told that he must resist his own passions, but no one had shown him what arms to make use of in this moral warfare. He had been told to love virtue and to hate vice, but no one had furnished him with a criterion for distinguishing true virtue from its counterfeit. The temper of Edoardo was ardent and hasty, but flexible and weak. Nature had made him good, but society could make him very bad. He was like a ship without a good pilot--one to become good or bad according to circumstances. Enthusiastic, easily impressed by example, he would

be most virtuous if his first steps had moved among the virtuous; if among the wicked, he would rush to perdition.

A letter of recommendation to the father of Sophia, who had formerly had some commercial dealings with the Valperghi, introduced him into the house. His timidity made him prefer that family to richer ones with which he was also acquainted, and amongst whom he could have found youths, amusements, and habits similar to those he had left behind in Venice. But Sophia, lovely, amiable, and frank, had shown him the affection of a sister. He had soon conceived a passion for her; declarations of love, promises, oaths, everything had thus been impetuous and sudden with him, as his disposition prompted. The inexperienced girl believed that a sentiment so strong, so ardent, must be equally profound and constant, and yielded to the enchantment of a first love. Edoardo had terminated the first year of his legal studies, and was now preparing to return to Venice.

Alberto Cadori, the father of Sophia, was also a merchant. He had begun business in a small sphere; but having guided his industry prudently, from being poor he had gradually become rich, and at length retired from commerce with a considerable fortune. Cadori was avaricious, harsh, exacting: he wished rather to be feared than loved: he was not the father, but the tyrant of his family. There was seemingly some secret cause of disagreement between him and his wife: it was perhaps for this reason that he did not love his children; but what it was no one could tell. His family was now limited to Sophia and his wife. He had had another daughter, fair and amiable as Sophia; but the sad school of the world, and the all-powerful empire of love, had untimely laid her low. The Signora Cadori, though still young, was already on the brink of the grave. The grief that preyed on her life, and especially the lamentable end of her first-born, had brought on paralysis. She could no longer move without assistance.

One other person formed part of the family, without being connected with it by relationship--a woman who seemed at first sight to have reached her seventieth year, so slow and difficult were her movements. Her words savoured a little of obscurity, and her countenance was rather repulsive. She was a Milanese. Having come to the baths in Padua, she had taken lodgings in Cadori's house. She seldom spoke, and paid no attention to what was passing around her. She always seemed unconscious of the loud and angry language of Cadori, which was proving fatal to the neglected wife and the oppressed daughter. She appeared to love no one; no one loved her. However, as she paid largely for her apartments, Cadori did everything to keep her in his house.

Though Sophia led a melancholy life, it was much relieved by the exercise of her accomplishments, which were numerous. No female in Padua, for instance, could compare with her in the art of flower-making. Her friends contended for the pleasure of adorning themselves with one of these flowers; courteous and kind to all, she distributed some to each. Even the mercers of the city, when they had need of flowers of superior beauty, applied to Sophia, who willingly acceded to their requests.

The two days of delay to Edoardo's departure were past, and in those two days the Signora Cadori had had a new and very violent attack, which placed her life in danger. Edoardo came to take leave of the family. When alone, the conversation, the adieus of the lovers, were

not long; they both wept, looked at each other, and were silent. Yet how many things had they to say to each other, how many promises to renew, how many hopes and fears to exchange!

They parted; Edoardo pleased with himself, and Sophia dissatisfied with him and herself, without knowing why.

The heart is a true prophet: the fears of Sophia were about being realised; the days of her mother were drawing to a close. Sophia, sad and terrified, was never absent from her bedside. Her heart, her heart alone, sometimes wandered after the footsteps of another beloved, but less unhappy being. Forgive that thought of love to the maiden; call it not a sin. Sixteen! a soul so tender! the first love! The maternal eye saw into the inmost heart of the daughter, and felt no jealousy at those thoughts flying to her distant love. In those moments she silenced her own wants, lest she should disturb her in her reveries, and humbly prayed for the happiness of her child. Sophia, on recollecting herself, would testify the greatest sorrow, ask pardon of her dear invalid, and redouble her attention. Neither day nor night was she away from the pillow of her dying mother. Her strength supported her, as if by a miracle. No one divided with her this pious office, except the Countess Galeazzi, the mysterious guest of that house, and she came but seldom to the chamber of suffering.

But the last hour had struck for the Signora Cadori. With her dying breath she spoke of Edoardo. 'You love,' she said, 'and your love may be the source of good to you. Take this cross, which I have worn on my heart since the day of your birth; it was the gift of your father; take it, and wear it in memory of your poor mother. You will find in my chest a sum of money, and some bills on the imperial bank of Vienna. It is no great riches, but it is sufficient for the unforeseen wants that may press upon a woman. I would never consent to give up these sums to your father, and that was one source of our disagreement; but it was impossible for the heart of a mother to deprive herself of what she could one day share with her children. And I am glad that I have not done so; for, without such aid, your poor sister would have died of misery, as she did of grief and despair.'

She said more, and seemed to make other confidences to her daughter, but her words were uttered so feebly that they were lost. She then leaned her head on the shoulder of Sophia, never to raise it more.

Four months after this event, the time of study returned, and Edoardo came again to Padua. He did not bring the consent of his father to their marriage, but only some distant hopes. Cadori, who was aware of Sophia's inclinations, forbade Edoardo to frequent his house, until the formal permission of his father could be procured. Thus was Sophia deprived of the pleasure of being often near her lover, of enjoying his society, his conversation. She could see him but seldom, and that unknown to her father.

But Edoardo was changed. He was no longer the frank, the loving Edoardo of former times. A residence of five months in Venice, without being subjected to restraint, or having means to elude it; the company of other young men, familiar with vice and dissipation; above all, a fatal inclination had depraved and ruined him! He had suffered himself to be fascinated by the fierce delight which is found in gaming; play had become his occupation, his chief need. Play

and its effects, the orgies that precede, the excesses that follow, were the life of Edoardo. Waste and debt were the consequences; and when he had, under a thousand pretences, extorted from his father all the money he could, he began, on arriving in Padua, to apply to Sophia, whom he neglected, at least did not see as often as he might, though he still loved her. Sophia was as indulgent as he was indiscreet. At every fatal request for money, she offered him double the sum he had asked. When Edoardo began to tell her some feigned story, to conceal the shameful source of his wants, and to give her an account of how he had employed those sums, she would not listen to him.

'Why,' said she, 'should I demand an account of your actions? Why should I think over and debate what you have already considered? Will not all you have be one day mine? Shall we not be one day man and wife?' And these words took away from Edoardo every sense of remorse: conscience ceased to reproach him for the baseness of despoiling that poor girl of the little she possessed. The thought that he was one day to make her his wife, justified him in his own eyes; for by this he thought he should have recompensed her for all her sacrifices.

Edoardo's demands increased with his exigencies. He was making rapid advances into the most terrible phases of the gamester's vice; and the mania in Sophia of giving--of sacrificing all her means for Edoardo, did not stop. All the money left her by her mother had already disappeared; most of her valuable ornaments had been sold; some of the bank bills had been parted with: but as this could not be done without her father's knowledge, he had made the laws interpose, and sequestered the remainder. Sophia did not dare to speak or complain. She felt in her heart that her father was probably in the right, that her own conduct was at least unreflecting, and that Edoardo's expenses were too great; but still she found a thousand arguments to excuse both herself and him. She spent all the day making flowers, and stole a great part of the night from repose to devote it to this labour; but she, formerly so ready to make presents of her flowers, and adorn with them the young girls of her acquaintance, now exacted payment for them; so that every one wondered at this new and sudden avarice. But what did she care what was said of her? What did she care for appearing without those ornaments which women so love, and which add so much to their charms? What mattered it to her that she was ruining her own health by depriving herself of rest, toiling, and weeping? One look, one smile of Edoardo, the having satisfied one of his desires, compensated for all. What afflicted and troubled her was, that her labour should be so insufficient to meet his wants. Often did it occur to her mind that he gambled, that he was ruining himself, and she thought of reproving him for it, but had not courage to do so. Sometimes she accused herself of aiding him to destroy himself. Then she thought that she was mistaken; her doubts seemed to her as injuries to his love, and she grieved for having for a moment admitted them.

One treasure alone remained, the cross which her mother had given her on her death-bed. It was of brilliants, and might bring a large sum. She thought over this, and wept for a whole week. Many times she went out with the intention of selling it, but her heart could not resolve to do so, and she returned penitent and sorrowful.

Meanwhile, Edoardo was involving himself more and more in debt. Assailed by creditors on one side, and drawn to the gaming-table by

desire and necessity on the other; menaced with a prison, threatened to be denounced to his father, stupid from want of rest, midnight revelling, and anxiety, he one day presented himself before Sophia in a state so different from usual, that the poor girl was terrified at him. Whither, Edoardo, has departed the beauty, the freshness of your youthful years?--whither your simplicity of heart? Buried, buried amid dice and cards. Sophia no longer doubted that Edoardo gambled, that he had given himself up to a life worthy of reprehension; but she was disposed to pardon him, to hope that he would repent and turn to better counsels. But what made her tremble was the hoarse and desperate accent in which he told her that he had need of money, that he was, hard pressed by necessity, obliged to pay ten thousand lire. The glance that he directed to every corner of the apartment, perhaps because he did not dare to look her in the face, was dark and unsteady: some broken words, uttered in a low voice, pierced her heart like a dagger. And without any available means, she promised Edoardo to procure him the required sum by next day.

When he left the house, therefore, she threw herself at her father's feet, and begged him for a sum of money that belonged to her, but of which she could not dispose without his signature; but Cadori refused it. I shall not repeat their dialogue. I shall only say, that she came out from that conference in a state of distraction. Her mind was fraught with desolation. Hideous thoughts passed through her brain. It was night: she found she was alone. She felt desperate. A terrible temptation passed through her mind. Her father, she knew, had heaps of gold lying useless in his coffers; but locks and bolts placed their contents out of reach. She then bethought herself of the countess's bureau, in which her own cross had been deposited, secure from the old man's covetousness. There, too, the countess kept her treasures. She took a light, observed whether any one saw her, or could follow her, and repaired to the apartment of the Countess Galeazzi, who was from home, spending the evening with an old acquaintance. Hardly breathing, and walking on tiptoe, Sophia took a key from under a bell-glass, and opened the bureau. Oh, how she felt her heart throb! She was terrified; she trembled in every movement! The noise she made in opening the money-drawer seemed to be the footsteps of some person following to lay hands on her. The light of the lamp, reflected in the mirrors and in the furniture, seemed to her so many eyes that looked on and reproached her. She opened the drawer and took out her cross. Under it were several notes of the bank of Vienna. The temptation was strong; she laid her hands on the papers; but a thrill of terror seemed communicated through her frame by the touch, and, overcome by intense excitement, she fell senseless on the floor.

Some time afterwards the Countess Galeazzi returned home. On entering her apartment, she beheld the wretched girl stretched on the floor with the diamond cross in her hand. The bureau was still open. She ran to succour Sophia, and by the application of essences recalled her to life. The moment the latter awoke to consciousness, she threw herself on her knees, wept desperately, tried to speak, but could not; the only words she was at length able to articulate were--'Forgive me! forgive me!'

The countess used every means to pacify her, by the compassionate expression of her countenance, by her maternal gestures, caressing and pressing her to her bosom, with words of comfort and tenderness.

'Calm yourself, calm yourself,' she said; 'go and take some repose; you have need of it.'

'Countess,' replied Sophia, then wept anew. 'Shame, shame and desperation! Oh, wretch that I am! Oh, my poor heart!'

'Go, go to bed, Sophia; to-morrow we will talk. Here is the light.' Saying this, she reached her the lamp with one hand and led her by the other, using a little affectionate violence to conduct her out of the room, and prevent her from speaking another word.

The next day Sophia was so overwhelmed with grief and shame, that she took to her bed, struck down by a violent fever, which was the commencement of a dangerous illness. The countess was her nurse.

Edoardo, having lost the source whence he derived all his supplies, through the illness of Sophia, could no longer prevent his father from coming to the knowledge of his irregularities. He was immediately recalled to Venice, and shut up in a house of correction. Disgraced in the eyes of the companions of his debaucheries, and forced in his solitary confinement to make painful reflections on the consequences of his conduct, he seemed to be cured of his fatal passion, and when released, he returned no more to Padua; but, giving up the study of the law, he devoted himself to commerce, to which the contagious mania of making money, of becoming rich, made him steadily apply himself. His old inclination had changed its name; it was 'mercantile speculation;' but the substance remained the same. He had written to Sophia that his father would not consent to his marriage, unless it were with a lady of large fortune: unfortunately, she was not rich enough; however, that he would wed none but her, and that they must be resigned, and trust to time; and Sophia, living on the few letters that Edoardo continued to write her, and grieving that she was not as rich as Valperghi would have wished, waited and hoped. Her illness had been long and dangerous; her youth, and the care bestowed on her, had alone been able to save her life. She had long been oppressed by remorse: it was long ere she dared to lift her eyes to the countess, or address one word to her.

The latter had sought to evade every allusion to the past; and the poor girl, beginning to overcome her fears, ended at length in making her her friend, her confidante. She told her everything, and was fully forgiven everything.

After a time, Sophia recovered. They had lived together for four years, during which Sophia had opened her whole heart to that lady, made her the repository of all her everyday thoughts, her hopes; but the countess had always answered her with vague, uncertain words, or with silence. Alas! Sophia was fated to lose every object on which she had set her affection. After having closed the eyes of her mother and sister, adverse fortune obliged her to witness the death of the Countess Galeazzi.

When her affairs were looked into, it was found that she left her large fortune to Sophia Cadori; so that that which deprived her of so tender, so generous a friend, should also have made her happiness complete. Every obstacle that divided from her Edoardo, which separated her from him she loved so ardently, had vanished. In a few days a boundless love, a love of six years, a love she had cherished through so many sorrows, would be crowned! In a few days she would be

Sophia Valperghi!

She wrote a letter full of the joys and hopes soon to be realised to her dear Edoardo; she was happy, as happy as she had desired, as happy as she had so long dreamed of being; she made all preparations for her marriage. Being now quite independent of him, she spoke of it to her father--to every one; she sought garments of the colour and taste that she knew Edoardo liked; she imagined and planned a thousand surprises. How many times did she put the cherished wreath on her head, consult her mirror, study every position in which those flowers might appear to better advantage and increase her beauty! How often did she open the box that contained it to kiss it, to look at it, scarcely daring to touch it for fear of spoiling a leaf, of disarranging a fibre!

At length came the answer to her letter; an answer that to any other person might have seemed constrained, cold, terrible; but it was, on the contrary, to Sophia the seal of her felicity. She was only afflicted that Edoardo should have made illness an apology, which he said prevented him from coming immediately to Padua. To Sophia it was as clear as the sun that expressions of affection did not abound, because they had now at command what she and Edoardo had so long hoped and looked for; that the letter did not dwell on particulars, precisely because great joy is not talkative, and because the illness of Edoardo prevented it. She made ready to set out to Venice without delay, expecting that her father would join her there, and that the nuptials would be celebrated in that city when the health of Edoardo would permit.

Arrived at Venice, she was set down at the house of the Valperghi, and ordered the trunk which contained the few robes she had brought with her to be brought into a room, into which she had been introduced while the servants went to announce her arrival to Edoardo.

After a few minutes he entered the apartment, to discover who wanted to see him; and, on recognising Sophia, was disconcerted and abashed. She was surprised at seeing him splendidly dressed, as if for some extraordinary occasion. Then he was not ill! She read confusion and terror in his countenance.

'My own Edoardo,' said she, after some moments of silence; 'are you quite recovered?'

'It was but a slight indisposition, as I have written to you,' replied he; 'nor was there any reason for your hasty presence in Venice.'

'Edoardo, Edoardo!--there was no reason!--I have written to you! Edoardo, why do you speak so to me? Why are you disturbed? Are you no longer my own Edoardo? Tell me, tell me what is the matter with you?'

'Nothing. But what do you think will be said of you? A young girl alone in the house of a family she does not know!'

'Oh, Edoardo, you kill me! Explain yourself more clearly. This a house I do not know? Am I not to be mistress in this house? Am I not to be your wife?'

'But without any previous announcement of your coming, it would not

be well if my father were to find you here so unexpectedly. I think it would be better if you were to lodge, at least for a very short while, in an inn.'

'Your father! But am I not rich enough for him? This is a fearful mystery. Explain it, if you do not wish me to die.'

This conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, saying: 'Signor Edoardo, your bride requests you to pass into her apartment for a moment.'

Sophia had strength to command herself until the man was gone away. She then threw, or rather let herself fall into a chair, covering her face with her hands, crying: 'His bride! his bride! Is it true? Is it not a dream? For mercy's sake, if you have the heart of a man, tell me that it is false, that I have not heard rightly. For pity's sake answer me--answer me or kill me.'

'It is too true, Sophia; it was my father's will. In a little time I am to give my hand to another woman.'

'Oh, merciful Heaven! I have heard these words, and live. Oh, my poor life! But it cannot be: it is not true: you are not yet married: there is still time. Go--fly to the feet of your father, tell him you do not love that woman--that you love me, me only; that you have loved me for six years!'

'Impossible, Sophia; things have already gone too far. She is a princess--one of the first families of Florence. It breaks my heart, but it is impossible.'

'What matters her rank, her relatives, if you do not love her?'

'And if I did love her?' said Edoardo, wavering, rather to see whether it would be a means of ridding him of Sophia than expressing the sincere feeling of his heart.

'If you did love her? oh, then, you would be the most infamous of men--you would be a monster. But no; you cannot have forgotten your vows; you cannot have forgotten all your words, our life of six years.' Then rising, and throwing herself on her knees: 'Oh! Forgive me, Edoardo; forgive my words. I rave; I know not what I say! Tell me that you have only wished to put my affection to the proof--that you love no other woman--none but me alone! Oh, do not drive me from this house, Edoardo; do not give yourself to another woman!'

'Sophia, if I could help it, do you think I would make you weep thus?'

'If you could help it? What prevents you? Nothing--nothing.'

'Honour, Sophia.'

'Honour! Where was your honour if you have forgotten all your sacred promises--if you have perjured yourself?'

'Sophia, Sophia, pity me. Do not make me the talk of all Venice. I am the most infamous of men; but I can do nothing for you. Now I will confess to you the whole truth--a truth I had not the heart to tell

you before. That woman is already my wife; I have married her by civil contract; and the ceremony that is about to be performed presently is a mere formality. Sophia, forgive me if you can--forgive me, and depart.'

'Oh, no, no, I cannot go from this house. I will die here before your eyes.'

A sound of footsteps was heard. It was easy to guess that those light steps were a woman's. Edoardo turned towards a table, as if to look for some papers, saying to himself: 'I am lost.' And Sophia knelt down by the trunk that contained her clothes, pretending to rummage for something in it, while she wiped away her tears, and suppressed her sighs.

Edoardo's bride entered. She stood for a moment perplexed, seeing a woman with him; then said: 'Edoardo, I sent for you that you might yourself choose one of these wreaths. Which of them do you think will become me best?' showing him at the same time two bridal wreaths which she held in her hand.

'Neither,' said Sophia, rising and presenting a third wreath to the bride. 'The Signor Edoardo ordered me to make this some time ago for his bride, and I trust I have not laboured in vain.'

'In truth it is much handsomer than either of these others,' said the bride; 'but you told me nothing of this, Edoardo?'

'It was a surprise,' added Sophia.

'My own Edoardo,' said the bride again; 'another kindness; a new expression of your love. Oh, how dear this wreath will be to me!' and she retired, taking it with her.

Sophia looked at the door through which the lady had disappeared, and bursting into tears, exclaimed: 'Oh my poor wreath!'

'Sophia, Sophia, you are an angel,' said Edoardo. 'Once more I owe you my life.'

'Since she is yours,' replied Sophia mournfully, and sitting down faint and exhausted on her trunk--'since she is yours, ought I to bring death to her mind, the death that I feel already in my poor heart? No one knows, no one can know what is suffering, but those who suffer; oh, no woman ever endured what I endure at this moment! Go--go, Edoardo; prepare yourself for the ceremony: they are waiting for you. I have no more reproaches to make you--no more right to make them. All was in that wreath, and in renouncing that, I have renounced this. Go--I have need of not seeing you. I promise you that when you return I will be no longer here to trouble you with my presence.'

Edoardo, pale, confused, penitent, bent a long last gaze on Sophia; then left the room, saying: 'I am a villain--I am a villain.'

Two hours after, the marriage-ceremony was performed. The gondolas that bore the bridal cortege, on their return from the church of St Moise, were met by some fishing-boats that had drawn up a drowned female. The gondolas had to stop in order to let them pass. 'A sad

omen for the bride and bridegroom,' said an old woman of the company.

Edoardo, who had recognised that pale corpse, had thrown himself at the bottom of his gondola, in order to conceal his emotion, and with a convulsive motion pressed the hand of his bride, which he held between his own. The simple girl, interpreting that squeeze as an expression of love, said: 'Oh, my Edoardo, you will ever love me?'

'Ever, ever,' replied Edoardo, wiping away a tear. He then muttered to himself: 'Poor, poor Sophia!--she was an Angel, and I am a villain.'

THE DUKE OF NORMANDY.

A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

The continental journals announced that, on the 10th of August 1845, there died at Delft, in Holland, Charles-Louis, known as the 'Duke of Normandy.' This individual presented one of those extraordinary instances of doubtful identity which we find scattered over ancient and modern biography. The mystery of his birth has not been cleared up by his death, and continues as impenetrable as that of the celebrated Man with the Iron Mask.

It is well known that, in 1791, Louis XVI. of France was overtaken during his attempted flight from France at Varennes, and afterwards dragged to the prison of the Temple. He was accompanied by his family, which consisted of his wife, Marie Antoinette, his sister, daughter, and his only son, the dauphin of France. On the 21st January 1793, the unfortunate monarch was beheaded; and his son, still a prisoner, was partially acknowledged as Louis XVII., though only in the ninth year of his age. This was but a mockery, for his captivity only became the more close and cruel. He was separated from his mother, and handed over to the custody of one Simon, a ferocious cobbler, and his wife, who, besides practising all sorts of external cruelties on him, tried every means to demoralise his mind. When this ruffian was promoted to a seat in the 'Commune' (a kind of common council), the royal prisoner's hardships increased. He was shut up in a room, rendered totally dark both night and day. In this he was kept for a whole year, without once being allowed to leave it; neither was his body or bed linen changed during that time. The filth, stench, and vermin amidst which the child dragged on his existence, at length, it is said, terminated it. On the eve of death, his persecutors sent the physician Dessault to see if his life could be prolonged by better treatment; but the doctor's reply was that it was too late: nothing could save him; and his demise was announced to have taken place on the 8th of June 1795, at the age of ten years and two months. The National Convention, which then managed the public affairs, appointed a commission to verify the event, and the body was opened by two surgeons, named Pelletan and Dumangin. In speaking of the remains, they describe them as a corpse 'represented to us as that of Charles-Louis.' The doctor Pelletan took out the heart, and preserved it in spirits of wine; which he gave to the deceased's sister when she had married the Duke d'Angouleme. The rest of the body was huddled with other corpses into a common grave in the cemetery of the parish of St Margaret; so that, at the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, when Louis XVIII. desired that the remains of

his predecessor should be disinterred, they could not be distinguished.

The equivocal wording of the medical report, aided by other suspicions, caused an idea to gain extensive currency that a dead child had been substituted for the royal infant; and that he had escaped from his jailers by a well-laid plan, carried out by his partisans. This notion was so prevalent, that we find, amongst the records of the Convention, a decree dated June 14, 1795--only six days after the date fixed as that of the young king's death--ordering him to be sought for along all the roads of the kingdom. However, the better-informed part of the community were firmly convinced that Louis XVII. was dead and buried; and from that time till 1832, the belief was never effectually disturbed. Taking advantage of the doubt, several impostors made their appearance, claiming to be the prince. The first of these was one Hervagaut, who, when discovered to be a tailor's son, was condemned in 1802 to four years' imprisonment. In 1818, Mathurin Bruneau, a shoemaker, tried the same trick; but failing, was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. In short, no fewer than fifteen impostors have been enumerated; all of whom pretended to be the wretched young prince, returned from exile after escaping from the Temple. The latest claimant is the subject of the present notice; and so startlingly do some of the circumstances of his career coincide with the short history of the son of Louis XVI., that many well-informed persons really believe he was the person he represented himself to be.

Between the termination of Charles-Louis's imprisonment by death or otherwise, and the appearance of this individual on the scene, it may be necessary to remind the reader that several revolutions and counter-revolutions had swept over France. Napoleon's career had begun and ended; the allies had seated the Bourbons on the throne in the person of Louis XVIII., brother to Louis XVI., and uncle to his latest predecessor; Charles X. had succeeded, and was driven from the throne by the revolution of 1830, which seated Louis-Philippe on it in his stead. All these events had taken place when the story of the so-called Duke of Normandy commences.

On an unusually hot evening for the season--an early day in the May of 1832--a man covered with dust, and who appeared to be borne down with fatigue, entered Paris through the Barrier d'Italie. Still, he traversed the Boulevard de l'Hopital with a firm step, being a fine well-made man, apparently about forty-eight years old. On arriving at the bridge of Austerlitz, he crossed to the toll-bar at the further extremity, and was accosted by the keeper, an invalid soldier, who demanded the toll. Upon this he made a sign that he did not understand French; but, on the other pulling out a sous piece, to intimate the nature of his demand, the stranger shook his head, heaved a deep sigh, and, after some hesitation, drew forth a fine handkerchief, which he threw towards the toll-keeper, and hastened away in the direction of the Boulevard Bourbon, to Pere la Chaise. He got within the gates just before they were closed for the night, and concealing himself amongst the tombs and bushes, escaped the notice of the watchmen. It was thus that the stranger passed his first night in Paris.

The day was far advanced when he was found, too much overcome by hunger and fatigue to rise. A gentleman accidentally passing, observed and pitied his condition. After supplying him with some

food, he recommended him to solicit the assistance of a benevolent lady whom he named, as she was known far and near for her readiness to help foreigners in distress; besides, she spoke the German language fluently, the only one the worn-out traveller understood. Acting upon this advice, he repaired to the generous Comtesse de R.'s residence, at No. 16 Rue Richer. She was a lady well stricken in years, and preserved an enthusiastic veneration for the Bourbon branch of the royal family, having been *femme de chambre* to the son of Louis XVI. When the wretched wayfarer presented himself to her, she naturally inquired who he was. To which he replied in German, 'I am Charles-Louis, Duke of Normandy, son of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.' Upon hearing this unexpected reply, the good old countess fainted. On recovering her senses, she exclaimed, 'Good Heavens! he is the very image of his unfortunate mother!' On calmer reflection, however, she was but half convinced, and determined to put the stranger's identity to another test. She had kept as a relic a little blue robe with metal buttons, which was worn by the royal infant when she nursed him. This she brought forth; and the stranger no sooner saw it, than he exclaimed, 'Ah, my little coat!' After this, Comtesse de R. declared her belief that he was her prince to be so firm that she would have died on the scaffold rather than recant. Without hesitation, she gave up the best apartments of her house for his use and occupation; she even offered for his acceptance the remains of her fortune. This, however, he at once refused, asking no more from her than that she would send for a tailor to equip him with habiliments more in accordance with his pretensions than the tatters he then wore. This the countess did, and was not slow in imparting to her royalist friends of whom she was the honoured hostess. All acknowledged the extraordinary similarity both in person and manner which the stranger bore to the royal family. Some were enthusiastic believers; others, with all their *legitimist* enthusiasm, were sceptical. Amongst the former was a certain Monsieur S. de L., who thought the appearance of the 'prince' a miracle in reference to that particular time. Louis-Philippe, when he accepted the crown nearly two years before, had done so with great apparent reluctance. 'How happy, therefore, will he be,' said this visionary politician, 'to remove the burden of the state from his own shoulders to those of the rightful heir to the throne!' But before so curious a proposition was made to the king of the French, the other royalists consulted M. de Talleyrand. He replied, with his usual epigrammatic irony, 'There are some people who are born with two left hands. This is poor S.'s case: added to which, he seems to have been brought into the world without brains.' Upon this the party wisely determined to keep the 'prince's' presence in Paris as quiet as possible. Another of his adherents, M. de Forbin Janson, the fiery bishop of Nancy, suggested that, as the illustrious stranger's chance of the throne was somewhat remote, he should enter the church, in which the highest dignities awaited him. This was also found to be impracticable when Neuendorf (the name by which the 'prince' now declared he had hitherto been known) revealed that he was a married man, and the father of six children.

The more sceptical part of his adherents very naturally wished to know--supposing his story to be true--how in his early years he escaped from the Temple; and when the stranger had sufficiently mastered the French language--which he took but a short time to acquire--he gave a most circumstantial and plausible account of his early adventures. His narrative was carefully noted down at the time, and, translated, consists in substance as follows: 'I cannot be said to have *escaped* from my jailers,' he began, 'for I left the prison

in the most natural manner possible. Some time before the day of my supposed death, a royalist committee was formed for the purpose of saving me. One of these was M. Frotte, who, as the pupil of my physician Dessault, was allowed free ingress and egress to the Temple. One day he entered my cell, motioned me to be silent, seized me, and dragged me to a cabinet under the spire of the tower. A sick child who had been given over by the faculty was substituted in my place, and he, dying two days after (8th June 1795), was buried as Louis XVII. At my supposed death, there being no more prisoners in the Temple, all the keepers and guards were withdrawn, and I was conducted outside the walls without meeting a single official. The ruse, however, got wind, and the decree of the 14th of June was the consequence. To frustrate this, the royalist committee caused several children to personate me, imparting to the impostors several circumstances connected with my family. One they sent to Bordeaux, another to La Vendee, a third to Germany, and so on. These are the children who, when they became men, tried to keep up the character which they had been previously taught to play. This explains the incredible number of false dauphins who have appeared.' He ended by declaring that when, in 1814, the Congress of Vienna ceded the crown of France to Louis XVIII., they knew perfectly well of his existence; but the obligations the allies were under to 'his uncle,' overwhelmed the scruples they felt at investing that prince with a sovereignty to which he had no title.

One thing appeared improbable--how the assumed prince should have forgotten his native language. He was ten years of age at the period of his leaving France, and spoke French as cleverly as any other boy, if not more so. How, then, did he lose this faculty? A residence in Germany, even for so great a length of time as thirty-seven years, could hardly have obliterated the French language from his mind. This does not appear to have been explained, and, with some other circumstances, it served to check the credulity of parties half inclined to believe the representations of M. Neuendorf.

Further proofs were therefore required; and several were afterwards afforded. The details of the first are somewhat singular. At this time (July 1832) there lived in the village of Gallardon, at the extremity of Beauce, a peasant named Martin, who had the reputation of receiving revelations from above, which he acquired so far back as 1818, when Mathew Burneau and other spurious princes made their appearance. One Sunday in that year, during mass, Martin saw a vision in which he said an angel commanded him to get an interview with Louis XVIII., the purport of which should be afterwards revealed to him. Immediately after his return from church, Martin having taken leave of his wife and family, commenced his journey on foot to Paris. On the fifth day he arrived there, went straight to the palace of the Tuileries, and demanded to be admitted to the king. In the simplicity of his heart, he told the guards that his mission was of a celestial nature; but they, not finding messengers from above among the list of visitors set down in the orders of the day, handed poor Martin over to the municipal authorities, who transferred him to the Bicetre lunatic asylum. Here he remained for some time, during which his exemplary piety and touching resignation attracted the attention and respect of the principal physician, who often made him the subject of general conversation. At the end of two months Louis heard of the circumstance, and actually consented to see the harmless man. At the interview, he imparted to the king the substance of a second revelation; which was, that his majesty's nephew, Louis XVII., was

still alive, and would return at no very distant period; and that if the king he addressed attempted to undergo the ceremony of coronation, the direst calamities would follow; amongst others the dome of the cathedral (of Rheims) would fall in, and crush every soul taking part in the rites. Whether the majesty of France took any serious heed of this enthusiast's warning, it is impossible to say; but one thing is certain--Louis XVIII. never was formally crowned. When Martin returned to his village, he found that the king had bought the house which he rented, and presented it to him to live in for the rest of his days. This, together with his interview with royalty--of which he of course made no secret--elevated the poor visionary to the character of a prophet amongst the population of that part of the country; many of whom indeed formed themselves into a sect called Martinists, and devoutly expected the re-appearance of the son of Louis XVI.

As these facts were notorious in 1818, they had not been forgotten in 1832, and it was not at all unnatural that the least credulous of the Comtesse de R.'s friends should suggest that Neuendorf should be shown to the Beauce prophet. Accordingly, in September, a journey to St Arnould, near Dourdan, was undertaken; and without saying who he was, or pretended to be, Neuendorf was there confronted with Martin. In an instant, it is said, the prophet recognised him as the person he had seen in his second vision as Louis XVII. His enthusiasm knew no bounds; he embraced the 'prince' with tears of joy, and in the evening the whole party heard mass at the modest little church of St Arnould.

Whatever effect this scene may have had upon Neuendorf's more educated companions, it created a prodigious sensation in that part of the country, and one which was extremely beneficial to the 'prince.' The honest people could not do enough to testify their delight. After his return to Paris, they organised subscriptions, in collecting which the village priests took the lead. Under their influence the farmers and peasantry subscribed not only cash, but produce, a regular supply of which was sent every Saturday to Paris, under the charge of a farmer of St Arnould, named Noel Pequet. It was ascertained that, during the four months succeeding his appearance at St Arnould, the value of upwards of L16,000 sterling was remitted to him from various parts of France!

With these supplies, and the contributions of the Comtesse de R. and her friends, Neuendorf was able to take a house, and set up an establishment, which he did as Duc de Normandie, the title which had been given by Louis XVI. to his son. He began housekeeping on a scale of regal magnificence. He bought a carriage, and collected a handsome stud of horses. His servants' liveries were splendid, and adorned with gilt buttons, on which was embossed a broken crown. He even went so far as to form a court and appoint a ministry; and, that nothing should be wanting, he actually started a newspaper to advocate his cause. The gentleman who undertook the responsible editorship of this journal having, however, neglected to deposit the securities required by law with the proper authorities, was arrested, and condemned to a long imprisonment; which he duly suffered. The unfortunate victim to loyal sentiments was one M. Widerkeer. This was the only evidence vouchsafed by the higher powers of their knowledge of the duke's proceedings. That the government of Louis-Philippe did not apprehend any very serious extent of belief in Neuendorf's pretensions, must be inferred from the immunity with which they allowed him to carry on

his proceedings, and to accept the contributions of the royalists. On the other hand, it must be noticed that Louis-Philippe's seat on the throne was not so firm as it afterwards became; and he may have been afraid to disturb Neuendorf, lest he should have excited the enmity of a very powerful party.

It must be owned that the evidence which the pretender had hitherto produced, was only calculated to gain over persons of limited experience and strong legitimist prejudices. A circumstance, however, which afterwards took place, was of a nature to stagger more obstinate sceptics: it had indeed that effect. We translate it from the words of an individual who was present when it happened. The Duc de Normandie was at dinner, surrounded by several friends. 'Among the company was an old lady, who, having recently arrived from the provinces, had never heard of the "prince," and, on being presented to him, was extremely astonished to find herself in the presence of so illustrious a person. After dinner, the conversation turned upon the duke's younger days, and the lady referred to addressed him in these words--"I, monseigneur, never saw the dauphin; but an old friend, who was constantly near his person in his infancy, has described to me that from the midst of his lower jaw there sprung out two teeth. They were incisors, and as straight and pointed as the teeth of a rabbit." Without speaking a word, he pulled open his lower lip, and exhibited to the company such a pair of rabbits' teeth as were described.'

This occurrence confirmed the duke's adherents in their belief of his identity with the victim of the first revolution, and the presence of the rightful heir to the throne of France created some stir in Paris. Perhaps the aspirant to royalty and his friends felt disappointed that the government did not evince its dread by some little persecution, over and above the imprisonment of Widerkeer. To account for this forbearance, dark suspicions were whispered regarding the _secret_ intentions of the ruling powers; and these were not long in being corroborated. One day in November, the duke expressed a desire to imitate certain other royalties by examining the streets of the capital, and mixing with its humble citizens _incog._ To this end he sallied forth alone, and even condescended to take his dinner at Vefour's celebrated restaurant. The evening was unusually dark, and while returning to his house across the open space at the back of the Tuileries (La Place de Carousal), he felt his shoulder suddenly grasped by a strong hand, and in another instant a poniard was plunged more than once into his breast, with the words, 'Die, Capet!' [*] Fortunately, the intended victim wore inside his coat a medal of the Virgin, which had belonged, it was understood, to Marie Antoinette, his mother; this, receiving the point of the dagger, preserved his life, though several flesh wounds were inflicted. The assassin fled; nor did the duke make any alarm for fear of being obliged to appear at the municipal guardhouse, and thus get into the power of the government. When he reached home, he was faint from loss of blood, and kept his bed for a fortnight.

[Footnote: _Meurs, Capet!_ --Capet is the family name of the Bourbons, as Guelph is that of the House of Brunswick.]

The suspicions of foul-play entertained by his 'court' were confirmed; they regarded the bravo as an emissary of the government, and the _'Meurs, Capet!_' as an acknowledgment of the duke's right to the crown! There were, however, ill-natured people who went about

hinting that, as the victim was quite alone, and became the teller of his own story, the diabolical deed _might_ have been done by himself, to strengthen the faith of his followers. Nor were these sceptics silenced when the gashes in the coat, the dents in the medal, and the blood of the royal sufferer was pointed out. But upon the whole, whether true or false, the circumstance materially strengthened the duke's position; and, on recovery, he began to play the prince in earnest.

He wrote to the Duchess of Berri, and to 'his sister' the Duchess of Angouleme. To the latter he offered to prove his identity in the following manner: 'When in the Temple,' he said, 'our royal mother and our aunt wrote several lines on a paper, which paper was cut in halves. One piece was given to you, and when we meet I will produce its fellow, which has never been out of my possession since our fatal separation.' The truth of this was never put to the test, for no answer was deigned to his letter.

At length the state in which the Duke of Normandy lived, the constant visits of his increasing partisans, and his general proceedings, attracted the attention of the police; and the heir to the French throne was made to understand that he stood a likely chance of being thrown into prison, and brought up to answer for his conduct before the Court of Assize. Upon this he determined to live less ostentatiously, and withdrew to a hotel in the Rue St Guillaume (No. 34), with which address none but a chosen few of his devoted partisans were made acquainted. Though formerly disappointed at having been passed so contemptuously over by the authorities, he now seemed in great dread of them. He never dared to appear abroad, and instituted particular signs and modes of knocking at his door, when those in the secret wished admittance. The proprietor of the house entertained from these proceedings very disagreeable suspicions, and, lest he should get into trouble himself, gave his illustrious lodger notice to quit. Some weeks after, the claimant of the crown was really arrested; but exile, and not imprisonment was his doom. He was placed in the _coupe_ of a diligence between two policemen, and conducted beyond the frontiers of France. In 1838 we find him in England, still calling himself the Duke of Normandy.

He took up his quarters in Camberwell Green, near London, and in November of the above year, suffered a second attempt upon his life. He was, it seems, returning from an outhouse in the garden, when a man confronted him, and fired two pistols at his breast. He pushed aside the weapons with the candlestick he happened to be carrying; but two bullets entered his left arm. The assassin escaped over a drain into a back-street; but having been recognised, was subsequently captured. A surgeon was sent for, and the bullets extracted, after having done no serious injury. The criminal turned out to be one of his late adherents, by name Desire Rousselle; who, on examination before the magistrates of the police-office at Union Hall, could assign no motive for the deed; and after two more examinations he was discharged, the duke declining to prosecute. The next appearance of his grace of Normandy at a police-office was in character of defendant. It seems that he had turned his attention to the art of pyrotechnics, and his explosive experiments were so alarming to the quiet neighbourhood of Camberwell, that he was summoned to answer for his conduct; but on promising not to repeat it, the complaint was dismissed. It would appear that his experiments were not altogether useless; for at a trial of newly-invented shells

before the Board of Ordnance at Woolwich, the duke's missiles were declared either second or third, we forget which, in point of efficiency. Indeed he seems to have occupied himself almost exclusively with scientific pursuits whilst in England. At Chelsea, whither he removed, the duke constructed a set of work-shops and laboratories, in which he, with his assistants and pupils, diligently wrought. In what his scientific labours and experiments would have resulted, it is impossible to say, for they were interrupted by a third attempt on his life. While alone in one of his work-shops, late at night, a bullet was fired at him from a hidden and still undiscovered enemy. The shot missed him; but, afraid to remain in this country any longer, he retired to Delft, in Holland, where it seems he died a natural death on the 10th of August 1845.

Whatever opinions may be formed of the truth of this individual's story of his birth, it is certain that a great many persons in France, whose opinions are entitled to respect, believed him to have been Louis XVII. Amongst the notices in the French papers to which his decease gave rise, was a note written by M. Herbert, once director of the military posts in Italy. It appears that when in that office, the man Neuendorf was, in 1810, arrested at Rome, and interrogated by M. Radet, chief of police in that city: the latter, pronounced him to be in reality the son of Louis XVI. Than M. Radet, there could not be a better judge of the matter, for he happened to be one of the five persons who arrested Louis and his family when they tried to quit France, and were intercepted at Varennes. Our own impression is, notwithstanding this and all other circumstances to the contrary, that the man was an impostor, and such we believe will also be the impression generally among our readers.

DUTCH ANNA.

It was shortly after the outbreak of the French Revolution that the humble heroine of this story made her appearance in my native village. Dutch Anna (for so she was called by the country people) was, as the name implies, a native of Holland; and at that time she might be about twenty-five years of age. She was of the middle size, stoutly and firmly built, with a round, good-humoured face, dark hair, clear, honest-looking hazel eyes, and a mouth which, though wide, was expressive of decision and firmness. Her dress, which never varied in style, consisted of a coloured petticoat of a thick woollen material, a short bed-gown of striped cotton, confined round the waist by the strings of a snow-white apron, a close-fitting, modest cap, underneath the plaited border of which appeared her glossy hair, neatly braided over her low, broad forehead; add to this a pair of well-knit stockings, which the shortness of her petticoats afforded ample opportunity of admiring, with heavy wooden shoes, and you have a complete picture of Dutch Anna's costume. At the time I speak of, the prejudice entertained by the mass of the people against foreigners was much greater than in the present day, when the means of communication between different countries are so much improved, and the general diffusion of knowledge has shown the unreasonableness of regarding with distrust and contempt those of our fellow-creatures who have been born in a different climate, and trained in different customs to our own. It may therefore be readily imagined that Anna was for a time regarded with suspicion and jealousy, for the very reason which ought to have commanded the sympathy and good-will of

her neighbours--'that she was a stranger in the land.' Her mode of life perhaps increased the prejudice against her. Respecting the reason of her voluntary exile, she preserved a studied silence; though I afterwards learned that the persecution she endured from her own family on the subject of religion was the principal cause. Our village adjoined a populous manufacturing district, and Anna, having been accustomed to such occupation, soon obtained employment. Being a person of a peculiarly reserved and serious turn of mind, she could not endure the thought of living in lodgings; and as she was not able to furnish or pay the rent of a cottage, she hired for a trifling sum an old lonely barn belonging to my father, who was a small farmer, and, with the labour of her own hands, managed to put it into a habitable condition. The furniture of this rude dwelling was simple enough, consisting of a bed of clean straw, a round deal table, and two three-legged stools. The whitewashed walls were ornamented with coloured prints on Scripture subjects, framed and glazed; and a small looking-glass, placed in a position to secure the best light afforded by the little window, completed the decorations. Various were the conjectures formed by the villagers respecting this inoffensive though singular woman; and many were the stories circulated, all tending to keep alive the prejudice her eccentricities were calculated to excite.

A casual circumstance, which led to my becoming obliged to Anna, at length enabled me to overcome the suspicion and dislike with which our neighbour was regarded. Our acquaintance speedily ripened into friendship; for with the reaction natural to the generous, I felt as though I could never sufficiently compensate for my former injustice towards her. Often in an evening I would put on my bonnet, and, taking my work with me, go to spend a leisure hour with Dutch Anna; and on these occasions she generally entertained me with descriptions of her own country, and of the customs and manners of its inhabitants; or with striking anecdotes and incidents which had come under her own personal observation; never failing to draw some useful moral or illustrate some important truth from what she related. She could read well, and write a little--rare accomplishments in those days for one in her situation in life. Her powers of observation were extremely acute, and her memory retentive; but what struck me as her most remarkable characteristics, were her sincere and unaffected piety, her undeviating truthfulness, and her extraordinary decision and fearlessness. When I have said, on bidding her good-night, 'Anna, are you not afraid to be left alone here during the night, with no one within call?' she has replied, 'Afraid, Miss Mary! no; how can I feel afraid, knowing myself under the protection of One as great and powerful as He is wise and good? I am never alone, for God is ever present with me.' After Anna had resided some years in this country, during which time she had, by her constant good-conduct, gained the esteem of all who knew her, and, by her good-nature and willingness to oblige, won the kindly feeling of even the most prejudiced, she became anxious to pay a visit to her native land; and as the accommodations for travelling at that period, besides being few, were costly, she obtained letters of recommendation from her employers and other gentlemen in the place to friends residing in different towns on her route, and set out, intending to perform the greater part of her land-journey on foot. At the end of several months she returned, and quietly resumed her former mode of life. Not till fully a year after this period did she relate to me an adventure which had occurred to her on her journey homewards, and which I shall now transcribe.

It was at the close of an autumn day that Anna, who had been walking since early morning with scarcely an interval of rest, found herself, in spite of her great capability of enduring fatigue, somewhat foot-sore and weary on arriving at the town of ----. As she passed along the streets, she observed an unusual degree of bustle and excitement; and, on inquiring the cause, found that a large detachment of soldiers, on their way to the continent, had arrived in the town that afternoon, and that some difficulty was experienced in finding them accommodation. This was not very agreeable news for Anna, tired as she was; however, she pursued her way to the house of the clergyman, where she had, in passing that way before, been hospitably entertained, hoping that there she might be able to procure a lodging, however humble. But in this she was disappointed; for though the good clergyman and his wife received her kindly, they could not offer her shelter for the night, as they had already more guests than they could conveniently accommodate. Anna would have been contented and thankful for a bed of straw by the kitchen fire; but even this they could not give, as the lower apartments were wanted by those who had been obliged to give up their beds.

At length, after some hesitation, the clergyman said, 'I know but of one place where you could at this time find a lodging. You appear to be a woman of good courage, and if you dare venture, you may occupy a room in that house you see from this window. It is uninhabited, and has been so for some years, as it has the reputation of being haunted. Anna looked in the direction indicated, and saw through the deepening twilight a large two-storied house, built of a dull red brick, with stone copings, standing at some distance from the high-road. The house itself occupied a considerable extent of ground, being beautifully situated, with fronts to the south and west. The principal entrance was by folding-doors, half of which were glass; and the house was sheltered on the north and east by a grove of trees, whose branches, now but thinly covered with leaves, waved mournfully to and fro in the night wind. 'The last proprietor of that place,' continued the clergyman, 'was a vicious and depraved man, whose very existence was a curse to the neighbourhood in which he dwelt. At an early age he came into possession of a large property, which he spent in the gratification of every base and lawless passion. His life, as far as I can learn, was one unmixed course of cruelty, lust, and impiety, unredeemed by one noble aspiration, one generous, unselfish action. He died suddenly, in the prime of life, in the midst of one of his riotous midnight orgies, and the house has ever since been deserted. It is said, and believed by our good towns-folks, that there he still holds his revels, with fiends for his companions; and many affirm that they have heard the sound of their unearthly merriment, mingled with shrieks and wailings, borne upon the night-breeze; whilst the few who have ventured within its walls, tell of shapes seen, and sounds heard, which would cause the stoutest heart to quail. For myself, I am no great believer in the supernatural, and have no doubt that imagination, united to the loneliness of the spot, and the strange freaks the wind plays through a large uninhabited house, have originated reports which we are sure would lose nothing in the recital; so if you are inclined to make the trial, I will see that what is necessary is provided, and I think I may venture to promise you an undisturbed night's rest.'

Anna, as I have before said, was remarkable for her fearlessness; so she thanked the gentleman for his proposal, saying 'that she had not

the least fear of spirits, good or bad; that the former, if indeed they were ever visible to mortal eyes, could be but messengers of mercy; and for the latter, she could not conceive that a Being infinite in goodness would ever permit them to revisit this earth for the sole purpose of terrifying and tormenting innocent individuals like herself; that she far more dreaded evil men than evil spirits; and that as, from the estimation in which the place was held, she should feel herself secure from them, she would thankfully accept his offer.' As soon, therefore, as the necessary preparations were made, and Anna had partaken of the good substantial fare set before her, she begged to be allowed to retire to rest, as she was fatigued with her day's journey, and wished to set out again early the next morning. Her request was immediately complied with; the good clergyman himself insisting upon seeing her safely to her destination; when, having ascertained that proper provision had been made for her comfort, and told her that refreshment should be provided for her early next morning at his house, he bade her good-night, and left her to repose. As soon as he was gone, Anna proceeded to take a more particular survey of her apartment. It was a large, but not very lofty room, panelled with oak, and having two windows looking across a wide lawn to the main road. The bright fire in the ample fireplace illuminated the richly-carved cornice, with its grotesque heads and fanciful scrollwork. It had evidently been a dining-room, for some of the heavy furniture, in the fashion of the period in which it had been last inhabited, still remained. There were the massive table and the old-fashioned high-backed chairs, with covers of what had once been bright embroidery, doubtless the work of many a fair hand; but what attracted her attention most, was a picture over the chimney-piece. It was painted on the wooden panel; perhaps the reason it had never been removed, though evidently the work of no mean artist. It represented a scene of wild revelry. At the head of a table, covered with a profusion of fruits, with glasses and decanters of various elegant forms, stood a young man; high above his head he held a goblet filled to the brim with wine; excitement flashed from his bright blue eyes, and flushed the rounded cheek; light-brown hair, untouched by powder, curled round the low narrow forehead; whilst the small sensual mouth expressed all the worst passions of our nature. Around the table sat his admiring parasites; young beauty and hoary age, the strength of manhood and the earliest youth, were there, alike debased by the evidences of lawless passion. With what a master-hand had the painter seized upon the individual expression of each! There the glutton, and here the sot; now the eye fell on the mean pander or the roystering boon-companion; now on the wit, looking with a roguish leer upon his fair neighbour, or the miserable wretch maudlin in his cups; and again on the knave profiting by the recklessness of those around him. The bright blaze of the fire lit up the different countenances with a vivid and lifelike expression; and as Anna gazed, fascinated and spell-bound, her thoughts naturally reverted to what she had heard of the life and character of the last owner of the place. Was that youthful figure, so evidently the master of the revel, a portrait of the unhappy man himself who had thus unconsciously left behind him not only a memorial, but a warning. How often had the now silent halls echoed to the brawl of the drunkard, the song of the wanton, the jest of the profane, the laugh of the scorner! It was here, perhaps in this very room, that the dread hand of death had struck him; here he had been suddenly called to account for property misused, a life misspent. Saddened by these reflections, she turned from the picture, and taking her Bible from her bundle, she drew aside the tarnished

curtains, and seated herself at one of the windows. The moon had by this time risen, and was shedding her soft light on the peaceful landscape without. The beauty of the scene soothed her excited feelings; and as she read, her mind resumed its accustomed serenity. Closing her book, she prepared to retire to rest, first examining the doors, of which there were two: the one by which she had entered, opening into the front hall, she found to be without a lock, or indeed any fastening at all; the other, leading in an opposite direction, she was unable to open. As, however, she was quite free from apprehension, she felt no uneasiness from this circumstance; and, commending herself to the care of her heavenly Father, she composed herself to rest, and soon fell soundly asleep.

How long she had slept she could not tell, when she was awoken by what seemed to her the confused sounds of song and merriment. So deep had been her sleep, that it was some time before she could rouse herself to a recollection of her situation. When, however, she had done so, she raised herself in bed, and listened; all was silent, save that the night, having become rather gusty, the wind at intervals swept moaningly round the deserted mansion. The fire was almost out, but the candle in the lantern which stood by her bedside shed a feeble light upon the oaken floor; and the moon, though occasionally overcast, was still high in the heavens. Readily concluding the disturbance to have been wholly imaginary, the result of the impression made by her waking thoughts upon her sleeping fancies, Anna composed herself again to sleep; but scarcely had she lain down, when the same sounds, low at first, but gradually becoming louder and more distinct, broke in upon the silence. The noise appeared to her to proceed from a distant part of the house, and came with a kind of muffled sound, as though doors of some thickness intervened. Peals of laughter, bursts of applause, snatches of song, crashing of glass, mingled in wild confusion. Higher and higher grew the mirth, louder and louder swelled the tumult, until, when the uproar appeared to have reached its height, there was a pause--a silence as profound as it was sudden and appalling. Then there rang through the wide deserted halls and chambers a shrill despairing shriek, whilst far and near, above, below, around, rose mocking and insulting laughter. Dauntless as Anna was, and firm as was her reliance on the protection of Heaven, it would perhaps be too much to say that she felt no quickening of the pulse, no flutterings and throbbings of the heart as she listened. But surprise, and a strong desire to penetrate the mystery, greatly preponderated over any feelings of alarm, and her first impulse was immediately to endeavour to find her way to the scene of the disturbance. But a moment's consideration showed her how foolish and imprudent this would be, totally unacquainted as she was with the house, and with no better light than the feeble glimmer of her lantern. If it was the work of designing persons, such a step would be but to expose herself to danger, whilst, if the effect of supernatural agency, she could neither learn what they wished to conceal, nor shun what they chose to reveal. She therefore decided upon passively awaiting the result of her adventure. As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, the noise subsided, the laughter became fainter and fainter; until at length it died away, seemingly lost in the distance, and silence once more reigned around. After the lapse of a short interval, this was again broken by a noise resembling the rattling and clanking of a chain dragged heavily along, which seemed to approach by slow degrees towards her apartment, and as gradually receded; then again approached, and again receded; and so on several times, but each time coming nearer than

before; until at length it paused beside that door of her room which Anna had been unable to open. Cautiously raising her head from the pillow, Anna endeavoured, with fixed and strained look, to pierce the darkness in which that part of the room was enveloped; but though she could not distinguish anything, and though no sound was made, she became, with a thrill more nearly approaching terror than she had before experienced, instinctively conscious that she was no longer alone. Resolutely determined, however, not to yield to feelings of alarm, Anna said, in a firm, unfaltering voice: 'Whoever or whatever you are that thus disturb my repose and intrude upon my privacy, show yourself, and name your errand, if you want anything from me; if not, begone, for your attempts to terrify me are vain. I fear you not.' The only answer returned was a low laugh; and where the moonlight streamed in through the partly-drawn window-curtain, there stood a frightfully-grotesque figure. Its body, as well as Anna could distinguish, resembled that of a beast, but the head, face, and shoulders were those of a human being; the former being decorated with a horn over each shaggy eyebrow. It stood upon all fours, but the front legs were longer than those behind, and terminated in claws like a bird. Round its neck an iron chain was hung, which, as it now slowly advanced, sometimes in the light, and sometimes in the shade, it rattled menacingly. The sight of this creature, far from increasing Anna's alarm, considerably diminished it, and she lay perfectly quiet, steadily watching its movements, until it came within arm's-length of her, when, suddenly springing forward, she seized hold of it with a firm grasp, exclaiming: 'This is no spirit, for here is flesh and bone like myself.'

Apparently, the ghost being composed of too solid materials to melt in air, had no other resource than to oppose strength to strength, for it struggled vigorously, and with some difficulty succeeded in freeing itself from Anna's hold. No sooner was it at liberty, than it made for the door with as much speed as its various encumbrances would allow; and Anna, now completely roused, and forgetting all prudential considerations in the excitement of the moment, hastily put on a few articles of clothing, and, throwing her cloak around her, seized her lantern and followed. The ghost had, however, gained so much in advance of her, that it was with some difficulty she could decide which way to turn, but, guided by the clanking of the chain, she went boldly along a wide stone passage, and through several rooms, opening one out of another, until, just as she was again within sight, and almost within reach of the object of her pursuit, it suddenly disappeared; and Anna, in her eagerness, springing quickly forward, was herself the next moment precipitated through an opening in the floor, in her fall breaking her lantern. Fortunately she alighted on a heap of straw, or the consequences might have been fatal. As it was, though bruised and stunned by her sudden descent, she did not entirely lose consciousness, but was sensible of a confused murmur of voices near her; and as her perceptions became clearer, she was aware that the tones, though low, were earnest and angry, and that she herself was the subject of conversation.

'I tell you it is the only thing to be done; so what's the use of talking about it, you fool,' were the first words she distinguished.

'But,' interrupted another voice, evidently a woman's, 'would it not be better to wait and see?'

'Death and fury, wait and see what?' fiercely exclaimed the first

speaker. 'If she's dead, it'll do her no harm; and if she isn't, the sooner a stopper's put in her mouth the better.'

Completely roused from her stupor by the danger with which she was threatened, Anna opened her eyes, and perceived that she was in a large vaulted cellar, at one end of which was a small heated furnace. Scattered about the floor, and on rudely-constructed work-benches, as though the persons using them had hastily abandoned their employment, were many curious-looking tools and machines, together with heaps of metal of different sizes, and in different stages of manufacture, from the merely moulded shape to the finished shilling or guinea. Some half-dozen or eight men and women were grouped together, amongst whom she recognised the ghost, not quite divested of his masquerade dress. In a single glance Anna perceived all this, and it needed no conjuror to tell her that she had fallen into the hands of a gang of coiners.

Fully sensible of the peril of her situation, her extraordinary courage did not forsake her; for Anna, though somewhat peculiar in her religious opinions, was perfectly sincere, and even at this awful moment felt unshaken, confidence in the protecting care of Providence. Though a foreigner, she possessed great command of the English language, and her style, notwithstanding its singularity and quaintness, was well calculated to overawe the rude and lawless band into whose hands she had fallen. With a calm and steady gaze she met the eye of the ruffian, who brandished his weapon before her, and said, 'I pray you do not commit this great wickedness, nor shed the blood of a helpless woman, who has never injured you.'

'Oh, come,' interrupted the man in a surly tone, 'let's have none of that gammon, for it'll be of no use. If folk will meddle in others folk's concerns, they must take the consequences; we're not such fools as to put the rope round our own necks, I can tell you.'

'Nay, but hear what I have to say,' repeated Anna, eluding the man's grasp as he endeavoured to seize hold of her; 'my coming here was no fault of my own, and I promise not to betray you.'

'Oh ay, a likely tale,' said the man with a brutal laugh. 'We're all for ourselves in this world, and no mistake; so we shall just put you where you can tell no tales, old girl.'

'Stop; hear what she has to say: you shall; you must,' cried a young woman who started up from a table at the further end of the cellar, at which she had been seated, with her face buried in her hands, during the foregoing colloquy. 'I tell you, Jack,' she continued, advancing into the midst of the group, and laying her hand on the man's arm, 'you shan't touch that woman: you won't; I know you won't. Bad enough you are--we all are, God knows--but there's no blood upon our hands yet; and,' added she, lowering her voice, 'blood will speak, you know--remember.' The man's countenance fell as the girl uttered the last words; he relaxed his hold of the knife; and Anna, taking advantage of his indecision, and the relenting expression she thought she read in the dark faces round her, related her simple story, dwelling particularly upon the danger the corners would incur were she missing, and their security in case she was allowed to proceed on her journey, after seeing her friend the clergyman. Taking courage from the attention of her hearers, she even ventured to remonstrate with them upon their dangerous mode of life, and

entreated them to abandon it, and seek their subsistence honestly.

There was a pause of some minutes after Anna ceased speaking, during which the coiners exchanged with each other looks of mingled admiration and astonishment. At length one of them, who appeared to take the lead, addressing his companions, said, 'The woman has spoken well, and there is reason in what she says. It is true enough that murder will out; and though she is a stranger, she was known to come here. Her disappearance might excite suspicion, suspicion would lead to inquiries, inquiries to search, and then all would be up with us; besides, a few weeks will see us clear of this place, if we have luck, and I think we may trust her so long.' Then turning to Anna, he continued, 'You have a spirit of your own, and I like you the better, and would trust you the sooner for it; none but fools rely on the word of a coward, but one who dare speak the honest truth, without fear or favour, when in peril of life, is not likely to break faith, I think; so you shall go free, on condition that you take a solemn oath not to reveal to any one the events of this night until six months have passed; by that time we shall have quitted not only this neighbourhood, but the country, and,' he added with a laugh, 'the ghost that has kept all the men in ---- quaking after dark, like a pack of frightened children, will be laid for ever. Have I said well, my comrades?' There was a general murmur of assent, and the man continued: 'Recollect, then, that if you break your oath, your life will be the forfeit: we have means to ascertain and punish treachery; and should you attempt foul-play, you can no more escape our vengeance than here in this lonely place you can resist our power. Will you swear, by all you hold most dear and sacred, to keep our secret inviolable for the time agreed?' To this proposition Anna, as will be readily believed, joyfully assented, and being conducted by her strange acquaintances back to her sleeping apartment, she most gladly, when morning dawned, bade adieu to the scene of her singular and alarming adventure. On arriving at the clergyman's house, she was not sorry to find but few of the family stirring, as she naturally wished to avoid much questioning. In answer to the inquiries which were made as to how she had passed the night, she said that she had been much annoyed and disturbed; and though she avoided entering into particulars, she strongly advised that no one should be permitted to try a similar experiment, assuring them that she believed few could pass through what she had done without sustaining severe, if not permanent injury from it. Having thus, as far as lay in her power, acquitted her conscience, she pursued her journey. In a few days she arrived at home; but it was not until several months over the time specified had elapsed, that she related the adventure to me, in order to show how little dependence is to be placed on the stories told of ghosts and haunted houses. As Dutch Anna said: 'Evil men have generally more to do with such stories than evil spirits, and, after all, it is possible to give a certain gentleman and his agents more than their due.'

THE LOCKSMITH OF PHILADELPHIA.

Some years ago, in the city of Philadelphia, there lived an ingenious locksmith, named Amos Sparks. Skilled as a maker and repairer of locks, he was particularly celebrated for his dexterity in opening them, when it was necessary to do so in cases of emergency. Like many men of talent in other departments, Amos Sparks was poor. Though a

very industrious and prudent man, with a small and frugal family, he merely obtained a comfortable subsistence, but he never seemed to accumulate property. Whether it was that he was not of the race of money-makers, whose instinctive desire of accumulation forces them to earn and hoard without a thought beyond the mere means of acquisition--or whether the time occupied by the prosecution of new inquiries into still undiscovered regions of his favourite pursuit, and in conversation with those who came to inspect and admire the fruits of his ingenuity, were the cause of his poverty, we cannot undertake to determine--but perhaps various causes combined to keep his finances low; and it was quite as notorious in the city that Amos Sparks was a poor man, as that he was an ingenious mechanic. But his business was sufficient for the supply of his wants and those of his family, and so he studied and worked on, and was content.

It happened that, in the autumn of 18--, a merchant in the city, whose business was extensive, and who had been bustling about the quay and on board his vessels all the morning, returned to his counting-house to lodge several thousand dollars in the Philadelphia bank, to renew some paper falling due that day; when, to his surprise, he had either lost or mislaid the key of his iron chest. After diligent search, with no success, he was led to conclude that, in drawing out his handkerchief, he had dropped the key in the street, or perhaps into the dock. What was to be done? It was one o'clock--the bank closed at three, and there was no time to advertise the key, or to muster so large a sum of money as that required. In his perplexity the merchant thought of the poor locksmith. He had often heard of Amos Sparks; the case seemed one particularly adapted to a trial of his powers, and being a desperate one, if he could not furnish a remedy, where else were there reasonable expectations of succour? A clerk was hurried off for Amos, and having explained the difficulty, speedily reappeared, followed by the locksmith with his implements in his hand.

The job proved more difficult than had been anticipated, and, fearful of losing credit by the delay, the merchant offered five dollars' reward to Amos if he would open the chest in as many minutes. Amos succeeded. The lock was picked, and the chest flew open. There the merchant's treasures lay, but they were not yet in his possession. As he enjoyed but a poor reputation for uprightness of dealing, Amos could not trust to his promise of payment. Holding the lid in his hand, he respectfully requested the sum which had been offered; and, as he had expected, it was refused. A much less sum was meanly proposed in its stead, on the plea that it was surely sufficient for a few minutes' work. Amos was indignant and inexorable. The merchant shuffled and fumed. In an instant down went the lid of the chest, and, fastening by a spring, it was again locked as securely as before.

The merchant looked aghast at Amos, and then darted a glance at the clock: the hand pointed to within twenty minutes of three, and seemed posting over the figures with the speed of light. What was to be done? At first he tried to bully, but it would not do. Amos told him, if he had sustained any injury, he might sue as soon as he pleased, for that his time was too precious just now to be wasted in trifling affairs; and, with a face of unruffled composure, he turned on his heel and was leaving the office.

The merchant called him back--he had no alternative--his credit was

at stake--he was humbled by the necessity of the case; and handing forth the five dollars, 'There, Sparks,' said he, 'take your money, and let us have no more words.'

'I must have ten dollars now,' replied the locksmith. 'You would have taken advantage of a poor man; and, besides opening your strong box there, I have a lesson to offer which is well worth a trifling sum. You would not only have deprived me of what had been fairly earned, but have tempted me into a lawsuit which would have ruined my family. You will never in future presume upon your wealth in your dealings with the poor, without thinking of the locksmith, and those five dollars may save you much sin and much repentance.'

This homily, besides being preached in a tone of calm determination, which left no room to hope for any abatement, had exhausted another minute or two of the time already so precious. The merchant hurriedly counted out the ten dollars, which Amos deliberately inspected, to see that they belonged to no insolvent bank, and then deposited them in his pocket. Having thus made quite sure of his reward, he dexterously opened the lock, and placed the merchant in possession of his property, in time to save his credit at the bank.

About a month after this affair, the Philadelphia bank was robbed of coin and notes to the amount of fifty thousand dollars. The bars of a window had been cut, and the vault entered so ingeniously, that it was evident the burglar had possessed, besides daring courage, a good deal of mechanical skill. The police scoured the city and country round about, but no clue to the discovery of the robbery could be traced. The public mind was powerfully excited. Everybody who had anything to lose, felt that daring and ingenious felons were abroad, who might probably pay them a visit; all were therefore interested in the discovery and the conviction of the perpetrator of so daring a deed. Suspicions at length began to settle on Sparks; but yet his poverty and known integrity seemed to give them the lie. The story of the iron chest, which the merchant had hitherto been ashamed, and Amos too forgiving, to tell--for the latter did not care to set the town laughing at the man who had wronged him--now began to be told. The merchant, influenced by a vindictive spirit, had whispered it to the directors of the bank, with sundry shrugs and innuendoes; and of course it soon spread far and wide, with all sorts of exaggerated variations and additions. Amos thought for several days that some of his neighbours looked and acted rather oddly, and he missed one or two who used to drop in and chat almost every afternoon; but not suspecting for a moment that there was any cause for altered behaviour, these matters made but a slight impression on his mind. In all such cases, the person most interested is the last to hear disagreeable news; and the first hint that the locksmith got of the universal suspicion was from the officer of the police, who came with a party of constables to search his premises. Astonishment and grief were the portion of Amos and his family for that day.

'Cheer up, my darlings,' said Amos, who was the first to recover the sobriety of thought that usually characterised him--'cheer up--all will yet be well; it is impossible that the unjust suspicion can long hover about us. A life of honesty and fair-dealing will not be without its reward. The real authors of this outrage will probably be discovered soon, for a fraud so extensive will make all parties vigilant; and if not, why, then, when our neighbours see us toiling at our usual occupations, with no evidences of secret wealth or

lavish expenditure on our persons or at our board, and remember how many years we have been so occupied and so attired, without a suspicion of wrong-doing even in small matters attached to us, there will be good-sense and good-feeling enough in the city to do us justice.'

There was sound sense and much consolation in this reasoning: the obvious probabilities of the case were in favour of the fulfilment of the locksmith's expectations. But a scene of trial and excitement--of prolonged agony and hope deferred--lay before him, the extent of which it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for him then to have foreseen. Toiled in the search, the directors of the bank sent one of their body to negotiate with Amos--to offer him a large sum of money, and a guarantee from further molestation, if he would confess, restore the property, and give up his accomplices, if any there were. It was in vain that he protested his innocence, and avowed his abhorrence of the crime. The banker rallied him on his assumed composure, and threatened him with consequences; until the locksmith, who had been unaccustomed to dialogues founded on the presumption that he was a villain, ordered his tormentor out of his shop, with the spirit of a man who, though poor, was resolved to preserve his self-respect, and protect the sanctity of his dwelling from impertinent and insulting intrusion.

The banker retired, baffled, and threatening vengeance. A consultation was held, and it was finally determined to arrest Sparks and commit him to prison, in the hope that, by shutting him up, and separating him from his family and accomplices, he would be less upon his guard against the collection of evidence necessary to a conviction, and perhaps be frightened into terms, or induced to make a full confession. This was a severe blow to his family. The privations forced upon them by the want of the locksmith's earnings were borne without a murmur--and out of the little that could be mustered, a portion was always reserved to buy some trifling but unexpected comfort or luxury to carry to the prisoner.

Some months having passed without Sparks having made any confession, or the discovery of any new fact whereby his guilt might be established, his prosecutors found themselves reluctantly compelled to bring him to trial. They had not a tittle of evidence, except some strange locks and implements found in the shop, and which proved the talent, but not the guilt, of the mechanic. But these were so various, and executed with such elaborate art, and such an evident expenditure of labour, that but few, even of the judges, jury, or spectators, could be persuaded that a man so poor would have devoted himself so sedulously to such an employment, unless he had had some other object in view than mere instruction or amusement. His friends and neighbours gave him an excellent character; but on their cross-examination, all admitted his entire devotion to his favourite pursuit. The counsel for the banker exerted himself with considerable ability. Calculating in some degree on the state of the public mind, and upon the influence which vague rumours, coupled with the evidences of the mechanic's handicraft exhibited in court, might have on the mind of the jury, he dwelt upon every ward and winding--on the story of the iron chest--on the evident poverty of the locksmith, and yet his apparent waste of time--and asked if all this work were not intended to insure success in some vast design? He believed that a verdict would be immediately followed by a confession, for he thought Amos guilty, and succeeded in making the

belief pretty general among his audience. Some of the jury were half inclined to speculate on the probabilities of a confession, and, swept away by the current of suspicion, were not indisposed to convict without evidence, in order that the result might do credit to their penetration; but this was impossible, even in an American court of justice, in the good old times of which we write. Hanging persons on suspicion, and acquitting felons because the mob think murder no crime, are modern inventions. The charge of the judge was clear and decisive. He admitted that there were grounds of suspicion--that there were circumstances connected with the prisoner's peculiar mode of life that were not reconcilable with the lowness of his finances; but yet of direct testimony there was not a vestige, and of circumstantial evidence there were not only links wanting in the chain, but, in fact, there was not a single link extending beyond the locksmith's dwelling. Sparks was accordingly acquitted; but as no other clue was found to direct suspicion, it still lay upon him like a cloud. The vindictive merchant and the dissatisfied bankers did not hesitate to declare, that although the charge could not be legally brought home, they had no doubt whatever of his guilt. This opinion was taken up and reiterated, until thousands, who were too careless to investigate the story, were satisfied that Amos Sparks was a rogue.

Amos rejoiced in his acquittal, as one who felt that the jury had performed a solemn duty faithfully, and who was glad to find that his present experience had strengthened rather than impaired his reliance on the tribunals of his country. He embraced his family as one snatched from great responsibility and peril; and yet Amos felt that though acquitted by the jury, he was not by the town: he saw that in the faces of some of the jury, and most of the audience, which he was too shrewd an observer to misunderstand. He wished it were otherwise; but he was contented to take his chance of some subsequent revelation; and if it came not, of living down the foul suspicion.

But Amos had never thought of how he was to live. The cold looks, averted faces, and rude scandal of the neighbours, could be borne, because really there was some excuse in the circumstances, and because he hoped that there would be a joyful ending of it all at some future day. But the loss of custom first opened his eyes to his real situation. No work came to his shop; he made articles, but he could not sell them; and as the little money he had saved was necessarily exhausted in the unavoidable expense of the trial, the family found it impossible, aided by the utmost exertion and economy, to meet their current outlay. One article of furniture after another was reluctantly sacrificed, or some little comfort abridged, until, at the end of months of degradation and absolute distress, their bare board was spread within bare walls, and it became necessary to beg, to starve, or to remove. The latter expedient had often been suggested in family consultations, and it is one that in America is the common remedy for all great calamities. The Sparkses would have removed, but they still clung to the hope that the real perpetrator would be discovered, and the mystery cleared up; and, besides, they thought it would be an acknowledgment of the justice of the general suspicion if they turned their backs and fled. They lived upon the expectation of the renewed confidence and companionship of old friends and neighbours, when Providence should deem it right to draw the veil aside. At length, to live longer in Philadelphia became impossible, and the whole family prepared to depart. Their effects were easily transported, and as they had had no credit since the

arrest, there was nobody to prevent them from seeking a livelihood elsewhere.

Embarking in one of the river boats, they pushed up the Schuylkill, and settled at Norristown. The whole family being industrious and obliging, they soon began to gather little comforts around them; and as these were not embittered by the cold looks and insulting sneers of the neighbourhood, they were comparatively happy for a time. But even here there was for them no permanent place of rest. A traveller passing through Norristown, on his way from the capital to the Blue Mountains, recognised Sparks, and told somebody he knew that he wished the community joy of having added to the number of its inhabitants the notorious locksmith of Philadelphia. The news soon spread. The family found that they were shunned as they had formerly been by those who had known them longer than the good people of Norristown, and had a fair prospect of starvation opening before them. They removed again. This time there was no inducement to linger, for they had no local attachments to detain them. They crossed the mountains, and, descending into the vale of the Susquehanna, pitched their tent at Sunbury. Here the same temporary success excited the same hopes, only to be blighted in the bud by the breath of slander, which seemed so widely circulated as to leave them hardly any asylum within the limits of the State. We need not enumerate the different towns and villages in which they essayed to gain a livelihood, and failed. They had nearly crossed the State in its whole length, been driven from Pittsburg, and were slowly wending their way further west, and were standing on the high ground overlooking Middleton, as though doubtful if there was to be rest for the soles of their feet even there. They hesitated to try a new experiment. Sparks seated himself on a stone beneath a spreading sycamore--his family clustered around him on the grass: they had travelled far, and were weary, and, without speaking a word, as their eyes met, and thinking of their prolonged sufferings and slender hopes, they burst into a flood of tears, in which Sparks, burying his face in the golden locks of the sweet girl who bowed her head upon his knee, joined audibly. At length, wiping away his tears, and checking the rising sobs that shook his manly bosom--'God's will be done, my children,' said the locksmith; 'we cannot help weeping, but let us not murmur. If we are to be wanderers and fugitives on the earth, let us never lose sight of the promise which assures us of an eternal refuge in a place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. I was perhaps too proud of that skill of mine--too apt to plume myself upon it, above others whose gifts had been less abundant. My error has been that of wiser and greater men, who have been made to feel that what we cherish as the means of obtaining earthly blessings, sometimes turns out a curse.'

To dissipate the gloom which hung over the whole party, and beguile the half hour they intended to rest in that sweet spot, Mrs Sparks drew out a Philadelphia newspaper which somebody had given her upon the road, and called their attention to the deaths and marriages, that they might see what changes were taking place in a city that still interested them, though they were banished for ever from its borders. She had hardly opened the paper when her eye glanced on an article which she was too much excited to read. Amos, wondering at the emotion displayed, gently disengaged the paper, and read: 'Bank robber--Sparks not the man.' His own feelings were as powerfully interested as those of his wife, but his nerves were stronger; and he read out, to an audience whose ears devoured every syllable of the

glad tidings, an account of the conviction and execution of a wretch in Albany, and who had confessed, among other daring and heinous crimes, the robbery of the Philadelphia bank, accounting for the disappearance of the property, and exonerating Sparks, whose face he had never seen. These were tidings of great joy to the weary wayfarers beneath the sycamore; their resolution to return to their native city was formed at once, and before a week had passed, they were slowly journeying to the capital of the State.

Meanwhile, an extraordinary revulsion of feeling had taken place at Philadelphia. Newspapers and other periodicals which had formerly been loud in condemnation of the locksmith, now blazoned abroad the robber's confession--wondered how any man could have been for a moment suspected upon such evidence as was adduced on the trial--drew pictures of the domestic felicity once enjoyed by the Sparkses, and then painted--partly from what was known of the reality, and partly from imagination--their sufferings, privations, and wrongs in the pilgrimage they had performed in fleeing from an unjust but damnatory accusation. The whole city rang with the story. Old friends and neighbours, who had been the first to shun them, now became the loud and vehement partisans of the family. The whole city was anxious to know where they were. Some reported that they had perished in the woods; others that they had been burned in a prairie, which not a few believed; while another class averred that the locksmith, driven to desperation, had first destroyed his family, and then himself. All these stories of course created as much excitement as the robbery of the bank had done before, only that this time the tide set the other way; and when the poor locksmith and his family, who had been driven like vagabonds from the city, approached its suburbs, they were met, congratulated, and followed by thousands: in fact, theirs was almost a triumphal entry. And as the public always like to have a victim, Sparks was advised on all hands to bring an action against the directors of the bank: large damages would, they knew, be given, and the banker deserved to suffer for the causeless ruin brought on a poor but industrious family.

Sparks was reluctant to engage in any such proceeding. His character was vindicated, his business restored. He occupied his own shop, and his family were comfortable and content. But the current of public opinion was too strong for him. All Philadelphia had determined that the banker should suffer. An eminent lawyer volunteered to conduct the suit, and make no charge if a liberal verdict were not obtained. The locksmith pondered the matter well. His own wrongs he freely forgave, but he thought that there had been a readiness to secure the interests of a wealthy corporation by blasting the prospects of a humble mechanic, which, for the good of society, ought not to pass unrebuked. He felt that the moral effect of such a prosecution would be salutary, teaching the rich not to presume too far upon their affluence, and cheering the hearts of the poor while suffering unmerited persecution. The suit was commenced, and urged to trial, notwithstanding several attempts at compromise on the part of the banker. The pleadings on both sides were able and ingenious; but the counsel for the plaintiff had a theme worthy of the fine powers he possessed. At the close of a pathetic and powerful declamation, the audience, who had formerly condemned Amos in their hearts without evidence, were melted to tears by the recital of his sufferings; and when the jury returned with a verdict of ten thousand dollars damages against the banker, the locksmith was honoured by a ride home on their shoulders amidst a hurricane of cheers.

THE END

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