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Author: George Alfred Townsend

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BOHEMIAN DAYS: THREE AMERICAN
TALES ***

BOHEMIAN DAYS

Three American Tales

BY

GEO. ALFRED TOWNSEND

"GATH"

"And David arose and fled to Gath. And he changed his behavior. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him. And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months."

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TO TEN FRIENDS AT DINNER,

GILSEY HOUSE, NEW YORK,

APRIL 21, 1879;

PREFACE.

So far from the first tale in this book being of political motive, it was written among the subjects of it, and read to several of them in 1864. Perhaps the only *souvenir* of refugee and "skeddaddler" life abroad during the war ever published, its preservation may one day be useful in the socialistic archives of the South, to whose posterity slavery will seem almost a mythical thing. With as little bias in the second tale, I have etched the young Northern truant abroad during the secession. The closing tale, more recently written, in the midst of constant toil and travel, is an attempt to recall an old suburb, now nearly erased and illegible by the extension of a great city, and may be considered a home American picture about contemporary with the European tales.

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BOHEMIA.

The farther I do grow from *La Bohème*,
The more I do regret that foolish shame
Which made me hold it something to conceal,
And so I did myself expatriate;
For in my pulses and my feet I feel
That wayward realm was still my own estate;
Wise wagged our tongues when the dear nights grew late,
And quainter, clearer, rose our quick conceits,
And pure and mutual were our social sweets.
Oh! ever thus convivial round the gate
Of Letters have the masters and the young
Loitered away their enterprises great,
Since Spenser revelled in the halls of state,
And at his tavern rarest Jonson sung.

THE REBEL COLONY IN PARIS.

I.

THE EXILES.

In the latter part of October, 1863, seven very anxious and dilapidated personages were assembled under the roof of an old, eight-storied tenement, near the church of St. Sulpice, in the city of Paris.

The seven under consideration had reached the catastrophe of their decline—and rise. They had met in solemn deliberation to pass resolutions to that effect, and take the only congenial means for replenishment and reform. This means lay in miniature before a caged window, revealed by a superfluity of light—a roulette-table, whereon the ball was spinning industriously from the practised fingers of Mr. Auburn Risque, of Mississippi.

Mr. Auburn Risque had a spotted eye and a bluishly cold face; his fingers were the only movable part of him, for he performed respiration and articulation with the same organ—his nose; and the sole words vouchsafed by this at present were: "Black—black—black—white—black—white—white—black"—etc.

The five surrounding parties were carefully noting upon fragments of paper the results of the experiment, and likewise Master Lees, the lessee of the chamber—a pale, emaciated youth, sitting up in bed, and ciphering tremulously, with bony fingers; even he, upon whom disease had made auguries of death, looked forward to gold, as the remedy which science had not brought, for a wasted youth of dissipation and incontinence.

They were all representatives of the recently instituted Confederacy. Most of them had dwelt in Paris anterior to the war, and, habituated to its luxuries, scarcely recognized themselves, now that they were forlorn and needy. Note Mr. Pisgah, for example—a Georgian, tall, shapely and handsome, with the gray hairs of his thirtieth year shading his working temples; he had been the most envied man in Paris; no woman could resist the magnetism of his eye; he was almost a match for the great Berger at billiards; he rode like a centaur on the Boulevards, and counterfeited Apollo at the opera and the masque. His credit was good for fifty thousand francs any day in the year. He had travelled in far and contiguous regions, conducted intrigues at Athens and Damascus, and smoked his pipe upon the Nile and among the ruins of Sebastopol. Without principle, he was yet amiable, and with his dashing style and address, one forgot his worthlessness.

How keenly he is reminded of it now! He cannot work, he has no craft nor profession; he knew enough to pass for an educated gentleman; not enough to earn a franc a day. He is the *protégé* at present of his washerwoman, and can say, with some governments, that his debts are impartially distributed. He has only two fears—those of starvation in France, and a soldier's death in America.

The prospect of a debtor's prison at Clichy has long since ceased to be a terror. There, he would be secure of sustenance and shelter, and of these, at liberty, he is doubtful every day.

Still, with his threadbare coat, he haunts the Casino and the Valentino of evenings; for some mistresses of a former day send him billets.

He lies in bed till long after noon, that he may not have pangs of hunger; and has yet credit for a dinner at an obscure *cremery*. When this last confidence shall have been forfeited, what must result to Pisgah?

He is striving to anticipate the answer with this experiment at roulette; for he has a "system" whereby it is possible to break any gambling bank—Spa, Baden, Wisbaden or Homburg. The others have systems also, from Auburn Risque to Simp, the only son of the richest widow in Louisiana, who disbursed of old in Paris ten thousand dollars annually.

His house at Passy was a palace in miniature, and his favorite a tragedy queen. She played at the Folies Dramatiques, and drove three horses of afternoons upon the Champs Elysées. She had other engagements, of course, when Mr. Lincoln's "paper blockade" stopped Master Simp's remittances, and he passed her yesterday upon the Rue Rivoli, with the Russian ambassador's footman at her back, but she only touched him with her silks.

Simp studied a profession, and was a volunteer counsel in the memorable case of Jeems Pinckney against Jeems Rutledge. His speech, on that occasion, occupied in delivery just three minutes, and set the courtroom in a roar. He paid the village editor ten dollars to compose it, and the same sum to publish it.

"If you could learn it for me," said Simp, anxiously, "I would give you twenty dollars."

This, his first and last public appearance, was conditional to the receipt from his mother, of six thousand acres of land and eighty negroes. It might have been a close calculation for a mathematician to know how many black sweat-drops, how many strokes of the rawhide, went into the celebrated dinner at the Maison Dorée, wherein Master Simp and only his lady had thirty-four courses, and eleven qualities of wine, and a bill of eight hundred francs.

In that prosperous era, his inalienable comrade had been Mr. Andy Plade, who now stood beside him, intensely absorbed.

Of late Mr. Plade's affection had been transferred to Hugenot, the only possessor of an entire franc in the chamber. Hugenot was a short-set individual, in pumps and an eye-glass, who had been but a few days in the city. He was decidedly a man of sentiment. He called the Confederacy "ow-ah cause," and claimed to have signed the call for the first secession meeting in the South.

He asserted frankly that he was of French extraction, but only hinted that he was of noble blood. He had been a hatter, but carefully ignored the fact; and, having run the blockade with profitable cargoes fourteen times, had settled down to be a respectable trader between Havre and Nassau. Mr. Plade shared much of the sentiment and some of the money of this illustrious personage.

There were rumors abroad that Plade himself had great, but embarrassed, fortunes.

He was one of the hundred thousand chevaliers who hail the advent of war as something which will hide their nothingness.

"I knew it," said Auburn Risque, at length, pinching the ball between his hard palms as if it were the creature of his will. "My system is good; yours do not validate themselves. You are novices at gambling; I am an old blackleg." It was as he had said; the method of betting which he proposed had seemed to be successful. He staked upon colors; never upon numbers; and alternated from white to black after a fixed, undeviating routine.

Less by experiment than by faith, the others gave up their own theories to adopt his own. They resolved to collect every available sou, and, confiding it to the keeping of Mr. Risque, send him to Germany, that he might beggar the bankers, and so restore the Southern Colony to its wonted prosperity.

Hugenot delivered a short address, wishing "the cause" good luck, but declining to subscribe anything. He did not doubt the safety of "the system" of course, but had an hereditary antipathy to gaming. The precepts of all his ancestry were against it.

Poor Lees followed in a broken way, indicating sundry books, a guitar, two pairs of old boots, and a canary bird, as the relics of his fortune. These, Andy Plade, who possessed nothing, but thought he might borrow a trifle, volunteered to dispose of, and Freckle, a Missourian, who was tolerated in the colony only because he could be plucked, asserted enthusiastically, and amid great sensation, that he yet had three hundred francs at the banker's, his entire capital, all of which he meant to devote to the most reliable project in the world.

At this episode, Pigsaw, whose misfortunes had quite shattered his nerves, proposed to drink at Freckle's expense to the success of the system, and Hugenot was prevailed upon to advance twenty-one sous, while Simp took the order to the adjacent *marchand du vin*.

When they had all filled, Hugenot, looking upon himself in the light of a benefactor, considered it necessary to do something.

"Boys," he said, wiping his eyes with the lining of a kid glove, "will you esteem it unnatural, that a Suth Kurlinian, who sat—at an early age, it is true—at the feet of the great Kulhoon, should lift up his voice and weep in this day of ou-ah calamity?"

(Sensation, aggrieved by the sobs of Freckle, who, unused to spirits and greatly affected—chokes.)

"When I cast my eye about this lofty chambah" (here Lees, who hasn't been out of it for a year, hides himself beneath the bed-clothes); "when I see these noble spih-its dwelling obscu' and penniless; when I remembah that two short years ago, they waih of independent fohtunes—one with his sugah, anotha with his cotton, a third with his tobacco, in short, all the blessings of heaven bestowed upon a free people—niggars, plantations, pleasures!—I can but lay my pooah hand upon the manes of my ancestry, and ask in the name of ou-ah cause, is there justice above or retribution upon the earth!"

A profound silence ensued, broken only by Mr. Plade, who called Hugenot a man of sentiment, and slapped his back; while Freckle fell upon Pigsaw's bosom, and wished that his stomach was as full as his heart.

Mr. Simp, who had been endeavoring to recollect some passages of his address, in the case of the Jeemses, for that address had an universal application, and might mean as much now as on the original occasion, brought down one of those decayed boots which the *marchand des habits* had thrice refused to buy, and said, stoutly:

"By Gad! think of it, hyuh am I, a beggah, by Gad, without shoes to my feet, suh! The wuth of one nigga would keep me now for a yeah. At home, by Gad, I could afford to spend the wuth of a staving field hand every twenty-fouah houahs. I'll sweah!" cried Simp in conclusion, "I call this hard."

"I suppose the Yankees have confiscated my stocks in the Havre steamers," muttered Andy Plade. "I consider they have done me out of twenty thousand dollars."

"Brotha writes to me, last lettah," continued Freckle, who had recovered, "every tree cut off the plantation—every nigga run off, down to old Sim, a hundred years old—every panel of fence toted away—no bacon in smoke-house—not an old rip in stable—no corn, coon, possum, rabbit, fox, dog or hog within ten miles of the place—house stands in a mire—mire stands in desert—Yankee general going to conscrip brotha. I save myself, sp'ose, for stahvation."

"Wait till you come down to my condition," faltered the proprietor, making emphasis with his meagre finger—"I have been my own enemy; the Yankees will but finish what is almost consummated now. I tell you, boys, I expect to die in this room; I shall never quit this bed. I am offensive, wasted, withered, and would look gladly upon Père la Chaise,^[A] if with my bodily maladies my mind was not also diseased. I have no fortitude; I am afraid of death!"

[A] The great Cemetery of Paris.

The room seemed to grow suddenly cold, and the faces of all the inmates became pale; they looked more squalid than ever—the threadbare curtains, the rheumatic chairs, the soiled floor, sashes and wallpaper.

Mr. Hugenot fumbled his shirt-bosom nervously, and his diamond pin, glaring like a lamp upon the worn garbs and faces of his compatriots, showed them still wanner and meaner by contrast.

"Put the blues under your feet!" cried Auburn Risque, in his hard, practical way; "my system will resurrect the dead. You shall have clothes upon your backs, shoes upon your feet, specie in your pockets, blood in your veins. Let us sell, borrow and pawn; we can raise a thousand francs together. I will return in a fortnight with fifty thousand!"

II.

RAISING THE WIND.

The million five hundred thousand folks in Paris, who went about their pleasures that October night, knew little of the sorrows of the Southern Colony.

Pisgah dropped in at the Chateau des Fleurs to beg a paltry loan from some ancient favorite. The time had been, when, after a nightly debauch, he had placed two hundred francs in her morning's coffee-cup. It was mournful now to mark his premature gray hairs, as, resting his soiled, faded coat-sleeve upon her *manteau de velour*, he saw the scorn of his poverty in the bright eyes which had smiled upon him, and made his request so humbly and so feverishly.

"Give me back, Feefine," he faltered, "only that fifty francs I once tied in a gold band about your spaniel's neck. I am poor, my dear—that will not move you, I know, but I am going to Germany to play at the banks; if I win, I swear to pay you back ten francs for one!"

There was never a *lorette* who did not love to gamble. She stopped a passing gentleman and borrowed the money; the other saw it transferred to Pisgah, with an expression of contempt, and, turning to a friend, called him aloud a withering name.

Poor Pisgah! he would have drawn his bowie-knife once, and defied even the emperor to stand between the man and himself after such an appellation. He would have esteemed it a favor now to be what he was named, and only lifted his creased beaver gratefully, and hobbled nervously away, and stopping near by at a café drank a great glass of absinthe, with almost a prayerful heart.

At Mr. Simp's hotel in the Rue Monsieur Le Prince much business was transacted after dark. Monsieurs Freckle and Plade were engaged in smuggling away certain relics of furniture and wearing apparel.

Mr. Simp already owed his landlord fifteen months' rent, for which the only security was his diminishing effects.

If the mole-eyed concierge should suspect foul play with these, Simp would be turned out of doors immediately and the property confiscated.

Singly and in packages the collateral made its exit. A half-dozen regal chemises made to order at fifty francs apiece; a musical clock picked up at Genoa for twelve louis; a patent boot-jack and an ebony billiard cue; a Paduan violin; two statuettes of more fidelity than modesty, to be sold pound for pound at the current value of bronze; divers pipes—articles of which Mr. Simp had earned the title of connoisseur, by investing several hundred dollars annually—a gutta-percha self-adjusting dog-muzzle, the dog attached to which had been seized by H. M. Napoleon III. in lieu of taxes, etc., etc.

Everything passed out successfully except one pair of pantaloons which protruded from Freckle's vest, and that unfortunate person at once fell under suspicion of theft. All went in the manner stated to Mr. Lees' chamber, he being the only colonist who did not hazard the loss of his room, chiefly because nobody else would rent it, and in part because his landlady, having swindled him for six or eight years, had compunctions as to ejecting him.

Thence in the morning, true to his aristocratic instincts, Mr. Simp departed in a *voiture* for the central bureau of the Mont de Piète,^[B] in the Rue Blanc Manteau. His face had become familiar there of late. He carried his articles up from the curb, while the *cocher* grinned and winked behind, and taking his turn in the throng of widows, orphans, ouvriers, and profligates and unfortunates of all loose conditions, Simp was a subject of much unenviable remark. He came

away with quite an armful of large yellow certificates, and the articles were registered to Monsieur Simp, a French subject; for with such passports went all his compatriots.

[B] The government pawnbroking shop.

Andy Plade spent twenty-four hours, meanwhile, at the Grand Hotel, enacting the time-honored part of all things to all men.

He differed from the other colonists, in that they were weak—he was bad. He spoke several languages intelligibly, and knew much of many things—art, finances, geography—just those matters on which newly arrived Americans desire information. His address was even fascinating. One suspected him to be a leech, but pardoned the motive for the manner. He called himself a broken man. The war had blighted his fair fortunes. For a time he had held on hopefully, but now meant to breast the current no longer. His time was at the service of anybody. Would monsieur like to see the city? He knew its every cleft and den. So he had lived in Paris five years—in the same manner, elsewhere, all his life.

A few men heard his story and helped him—one Northern man had given him employment; his gratitude was defalcation.

To day he has sounded Hugenot; but that man of sentiment alluded to the business habits of his ancestry, and intimated that he did not lend.

"Ou-ah cause, Andy," he says, with a flourish, "is now negotiating a loan. When ou-ah beloved country is reduced to such straits, that she must borrow from strangers, I cannot think of relieving private indigence."

Later in the day, however, Mr. Plade made the acquaintance of an ingenuous youth from Pennsylvania, and obtaining a hundred francs, for one day only, sent it straightway to Mr. Auburn Risque.

A second meeting was held at Lees' the third day noon, when the originator of the "system" sat icily grim behind a table whereon eleven hundred francs reposed; and the whole colony, crowding breathlessly around, was amazed to note how little the space taken up by so great a sum.

They opened a crevice that Lees might be gladdened with the sight of the gold; for to-day that invalid was unusually dispirited, and could not quit his bed.

"We are down very low, old Simp," said Pisgah, smilingly, "when either the possession or the loss of that amount can be an event in our lives."

"You will laugh that it was so, a week hence," answered Auburn Risque—"when you lunch at Peters' while awaiting my third check for a thousand dollars apiece."

"I don't believe in the system," growled Lees, opening a cold draft from his melancholy eyes: "I don't feel that I shall ever spend a sou of the winnings. No more will any of you. There will be no winnings to spend. Auburn Risque will lose. He always does."

"If you were standing by at the play I should," cried Risque, while the pock-marks in his face were like the thawings of ice. "You would croak like an old raven, and I should forget my reckoning."

"Come now, Lees," cried all the others; "you must not see bad omen for the Colony;" and they said, in undertone, that Lees had come to be quite a bore.

They were all doubtful, nevertheless. Their crisis could not be exaggerated. Their interest was almost devout. Three thousand miles from relief; two seas between, one of water and one of fire; at home, conscription, captivity, death: the calamity of Southerners abroad would merit all sympathy, if it had not been induced by waste, and unredeemed by either fortitude or regret.

The unhappy Freckle, whose luckless admiration of the rest had been his ruin, felt that a sonorous prayer, such as his old father used to make in the Methodist meeting-house, would be a good thing wherewith to freight Auburn Risque for his voyage. When men stake everything on a chance, it is natural to look up to somebody who governs chances; but Andy Plade, in his loud, bad way, proposed a huge toast, which they took with a cheer, and quite confused Hugenot, who had a sentiment *apropos*.

Then they escorted Auburn Risque to the Chemin de fer du Nord,^[C] and packed him away in a third-class carriage, wringing his hand as if he were their only hope and friend in the world.

[C] Northern Railway Station.

III.

DEATH IN EXPATRIATION.

It was a weary day for the Southern Colony. They strolled about town—to the Masque, the Jardin des Plantes, the Champ des Mars, the Marché aux Chevaux, and finally to Freckle's place, and

essayed a lugubrious hour at whist.

"It is poor fun, Pisgah," said Mr. Simp, at last, "if we remember that afternoon at poker when you won eight thousand francs and I lost six thousand."

The conversation forever returned to Spa and Baden-Baden, and many wagers were made upon the amount of money which Risque would gain—first day—second day—first week, and so forth.

At last they resolved to send to Lees' chamber for the roulette-board, and pass the evening in experiment. They drew Jacks for the party who should fetch it, and Freckle, always unfortunate, was pronounced the man. He went cheerfully, thinking it quite an honor to serve the Colony in any capacity—for Freckle, representing a disaffected State, had fallen under suspicion of lukewarm loyalty, and was most anxious to clear up any such imputation.

His head was full of odd remembrances as he crossed the Place St. Sulpice: his plain old father at the old border home, close and hard-handed, who went afield with his own negroes, and made his sons take the plough-handles, and marched them all before him every Sunday to the plank church, and led the singing himself with an ancient tuning-fork, and took up the collection in a black velvet bag fastened to a pole.

He had foreseen the war, and sent his son abroad to avoid it. He had given Freckle sufficient money to travel for five years, and told him in the same sentence to guard his farthings and say his prayers. Freckle could see the old man now, with a tear poised on his tangled eyelashes, asking a farewell benediction from the front portico, upon himself departing, while every woolly-head was uncovered, and the whole assembled "property" had groaned "Amen" together.

That was patriarchal life; what was this? Freckle thought this much finer and higher. He had not asked himself if it was better. He was rather ashamed of his father now, and anxious to be a dashing gentleman, like Plade or Pisgah.

Why did he play whist so badly? How chanced it that, having dwelt eighteen months in Paris, he could speak no French? His only *grisette* had both robbed him and been false to him. He knew that the Colony tolerated him, merely. Was he indeed verdant, as they had said—obtuse, stupid, lacking wit?

After all, he repeated to himself, what had the Colony done for him? He had not now twenty francs to his name, and was a thousand francs in debt; he had essayed to study medicine, but balked at the first lesson. Yet, though these suggestions, rather than convictions, occurred to him, they stirred no latent ambition. If he had ever known one high resolution, the Southern Colony had pulled it up, and sown the place with salt.

So he reached Master Lees' tenement; it was a long ascent, and toward the last stages perilous; the stairs had a fashion of curving round unexpectedly and bending against jambs and blank walls. He was quite out of breath when he staggered against Lees' door and burst it open.

The light fell almost glaringly upon the bare, contracted chamber; for this was next to the sky and close up to the clouds, and the window looked toward the west, where the sun, sinking majestically, was throwing its brightest smiles upon Paris, as it bade adieu.

And there, upon his tossed, neglected bed, in the full blaze of the sunset, his sharp, fallow jaws dropped upon his neck, his cheeks colorless and concave, his great eyes open wide and his hair unsmoothed, Master Lees lay dead, with the roulette table upon his breast!

When Freckle had raised himself from the platform at the base of the first flight of stairs, down which he had fallen in his fright, he hastened to his own chamber and gave the Colony notice of the depletion of its number.

A deep gloom, as may be surmised, fell upon all. Lees had been no great favorite of late, and it had been the trite remark for a year that he was looking like death; but at this juncture the tidings came ominously enough. One member, at least, of the Southern Colony would never share the winnings of Auburn Risque, and now that they referred to his forebodings of the morning, it was recalled that with his own demise, he had prophesied the failure of "the system."

His end seemed to each young exile a personal admonition; they had known him strong and spirited, and with them he had grown poor and unhappy. Poverty is a warning that talks like the wind, and we do not heed it; but death raps at our door with bony knuckles, so that we grow pale and think.

They shuddered, though they were hardened young men, so unfeeling, even after this reprimand, that they would have left the corpse of their companion to go unhonored to its grave; separately they wished to do so—in community they were ashamed; and Pisgah had half a hope that somebody would demur when he said, awkwardly:

"The Colony must attend the funeral, I suppose. God knows which of us will take the next turn."

Freckle cried out, however, that he should go, if he were to be buried alive in the same tomb, and on this occasion only he appeared in the light of an influential spirit.

IV.

THE DESPERATE CHANCE.

During all this time Mr. Auburn Risque, packed away in the omnibus train, with a cheap cigar between his lips, and a face like a refrigerator, was scudding over the rolling provinces of France, thinking as little of the sunshine, and the harvesters of flax, and the turning leaves of the woods, and the chateaux overawing the thatched little villages, as if the train were his mail-coach, and France were Arkansas, and he were lashing the rump of the "off" horse, as he had done for the better part of his life.

Risque's uncle had been a great Mississippi jobber; he took U. S. postal contracts for all the unknown world; route of the first class, six horses and daily; route of the second class, semi-weekly and four horses; third class, two horses and weekly; fourth class, one horse, one saddle, and one small boy.

The young Auburn had been born in the stable, and had taken at once to the road. His uncle found it convenient to put him to work. He can never be faithfully said to have learned to *walk*; and recalls, as the first incident of his life, a man who carried a baby and two bowie knives, teaching him to play old sledge on the cushions of a Washita stage.

Thenceforward he was a man of one idea. He held it to be one of the decrees, that he was to grow rich by gaming. As he went, by day or night, in rain or fog or burning sun, by the margins of turgid south-western rivers, where his "leaders" shied at the alligators asleep in the stage-road; through dreary pine woods, where the owls hooted at silence; over red, reedy, slimy causeways; in cane-breaks and bayous; past villages where civilization looked westward with a dirk between its teeth, and cracked its horsewhip; past rich plantations where the negroes sang afield, and the planter in the house-porch took off his hat to bow—here, there, always, everywhere, with his cold, hard, pock-marked face, thin lips and spotted eye, Auburn Risque sat brooding behind the reins, computing, calculating, overreaching, waiting for his destiny to wrestle with Chance and bind it down while its pockets were picked.

His whole life might have been called a game of cards. He carried a deck forever next his heart. Sometimes he gambled with other vehicles—stocks, shares, currency—but the cards were still his mainstay, and he was well acquainted with every known or obsolete game. There was no trick, nor fraud, nor waggery which he had not at his fingers-ends.

It was his favorite theory that there was method in what seemed chance; principles underlying luck; measures for infinity; clues to all combinations.

Given one pack of cards, one man to shuffle, one to cut, one to deal, and fair play, and it was yet possible to know just how many times in a given number of games each card would fall to each man.

Given a roulette circle of one hundred numbered spaces and a blindfolded man to spin the ball; it could be counted just how many times in one thousand said ball would come to rest upon any one number.

No searcher for perpetual motion, no blind believer in alchemy, clung to his one idea closer than Auburn Risque. He had shut all themes, affections, interests, from his mind. He neither loved nor hated any living being. He was penurious in his expenditures—never in his wagers. He would stake upon anything in nature—a trot, an election, a battle, a murder.

"Will you play picquet for one sou the game, one hundred and fifty points?" says a soldier near by.

He accepts at once; the afternoon passes to night, and the lamps in the roof are lighted. The cards flicker upon the seat; the boors gather round to watch; they pass the French frontier, and see from their windows the forges of Belgium, throwing fire upon the river Meuse. Still, hour after hour, though their eyes are weary, and all the folks are gone or sleeping, the cards fall, fall, fall, till there comes a jar and a stop, and the guard cries, "Cologne!"

"You have won," says the soldier, laying down his money. "Good-night."

The Rhine is a fine stream, though our German friends will build mock-castles upon it, and insist that it is the only real river in the world.

Auburn Risque pays no more regard to it than though he were treading the cedars and sands of New Jersey or North Carolina. He speaks with a Franco-Russian, who has lost in play ten thousand francs a month for three successive years, and while they discuss chances, expedients and experiences, the Siebern-gebierge drifts by, they pass St. Goar and Bingen, and the wonderful Rhine has been only a time, nothing of a scene, as they stop abreast Biberich, and, rowed ashore in a flagboat, make at once for the railway.

At noon, on the third day, Mr. Risque having engaged a frugal bed at a little distance from Wisbaden, enters the grand saloon of the Kursaal, and turning to the right, sees before him a perspective, to which not all the marvels of art or nature afford comparison: a snug little room,

with a table of green baize in the centre of the floor, and about the table sundry folks of various ages and degrees, before each a heap of glittering coins, and in the midst of all a something which moves forever, with a hurtle and a hum—the roulette.

Mark them! the weak, the profligate, the daring. There is old age, watching the play, with its voice like a baby's cry; and the paper whereon it keeps tremulous tally swimming upon eyes of perpetual twilight.

The boy ventures his first gold piece with the resolve that, win or lose, he will stake no more. He wins, and lies. At his side stands beautiful Sin, forgetting its guilt and coquetry for its avarice. The pale defaulter from over the sea hazards like one whose treasure is a burden upon his neck, and the *roué*—blank, emotionless, remorseless—doubling at every loss, walks penniless away to dinner with a better appetite than he who saves a nation or dies for a truth.

The daintily dressed *coupeurs* are in their chairs, eyeless, but omniscient; the ball goes heedlessly, slaying or anointing where it stays, and the gold as it is raked up clinks and glistens, as if it struck men's hearts and found them as hard and sounding.

Mr. Risque advanced to the end of the table, and stood motionless a little while, drinking it all into his passionless eyes, which, like sponges, absorbed whatever they saw, but nothing revealed. At last his right hand dropped softly to his vest pocket, as though it had some interest in deceiving his left hand.

Apparently unconscious of the act, the right hand next slid over the table edge, and silently deposited a five-franc piece upon the black compartment.

"Whiz-z-z-z" started the ball from the fingers of the *coupeurs*—"click" dropped the ball into a black department of the board; "clink! tingle!" cried the money, changing hands; but not a word said Auburn Risque, standing like a stalagmite with his eyes upon ten francs.

"Whiz-z-z!"—"click!" "click!" "tingle!"

Did he see the fifteen francs at all, half trance-like, half corpse-like, as he stood, waiting for the third revolution, and waiting again, and again, and again?

His five francs have grown to be a hundred; his cold hand falls freezingly upon them; five francs replace the hundred he took away—"Whizz!" goes the ball; "click!" stops the ball; the *coupeur* seizes Mr. Risque's five francs, and Mr. Risque walks away like a somnambulist.

V.

BURIED IN THE COMMON DITCH.

It would have been a strange scene for an American public, the street corridor of the lofty house near the church of Saint Sulpice, on the funeral afternoon.

The coffin lay upon a draped table, and festoons of crape threw phantom shadows upon the soiled velvet covering. Each passing pedestrian and cabman took off his hat a moment. The Southern Colony were in the landlady's bureau enjoying a lunch and liquor, and precisely at three o'clock they came down stairs, not more dilapidated than usual, while at the same moment the municipal hearse drove up, attended by one *cocher* and two *croquemorts*.^[D]

[D] Literally, "parasites of death."

The hearse was a cheap charity affair, furnished by the *Maire* of the *arrondissement*, though it was sprucely painted and decked with funeral cloth. The driver wore a huge black chapeau, a white cotton cravat, and thigh-boots, which, standing up stiffly as he sat, seemed to engulf him to the ears.

When the *croquemorts*, in a business way, lifted the velvet from the coffin, it was seen to be constructed of strips of deal merely, unpainted, and not thicker than a Malaga raisin box.

There was some fear that it would fall apart of its own fragility, but the chief *croquemort* explained politely that such accidents never happened.

"We have entombed four of them to-day," he said; "see how nicely we shall lift the fifth one."

There was, indeed, a certain sleight whereby he slung it across his shoulder, but no reason in the world for tossing it upon the hearse with a slam. They covered its nakedness with velvet, and the *cocher*, having taken a cigar from his pocket, and looking much as if he would like to smoke, put it back again sadly, cracked his whip, and the cortege went on. The *croquemorts* kept a little way ahead, sauntering upon the sidewalk, and their cloaks and oil-cloth hats protected them from a drizzling rain, which now came down, to the grief of the mourners, walking in the middle of the street behind the body. They were seven in number, Messrs. Plade, Pisgah and Simp, going together, and apparently a trifle the worse for the lunch; Freckle followed singly, having been told to keep at a distance to render the display more imposing; the landlady and her niece went arm in arm after, and behind them trode a little old hunchback gentleman, neatly clothed, and

bearing in his hand a black, wooden cross, considerably higher than himself, on which was painted, in white letters, this inscription:

CHRISTOPHER LEES,
CAROLINA DU NORD,
ÉTATS CONFÉDÉRE
AMÉRIQUE.
AGE VINGT-QUATRE.

A wreath of yellow immortelles, tied to the crosspiece, was interwoven with these spangled letters:

"R-E-G-R-E-T-S;"

and the solemn air of the old man seemed to evidence that they were not meaningless.

The hunchback was Lees' principal creditor. He kept a small restaurant, where the deceased had been supplied for two years, and his books showed indebtedness of twenty-eight hundred francs, not a sou of which he should ever receive. He could ill afford to lose the money, and had known, indeed, that he should never be paid, a year previous to the demise. But the friendlessness of the stranger had touched his heart. Twice every day he sent up a basket of food, which was always returned empty, and every Sunday climbed the long stairway with a bottle of the best wine—but never once said, "Pay my bill."

Here he was at the last chapter of exile, still bearing his creditor's cross.

"Give the young man's friends a lunch," he had said to the landlady: "I will make it right;"—and in the cortege he was probably the only honest mourner.

Not we, who know Frenchmen by caricature merely, as volatile, fickle, deceitful, full of artifice, should sit in judgment upon them. He has the least heart of all who thinks that there is not some heart everywhere! The charity which tarrieth long and suffereth much wrong, has been that of the Parisians of the Latin Quarter, during the American war.

Along all the route the folks lifted their hats as the hearse passed by, and so, through slush and mist and rain, the little company kept straight toward the barriers, and turned at last into the great gate of the cemetery of Mt. Parnasse.

They do not deck the cities of the dead abroad as our great sepulchres are adorned.

Père la Chaise is famed rather for its inmates than its tombs, and Mont Parnasse and Monte Martre, the remaining places of interment, are even forbidding to the mind and the eye.

A gate-keeper, in semi-military dress, sounded a loud bell as the hearse rolled over the curb, and when they had taken an aisle to the left, with maple trees on either side, and vistas of mean-looking vaults, a corpulent priest, wearing a cape and a white apron, and attended by a civil assistant of most villainous physiognomy, met the cortege and escorted it to its destination.

This was the *fosse commune*—in plain English, the *common trench*—an open lot adjacent to the cemetery, appropriated to bodies interred at public expense, and presenting to the eye a spectacle which, considered either with regard to its quaintness or its dreariness, stood alone and unrivalled.

Nearest the street the ground had long been occupied, trench parallel with trench, filled to the surface level, sodded green, and each grave marked by a wooden cross. There was a double layer of bodies beneath, lying side by side; no margin could of course be given at the surface; the thickly planted crosses, therefore, looked, at a little distance, like a great waste of heath or bramble, broken now and then by a dwarf cedar, and hung to the full with flowers and tokens. The width of the trenches was that of the added height of two full-grown men, and the length a half mile perhaps; a narrow passage-way separated them, so that, however undistinguishable they appeared, each grave could be indentified and visited.

Close observation might have found much to cheer this waste of flesh, this economy of space; but to this little approaching company the scene was of a kind to make death more terrible by association.

A rough wall enclosed the flat expanse of charnel, over which the scattered houses of the barriers looked widowed through their mournful windows; and now and then a crippled crone, or a bereaved old pauper, hobbled to the roadway and shook her white hairs to the rain.

It seemed a long way over the boggy soil to the newly opened trench, where the hearse stopped with its wheels half-sunken, and the chief *croquemort*, without any ado, threw the coffin over his shoulder and walked to the place of sepulture. Five *fossoyeurs*, at the remote end of the trench, were digging and covering, as if their number rather than their work needed increase, and a soldier in blue overcoat, whose hands were full of papers, came up at a commercial pace, and cried:

"*Corps trente-deux!*"

Which corresponded to the figures on the box, and to the number of interments for the day.

The delvers made no pause while the priest read the service, and the clods fell faster than the

rain. The box was nicely mortised against another previously deposited, and as there remained an interstice between it and that at its feet, an infant's coffin made the space complete.

The Latin service was of all recitations the most slovenly and contemptuous; the priest might have been either smiling or sleeping; for his very red face appeared to have nothing in common with his scarcely moving lips; and the assistant looked straight at the trench, half covetously, half vindictively, as if he meant to turn the body out of the box directly, and run away with the grave-clothes. It took but two minutes to run through the text; the holy water was dashed from the hyssop; and the priest, with a small shovel, threw a quantity of clods after it. "*Requiescat in pace!*" he cried, like one just awakened, and now for the first time the grave-diggers ceased; they wanted the customary fee, *pour boire*.

The exiles never felt so destitute before; not a sou could be found in the Colony. But the little hunchback stepped up with the cross, and gave it to the chief *fossoyeur*, dropping a franc into his hand; each of the women added some sous, and the younger one quietly tied a small round token of brass to the wood, which she kissed thrice; it bore these words:

"*A mon ami.*"

"A little more than kin and less than kind!" whispered Andy Plade, who knew what such souvenirs meant, in Paris.

The Colony went away disconsolate; but the little hunchback stopped on the margin, and looked once more into the pit where the box was fast disappearing.

"Pardon our debts, *bon Dieu!*" he said, "as we pardon our debtors."

Shall we who have followed this funeral be kind to the stranger that is within our gates? The quiet old gentleman standing so gravely over the *fosse commune* might have attracted more regard from the angels than that Iron Duke who once looked down upon the sarcophagus of his enemy in the Hotel des Invalides.

And so Lees was at rest—the master's only son, the heir to lands and houses, and servants, and hopes. He had escaped the bullet, but also that honor which a soldier's death conferred—and thus, abroad and neglected, had existed awhile upon the charity of strangers, to expire of his own wickedness, and accept, as a boon, this place among the bones of the wretched.

How beat the hearts which wait for the strife to be done and for him to return! The field-hands sleep more honored in their separate mounds beneath the pine trees. The landlady's daughter may come sometimes to fasten a flower upon his cross; but, like that cross, her sorrow will decay, and Master Lees will mingle with common dust, passing out of the memory of Europe—ay! even of the Southern Colony.

How bowed and wounded they threaded the way homeward, those young men, whom the world, in its bated breath, had called rich and fortunate! Now that they thought it over, how absurd had been this gambling venture! They should lose every sou. They had, for a blind chance, exhausted the patience of their creditors, and made away with their last collateral—their last crust, and bed, and drink.

"I wish," said Simp, bitterly, "that I had been born one of my mother's niggers. Bigad! a cabin, a wood fire, corn meal and a pound of pork per diem, would keep me like a duke next winter."

Here they stopped at Simp's hotel, and, as he was afraid to enter alone, the loss of his baggage being detected, the Colony consented to ascend to his chamber.

"Monsieur Simp," said the fierce concierge, "here is a letter, the last which I shall ever receive for you! You will please pay my bill to-night, or I shall go to the office of the *prud'homme*; you are of the *canaille*, sir! Where are your effects?"

"Whoop!" yelled Mr. Simp, in the landlady's face. "Yah-ah-ah! hoora ah-ah! three cheers! we have news of our venture! This is a telegram!"

"WISBADEN, Oct. 30.

"The system wins! To-day and yesterday I took seven thousand one hundred francs. I have selected the 4th of November to break the bank.

"AUBURN RISQUE."

VI.

THE OLD REVELRY REVIVED.

The Colony would have shouted over Master Lees' coffin at the receipt of such intelligence. They gave a genuine American cheer, nine times repeated, with the celebrated "tiger" of the Texan Rangers, as it had been reported to them. Mr. Simp read the dispatch to the concierge, who brightened up, begged his pardon, and hoped that he would forget words said in anger.

"Madam," said Mr. Simp, with some dignity, "I have suffered and forgotten much in this establishment; we have an aphorism, relative to the last feather, in the English tongue. But lend me one hundred francs till my instalment arrives from Germany, and I will forgive even the present insult."

"Boys!" cried Andy Plade, "let us have a supper! We—that is, you—can take the telegram to our several creditors, and raise enough upon it to pass a regal night at the *Trois Frères*."

This proposition was received with great favor; the concierge gave Simp a hundred francs; he ordered cigars and a gallon of punch, and they repaired to his room to arrange the details of the celebration.

Freckle gave great offence by wishing that "Poor Lees" were alive to enjoy himself; and Simp said, "Bigad, sir! Freckle, living, is more of a bore than Lees, dead."

They resolved to attend supper in their dilapidated clothes, so that what they had been might be pleasantly rebuked by what they were. "And but for this feature," said Andy Plade, "it would have been well to invite Ambassador Slidell." But Pisgah and Simp, who had applied to Slidell several times by letter for temporary loans, were averse, just now, to the presence of one who had forgotten "the first requisite of a Southern Gentleman—generosity."

So it was settled that only the Colony and Huguenot were to come, each man to bring one lady. Simp, Pisgah, and Freckle thought Huguenot a villain. He had not even attended the obsequies of the lamented Lees. But Andy Plade forcibly urged that Huguenot was a good speaker, and would be needed for a sentiment.

In the evening a lunch was served by Mr. Simp, of which some young ladies of the Paris *demi-monde* partook; the "Bonnie Blue Flag" was sung with great spirit, and Freckle became so intoxicated at two in the morning that one of the young ladies was prevailed upon to see him to his hotel.

There was great joy in the Latin Quarter when it was known that the Southern Colony had won at Wisbaden, and meant to pay its debts. The tailors, shoemakers, tobacconists, publicans, grocers and hosiers met in squads upon corners to talk it over; all the gentlemen obtained loans, and, as evidence of how liberal they meant to be, commenced by giving away whatever old effects they had.

A *cabinet* or small saloon of the most expensive restaurant in Paris was pleasantly adorned for the first reunion of the Confederate exiles.

The ancient seven-starred flag, entwined with the new battle-flag, hung in festoons at the head of the room, and directly beneath was the portrait of President Davis. A crayon drawing of the C. S. N. V. Florida, from the portfolio of the amateur Mr. Simp, was arched by two crossed cutlasses, hired for the occasion; and upon an enormous iced cake, in the centre of the table, stood a barefooted soldier, with his back against a pine tree, defying both a Yankee and a negro.

At eleven o'clock P.M. the scrupulously dressed attendants heard a buzz and a hurried tramp upon the stairs. They repaired at once to their respective places, and after a pause the Southern Colony and convoy made their appearance upon the threshold. With the exception of Pisgah and Huguenot, all were clothed in the relics of their poverty, but their hairs were curled, and they wore some recovered articles of jewelry. They had thus the guise of a colony of barbers coming up from the gold diggings, full of nuggets and old clothes.

By previous arrangement, the chair was taken by Andy Plade, supported by two young ladies, and, after saying a welcome to the guests in elegant French, he made a significant gesture to the chief waiter. The most luscious Ostend oysters were at once introduced; they lifted them with bright silver *fourchettes* from plates of Sevres porcelain, and each guest touched his lips afterward with a glass of refined *vermeuth*. Three descriptions of soup came successively, an amber *Julien*, in which the microscope would have been baffled to detect one vegetable fibre, yet it bore all the flavors of the garden; a tureen of *potage à la Bisque*, in which the rarest and tiniest shell-fish had dissolved themselves; and at the last a *tortue*, small in quantity, but so delicious that murmurs of "*encore*" were made.

Morsels of *viande*, so alternated that the appetite was prolonged—each dish seeming a better variation of the preceding—were helped toward digestion by the finest vintages of Burgundy; and the luscious *patés de foie gras*—for which the plumpest geese in Bretagne had been invalids all their days, and, if gossip be true, submitted in the end to a slow roasting alive—introduced the fish, which, by the then reformed Parisian mode, must appear after, not before, the *entrée*.

A *sole au vin blanc* gave way to a regal *mackerel au sauce champignon*, and after this dish came confections and fruits *ad libitum*, ending with the removal of the cloth, the introduction of cigars, and a *marquise* or punch of pure champagne.

It was a pleasant evening within and without; the windows were raised, and they could see the people in the gardens strolling beneath the lime trees; the starlight falling on the plashing fountain and the gray, motionless statues; the pearly light of the lines of lamps, shining down the long arcades; the glitter of jewelry and precious merchandise in the marvellous *boutiques*; the groups which sat around the café beneath with *sorbets* and *glacés*, and sparkling wines; the old women in Normandie caps and green aprons, who flitted here and there to take the hire of chairs, and break the hum of couples, talking profane and sacred love; around and above all, the

Cardinal's grand palace lifting its multitudinous pilasters, and seeming to prop up the sky.

It was Mr. Simp and his lady who saw these more particularly, as they had withdrawn from the table, to exchange a memory and a sentiment, and Huguenot had joined them with his most recent mistress; for the latter was particularly unfortunate in love, being cozened out of much money, and yet libelled for his closeness.

All the rest sat at the table, talking over the splendor of the supper, and proposing to hold a second one at the famous Philippe's, in the Rue Montorgueil. But Mr. Freckle, being again emboldened by wine, and affronted at the subordinate position assigned him, repeatedly cried that, for his part, he preferred the "old Latin Quarter," and challenged the chairman to produce a finer repast than Magny's in the Rue Counterscarp.

Pisgah, newly clothed *cap-à-pie*, was drinking absinthe, and with his absent eyes, worn face and changing hairs, looked like the spectre of his former self. Now and then he raised his head to give unconscious assent to something, but immediately relapsed to the worship of his nepenthe; and, as the long potatoes sent strong fumes to his temples, he chuckled audibly, and gathered his jaws to his eyes in a vacant grin. The gross, coarse woman at his side, from whom the other females shrank with frequent demonstrations of contempt, was Pisgah's *blanchisseuse*.

He was in her debt, and paid her with compliments; she is old and uninviting, and he owes her eight hundred francs. Hers are the new garments which he wears to-night. Few knew how many weary hours she labored for them in the floating houses upon the Seine. But she is in love with Pisgah, and is quite oblivious of the general regard; for, strange to such grand occasions, she has both eaten and imbibed enormously, and it may be even doubted at present whether she sees anything at all.

She strokes his cloth coat with her red, swollen hands, and proposes now and then that he shall visit the wardrobe to look after his new hat; but Pisgah only passes his arm about her, and drains his absinthe, and sometimes, as if to reassure the company, shouts wildly at the wrong places: "At's so, boys!" "Hoorah for you!" "Ay! capital, gen'l'men, capital!" And his partner, conscious that something has happened, laughs to her waist, and leans forward, quite overcome, as if she beheld something mirthful over her washboard.

The place was now quite dreamy with tobacco-smoke; Freckle was riotously sick at the window, and Andy Plade, who had been borrowing small sums from everybody who would lend, struck the table with a corkscrew, and called for order.

"Drire rup!" cried Mr. Freckle, looking very attentively, but seeing nothing.

"I have the honor to state, gentlemen of the Colony, that we have with us to-night an eloquent representative of our country—one whose business energy and enterprise have been useful both to his own fortunes and to the South—one who is a friend of yours, and more than a dear friend to me. We came from the same old Palmetto State, the first and the last ditch of our revolution. I give you a toast, gentlemen, to which Mr. Huguenot will respond:

"The Mother Country and the Colony—good luck to both!"

"Hoorah for you!" cried Pisgah, looking the wrong way.

The glasses rattled an instant, amid iterations of "Hear! hear!" and Mr. Huguenot, rising, as it appeared from a bandbox, carefully surveyed himself in a mirror opposite, and touched his nose with a small nosegay.

"I feel, my friends, rather as your host than your guest to-night—"

("It isn't yesternight"—from Freckle—"it's to-morroer night.")

"For I, gentlemen, stand upon my hereditary, if not my native heath; and you are, at most, Frenchmen by adoption. That ancestry whose deeds will live when the present poor representative of its name is departed drew from this martial land its blood and genius."

(Loud cries of "Gammon" from Freckle, and disapprobation from Simp.)

"From the past to the present, my friends, is a short transition. I found you in Paris a month ago, poor and dejected. You are here to-night, with that luxury which was your heritage. And how has it been restored?"

("At's so!" earnestly, from Pisgah.)

"By hard, grovelling work? Never! No contact with vulgar clay has soiled these aristocratic hands. The cavalier cannot be a mudsill! You are not like the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin. You have not toiled, gentlemen, but you have spun!"

(Great awakening, doubt, and bewilderment.)

"You have spun the roulette ball, and you have won!"

(Ferocious and unparalleled cheering.)

"And it has occurred to me, my friends, that ou-ah cause, in the present tremendous struggle, has been well symbolized by these, its foreign representatives. Calamity came upon the South, as upon you. It had indebtedness, as you have had. Shall I say that you, like the South, repudiated?"

No! that is a slander of our adversaries. But the parallel holds good in that we found ourselves abandoned by the world. Nations abroad gave us no sympathy; our neighbors at home laughed at our affliction. They would wrest from us that bulwark of our liberties, the African."

"Capital, gentlemen, capital!" from Pisgah.

"They demanded that we should toil for ourselves. Did we do so? Never! We appealed to the chances, as you have done; we would fight the Yankee, but we would not work. You would fight the bank, but you would not slave; and as you have won at Wisbaden, so have we, in a thousand glorious contests. Fill, then, gentlemen, to the toast which your chairman has announced:

"The Mother Country and the Colony—good luck to both!"

The applause which ensued was of such a nature that the proprietors below endeavored to hasten the conclusion of the dinner by sending up the bill. Pisgah and the *blanchisseuse* were embracing in a spirited way, and Simp was holding back Freckle, who—persuaded that Huguenot's remarks were in some way derogatory to himself—wished to toss down his gauntlet.

"The next toast, gentlemen of the Colony," said Andy Plade, "is to be dispatched immediately by the waiter, whom you see upon my right hand, to the office of the telegraph; thence to Mr. Risque at Wisbaden:

"The Southern exiles; doubtless the most immethodical men alive; but the results prove they have the best system: no *Risque*, no winnings."

"You will see, gentlemen," continued Mr. Plade, when the enthusiasm had subsided, "that I place the toast in this envelope. It will go in two minutes to Mr. Auburn Risque!"

The waiter started for the door; it was dashed open in his face, and splattered, dirty, and travel-worn, Auburn Risque himself stood like an apparition on the threshold.

"Perdition!" thundered Plade, staggered and pale-faced; "you were not to break the bank till to-morrow."

The Colony, sober or inebriate, clustered about the door, and held to each other that they might hear the explanation aright.

Auburn Risque straightened himself and glared upon all the besiegers, till his pock-marked face grew white as leprosy, and every spot in his secretive eye faded out in the glitter of his defiance.

"To-morrow?" he said, in a voice hard, passionless, inflectionless; "how could one break the bank to-morrow, when all his money was gone yesterday?"

"Gone!" repeated the Colony, in a breath rather than a voice, and reeling as if a galvanic current had passed through the circle—"Gone!"

"Every sou," said Risque, sinking into a chair. "The bank gave me one hundred francs to return to Paris; I risked twenty-five of it, hopeful of better luck, and lost again. Then I had not enough money to get home, and for forty kilometres of the way I have driven a *charette*. See!" he cried, throwing open his coat; "I sold my vest at Compiègne last night, for a morsel of supper."

"But you had won seven thousand one hundred francs!"

"I won more—more than eighteen thousand francs; but, enlarging my stakes with my capital, one hour brought me down to a sou."

"The 'system' was a swindle," hissed Mr. Simp, looking up through red eyes which throbbed like pulses. "What right had you to plunder us upon your speculation?"

"The 'system' could not fail," answered the gamester, at bay; "it must have been my manner of play. I think that, upon one run of luck, I gave up my method."

"We do not know," cried Simp, tossing his hands wildly; "we may not accuse, we may not be enraged—we are nothing now but profligates without means, and beggars without hope!"

They sobbed together, bitterly and brokenly, till Freckle, not entirely sober, shouted, "Good God, is it that gammon-head, Huguenot, who has ruined us? Fetch him out from his ancestry; let me see him, I say! Where is the man who took my three hundred francs!"

"I wish," said Simp, in a suicidal way, "that I were lying by Lees in the *fosse commune*. But I will not slave; the world owes every man a living!"

"Ay!" echoed the rest, as desperately, but less resolutely.

"This noise," said one of the waiters politely, "cannot be continued. It is at any rate time for the *salon* to be closed. We will thank you to pay your bill, and settle your quarrels in the garden."

"Here is the account," interpolated Andy Plade, "dinner for thirteen persons, nineteen hundred and fifty francs."

"Manes of my ancestry!" shrieked Huguenot, overturning the *blanchisseuse* in his way, and rushing from the house.

"We have not the money!" cried the whole Colony in chorus; and, as if by concert, the company in

mass, male and female, cleared the threshold and disappeared, headed by Andy Plade, who kept all the subscriptions in his pockets, and terminated by Freckle, who was caught at the base of the stairs and held for security.

VII.

THE COLONY DISBANDED.

The Colony, as a body, will appear no more in this transcript. The greatness of their misfortune kept them asunder. They closed their chamber-doors, and waited in hunger and sorrow for the moment when the sky should be their shelter and beggary their craft.

It was in this hour of ruin that the genius of Mr. Auburn Risque was manifest. The horse is always sure of a proprietor, and with horses Mr. Risque was more at home than with men.

"Man is ungrateful," soliloquized Risque, keeping along the Rue Mouffetard in the Chiffoniers' Quarter; "a horse is invariably faithful, unless he happens to be a mule. Confound men! the only excellence they have is not a virtue—they can play cards!"

Here he turned to the left, followed some narrow thoroughfares, and stopped at the great horse market, a scene familiarized to Americans, in its general features, by Rosa Bonheur's "La Foire du Chevaux."

Double rows of stalls enclosed a trotting course, roughly paved, and there was an artificial hill on one side, where draught-horses were tested. The animals were gayly caparisoned, whisks of straw affixed to the tails indicating those for sale; their manes and forelocks were plaited, ribbons streamed over their frontlets, they were muzzled and wore wooden bits.

We have no kindred exhibition in the States, so picturesque and so animated. Boors in blouses were galloping the great-hoofed beasts down the course by fours and sixes; the ribbons and manes fluttered; the whips cracked, and the owners halloed in *patois*.

Four fifths of French horses are gray; here, there was scarcely one exception; and the rule extended to the asses which moved amid hundreds of braying mulets, while at the farther end of the ground the teams were parked, and, near by, seller and buyer, book in hand, were chaffering and smoking in shrewd good-humor.

One man was collecting animals for a celebrated stage-route, and the gamester saw that he was a novice.

"Do you choose that for a good horse?" spoke up Risque, in his practical way, when the man had set aside a fine, sinewy draught stallion.

"I do!" said the man, shortly.

"Then you have no eye. He has a bad strain. I can lift all his feet but this one. See! he kicks if I touch it. Walk him now, and you will remark that it tells on his pace."

The man was convinced and pleased. "You are a judge," he said, glancing down Risque's dilapidated dress; "I will make it worth something to you to remain here during the day and assist me."

The imperturbable gamester became a feature of the sale. He was the best rider on the ground. He put his hard, freckled hand into the jaws of stallions, and cowed the wickedest mule with his spotted eye. He knew prices as well as values, and had, withal, a dashing way of bargaining, which baffled the traders and amused his patron.

"You have saved me much money and many mistakes," said the latter, at nightfall. "Who are you?"

"I am the man," answered Risque, straightforwardly, "to work on your stage-line, and I am dead broke."

The man invited Risque to dinner; they rode together on the Champs Elysées; and next morning at daylight the gamester left Paris without a thought or a farewell for the Colony.

It was in the Grand Hotel that Messrs. Huguenot and Plade met by chance the evening succeeding the dinner.

"I shall leave Paris, Andy," said Huguenot, regarding his pumps through his eye-glass. "My ancestry would blush in their coffins if they knew ou-ah cause to be represented by such individuals as those of last evening."

"Let us go together," replied Plade, in his plausible way; "you cannot speak a word of any continental language. Take me along as courier and companion; pay my travelling expenses, and I will pay my own board."

"Can I trust you, Suth Kurlinian?" said Huguenot, irresolutely; "you had no money yesterday."

"But I have a plan of raising a thousand francs to-day. What say you?"

"My family have been wont to see the evidence prior to committing themselves. First show me the specie."

"*Voilà!*" cried Plade, counting out forty louis; "the day after to-morrow I guarantee to own eighteen hundred francs."

It did not occur to Mr. Hugenot to inquire how his friend came to possess so much money; for Hugenot was not a clever man, and somewhat in dread of Andy Plade, who, as his school-mate, had thrashed him repeatedly, and even now that one had grown rich and the other was a vagabond, the latter's strong will and keen, bad intelligence made him the master man.

Hugenot's good fortune was accidental; his cargoes had passed the blockade and given handsome returns; but he shared none of the dangers, and the traffic required no particular skill. Hugenot was, briefly, a favorite of circumstances. The war-wind, which had toppled down many a long, thoughtful head, carried this inflated person to greatness.

They are well contrasted, now that they speak. The merchant, elaborately dressed, varnished pumps upon his effeminate feet, every hair taught its curve and direction, the lunette perched upon no nose to speak of, and the wavering, vacillating eye, which has no higher regard than his own miniature figure. Above rises the vagabond, straight, athletic and courageous, though a knave.

He is so much of a man physically and intellectually, that we do not see his faded coat-collar, frayed cuffs, worn buttons, and untidy boots. He is so little of a man morally, that, to any observer who looks twice, the plausibility of the face will fail to deceive. The eye is deep and direct, but the high, jutting forehead above is like a table of stone, bearing the ten broken commandments. He keeps the lips ajar in a smile, or shut in a resolve, to hide their sensuality, and the fine black beard conceals the massive contour of jaws which are cruel as hunger.

It was strange that Plade, with his clear conception, should do less than despise his acquaintance. On the contrary, he was partial to Hugenot's society. The world asked, wonderingly, what capacities had the latter? Was he not obtuse, sounding, shallow? Mr. Plade alone, of all the Americans in Paris, asserted from the first that Hugenot was far-sighted, close, capable. Indeed, he was so earnest in this enunciation that few thought him disinterested.

It was Master Simp who heard a bold step on the stairs that night, and a resolute knock upon his own door.

"Arrest for debt!" cried Mr. Simp, falling tearfully upon his bed; "I have expected the summons all day."

"The next man may come upon that errand," answered the ringing voice of Andy Plade. "Freckle sleeps in Clichy to-night; Risque cannot be found; the rest are as badly off; I have news for you."

"I am the man to be mocked," pleaded Simp; "but you must laugh at your own joke; I am too wretched to help you."

"The Yankees have opened the Mississippi River; Louisiana is subjugated, and communication re-established with your neighborhood; you can go home."

"What fraction of the way will this carry me?" said the other, holding up a five-franc piece. "My home is farther than the stars from me."

"It is a little sum," urged Mr. Plade; "one hundred dollars should pay the whole passage."

Mr. Simp, in response, mimicked a man shovelling gold pieces, but was too weak to prolong the pleasantry, and sat down on his empty trunk and wept, as Plade thought, like a calf.

"Your case seems indeed hopeless," said the elder. "Suppose I should borrow five hundred dollars on your credit, would you give me two hundred for my trouble?"

Mr. Simp said, bitterly, that he would give four hundred and ninety-five dollars for five; but Plade pressed for a direct answer to his original proffer, and Simp cried "Yes," with an oath.

"Then listen to me! there is no reason to doubt that your neighbors have made full crops for two years—cotton, sugar, tobacco. All this remains at home unsold and unshipped—yours with the rest. Take the oath of allegiance to the Yankee Government before its *chargé des affaires* in Paris. That will save your crops from confiscation, and be your passport to return. Then write to your former banker here, promising to consign your cotton to him, if he will advance five hundred dollars to take you to Louisiana. He knows you received of old ten thousand dollars per annum. He will risk so small a sum for a thing so plausible and profitable."

"I don't know what you have been saying," muttered Simp. "I cannot comprehend a scheme so intricate; you bewilder me! What is a consignment? How am I, bigad! to make that clear in a letter? Perhaps my speech in the case of Rutledge vs. Pinckney might come in well at this juncture."

"Write!" cried Plade, contemptuously; "write at my dictation."

That night the letter was mailed; Mr. Simp was summoned to his banker's the following noon, and at dusk he met Andy Plade in the Place Vendôme, and paid over a thousand francs with a sigh.

On the third night succeeding, Messrs. Plade and Hugenot were smoking their cigars at Nice, and Mr. Simp, without the least idea of what he meant to do, was drinking cocktails on the Atlantic Ocean.

"Francine," said Pisgah, with a woful glance at the dregs of absinthe in the tumbler, "give me a half franc, my dear; I am poorly to-day."

"Monsieur Pisgah," answered Madame Francine, "give me nine hundred and sixty-five francs, seventy-five centimes—that is your bill with me—and I am poorly also."

"My love," said Pisgah, rubbing his grizzled beard against the madame's fat cheek, "you are not hard-hearted. You will pity the poor old exile. I love you very much, Francine."

"Stand off!" cried the madame; "*vous m'embate!* You say you love me; then marry me!"

"Nonsense, my angel!"

"I say marry me!" repeated the madame, stamping her foot. "You are rich in America. You have slaves and land and houses and fine relatives. You will get all these when the war closes; but if you die of starvation in Paris, they amount to nothing. Marry me! I will keep you alive here; you will give me half of your possessions there! I shall be a grand lady, ride in my carriage, and have a nasty black woman to wash my fine clothes."

"That is impossible, Francine," answered Pisgah, not so utterly degraded but he felt the stigma of such a proposition from his *blanchisseuse*—and as he leaned his faded hairs upon his unnerved and quivering hands, the old pride fluttered in his heart a moment and painted rage upon his neck and temples.

"You are insulted, my lord count!" cried Madame Francine; "an alliance with a poor washerwoman would shame your great kin. Pay me my money, you beggar! or I shall put the fine gentleman in prison for debt."

"That would be a kindness to me, madame," said Pisgah, very humbly and piteously.

"You are right," she made answer, with a mocking laugh; "I will not save your life: you shall starve, sir! you shall starve!"

In truth, this consummation seemed very close, for as Pisgah entered his creamery soon afterward, the proprietor met him at the threshold.

"Monsieur Pisgah," he said, "you can have nothing to eat here, until you pay a part of your bill with me; I am a poor man, sir, and have children."

Pisgah kept up the street with heavy forebodings, and turned into the place of a clothes-merchant, to whom his face had long been familiar. When he emerged, his handsome habits, the gift of Madame Francine, hung in the clothes-dealer's window, and Mr. Pisgah, wearing a common blouse, a cap, and coarse hide shoes, repaired to the nearest wine-shop, and drank a dead man's portion of absinthe at the zinc counter. Then he returned to his own hotel, but as he reached to the rack for his key, the landlady laid her hand upon it and shook her head.

"You are properly dressed, Monsieur Pisgah," she said; "those who have no money should work; you cannot sleep in twenty-six to night, sir; I have shut up the chamber, and seized the little rubbish which you left."

Pisgah was homeless—a vagabond, an outcast. He walked unsteadily along the street in the pleasant evening, and the film of tears that shut the world from his eyes was peopled with far-off and familiar scenes.

He saw his father's wide acres, with the sunset gilding the fleeces of his sheep and crowning with fire the stacks of grain and the vanes upon his granges. Then the twilight fell, and the slaves went homeward singing, while the logs on the brass andirons lit up the windows of the mansion, and every negro cabin was luminous, so that in the night the homestead looked like a village. Then the moon rose above the woods, making the lawn frosty, and shining upon the long porch, where his mother came out to welcome him, attended by the two house-dogs, which barked so loudly in their glee that all the hen-coops were alarmed, and the peacocks in the trees held their tails to the stars and trilled.

"Come in, my son," said the mother, looking proudly upon the tall, straight shape and glossy locks; "the supper is smoking upon the table; here is your familiar julep, without which you have no appetite; the Maryland biscuit are unusually good this evening, and there is the yellow pone in the corner, with Sukey, your old nurse, behind it. Do you like much cream in your coffee, as you used to? Bless me! the partridge is plump as a duck; but here is your napkin, embroidered with your name; let us ask a blessing before we eat!"

While all this is going on, the cat, which has been purring by the fire, takes a wicked notion to frighten the canary bird, but the high old clock in the corner, imported from England before the celebrated Revolutionary war, impresses the cat as a very formidable object with its stately stride-stride-stride—so that the cat regarding it a moment, forgets the canary bird, and mews for a small portion of cream in a saucer.

"Halloo! halloo!" says the parrot, awakened by a leap of the fire; for, the back-log has broken in half, and Pisgah sees, by the increased light, the very hair-powder gleam on the portrait of General Washington. But now the cloth is removed, and the old-fashioned table folds up its leaves; they sip some remarkable sherry, which grandfather regards with a wheezy sort of laugh, and after they have played one game of draughts, Mr. Pisgah looks at his gold chronometer, and asks if he has still the great room above the porch and plenty of bedclothes.

This is what Mr. Pisgah sees upon the film of his tears—wealth, happiness, manliness! When he dashes the tears themselves to the pavement with an oath, what rises upon his eye and his heart? Paris—grand, luxurious, pitiless, and he, at twilight, flung upon the world, with neither kindred nor country—a thing unwilling to live, unfit to die!

He strolled along the quay to the Morgue; the beautiful water of St. Michel fell sibilantly cold from the fountain, and Apollyon above, at the feet of the avenging angel, seemed a sermon and an allegory of his own prostration. How all the folks upon the bridge were stony faced! It had never before occurred to him that men were cold-blooded creatures. He wondered if the Seine, dashing against the quays and piers beneath, were not their proper element? Ay! for here were three drowned people on the icy slabs of the Morgue, with half a hundred gazing wistfully at them, and their fixed eyes glaring fishily at the skylight, as if it were the surface of the river and they were at rest below.

So seemed all the landscape as he kept down the quay—the lines of high houses were ridges only in the sea, and Notre Dame, lifting its towers and sculptured façade before, was merely a high-decked ship, with sailors crowding astern. The holy apostles above the portal were more like human men than ever, with their silicious eyes and pulseless bosoms; while the hideous gargoyles at the base of each crocheted pinnacle, seemed swimming in the dusky evening.

It may have been that this aqueous phenomenon was natural to one "half-seas over;" but not till he stood on the place of the Hôtel de la Ville, did Pisgah have any consciousness whatever that he walked upon the solid world.

At this moment he was reminded, also, that he held a letter in his hand, his landlady's gift at parting; it was dated, "Clichy dungeon," and signed by Mr. Freckle.

"Dear Pisgah," read the text, "I am here at claim of restaurateur; shall die to-morrow at or before twelve o'clock, if Andy Plade don't fork over my subscription of two hundred francs. Andy Plade damned knave—no mistake! No living soul been to see me, except letter from Hon. Mr. Slidell. He has got sixteen thousand dollars in specie for Simp. Where's Simp, dogorn him! Hon. S. sent to Simp's house; understood he'd sailed for America. Requested Hon. S. to give me small part of money as Simp's next friend. Hon. S. declined. Population of prison very great. Damned scrub stock! Don't object to imprisonment as much as the fleas. Fleas bent on aiding my escape. If they crawl with me to-morrow night as far again as last night I'll be clear—no mistake! Live on soup, chiefly. Abhor soup. Had forty francs here first day, but debtor with one boot and spectacles won it at *picquet*. Restaurateur says bound to keep me here a thousand years if I don't sock—shall die—no mistake! Come see me, *toute suite*. Fetch pocket-comb, soap, and English Bible.

"Yours, in deep waters,
FRECKLE."

"The whole world is in deep waters," said Pisgah, dismally. "So much the better for them; here goes for something stronger!"

He repaired to the nearest drinking-saloon, and demanded a glass brimful of absinthe, at which all the garçons and patrons held up their hands while he drank it to the dregs.

"Sacristie!" cried a man with mouth wide open, "that gentleman can drink clear laudanum."

"I wish," thought Pisgah, with a pale face, "that it had been laudanum; I should have been dead by this time and all over. Why don't I get the *delirium tremens*? I should like to be crazy. Oh, ho, ho, ho!" he continued, laughing wildly, "to be in a hospital—nurses, soft bed, good food, pity—oh, ho! that would be a fate fit for an emperor."

Here his eye caught something across the way which riveted it, and he took half a step forward, exultingly. A great *caserne*, or barrack, adjoined the Hôtel de Ville, and twice every day, after breakfast and dinner, the soldiers within distributed the surplus of their rations to mendicants without. The latter were already assembling—laborers in neat, common clothing, with idlers and profligates not more forbidding, while a soldier on guard directed them where to rest and in what order or number to enter the building. Pisgah halted a moment with his heart in his throat. But he was very hungry, and his silver was half gone already; if he purchased a dinner, he might not be left with sufficient to obtain a bed for the night.

"Great God!" he said aloud, lifting his clenched hands and swollen eyes to the stars, "am I, then, among the very dogs, that I should beg the crumbs of a common soldier?"

He took his place in the line, and when at length his turn was announced, followed the rabble shamefacedly. The *chasseurs* in the mess-room were making merry after dinner with pipes and cards, and one of these, giving Pisgah a piece of bread and a tin basin of strong soup, slapped him smartly upon the shoulder, and cried:

"My fine fellow! you have the stuff in you for a soldier."

"I am just getting a soldier's stuff into me," responded Pisgah, antithetically.

"Why do you go abroad, hungry, ill-dressed, and houseless, when you can wear the livery of France?"

Pisgah thought the soldier a very presuming person.

"I am a foreigner," he said, "a—a—a French Canadian (we speak *patois* there). My troubles are temporary merely. A day or two may make me rich."

"Yet for that day or two," continued the *chasseur*, "you will have the humiliation of begging your bread. What signifies seven years of honorable service to three days of mendicancy and distress? We are well cared for by the nation; we are respected over the world. It is a mean thing to be a soldier in other lands; here we are the gentlemen of France."

Pisgah had never looked upon it in that light, and said so.

"Your poverty may have unmanned you," repeated the other; "to recover your own esteem do a manly act! We have all feared death as citizens; but take cold steel in your hand, and you can look into your grave without a qualm. I say to you," spoke the *chasseur*, clearly and eloquently, "be one of us. Decide now, before a doubt mars your better resolve! You are a young man, though the soulless career of a citizen has anticipated the whitening of your hairs. Plant your foot; throw back your shoulders; say 'yes!'"

"I do!" cried Pisgah, with something of the other's enthusiasm; "I was born a gentleman, I will die a gentleman, or a soldier."

They put Mr. Pisgah among the conscripts recently levied, and he went about town with a fictitious number in his hat, joining in their bacchanal choruses. The next day he appeared in white duck jacket and pantaloons, looking like an overgrown baker's boy, with a chapeau like a flat, burnt loaf. He was then put through the manual, which seemed to indicate all possible motions save that of liquoring up, and when he was so fatigued that he had not the energy even to fall down, he was clasped in the arms of Madame Francine, who had traced him to the barracks, but was too late to avert his destiny.

"Oh! *mon amant!*" she cried, falling upon his neck. "Why did you go and do it? You knew that I did not mean to see you starve."

"You have consigned me to a soldier's grave, woman!" answered Pisgah, in the deepest tragedy tone.

"Do not say so, my *bonbon!*" pleaded the good lady, covering him with kisses. "I would have worn my hands to the bone to save you from this dreadful life. Suppose you should be sent to Algiers or Mexico, or some other heathen country, and die there."

It was Pisgah's turn to be touched.

"My blood is upon your head, Francine! Have you any money?"

"Yes, yes! a gentleman, a *noir*, a *naigre*, for whom I have washed, paid me fifty francs this evening. It is all here; take it, my love!"

"I do not know, creature! that your conduct permits me to do so," said Pisgah, drawing back.

"You will drive me mad if you refuse," shrieked the blanchisseuse. "Oh! oh! how wicked and wretched am I!"

"Enough, madame! step over the way for my habitual glass of absinthe. Be particular about the change. We military men must be careful of our incomes. Stay! you may embrace me if you like."

The poor woman came every day to the barracks, bringing some trifle of food or clothing. She washed his regimentals, burnished his buckles and boots, paid his losses at cards, and bought him books and tobacco. She could never persuade herself that Pisgah was not her victim, and he found it useful to humor the notion.

Down in the swift Seine, at her booth in the great lavatory, where the ice rushed by and the rain beat in, she thought of Pisgah as she toiled; and though her back ached and her hands were flayed, she never wondered if her lot were not the most pitiable, and his in part deserved.

How often should we hard, selfish men, thank God for the weaknesses of women!

VIII.

THE MURDER ON THE ALPS.

And so, with Mr. Pisgah on the road to glory, Mr. Simp on the smooth sea, Mr. Freckle in the debtor's jail, Mr. Risque behind his four-in-hand, and Mr. Lees in the charity grave, let us sit with the two remaining colonists in the cabriolet at Bellinzona; for it is the month of April, and they are to cross the great St. Gothard *en route* for Paris. Here is the scene: a gloomy stone building for the diligence company; two great yellow diligences, empty and unharnessed in the area before; one other diligence, packed full, with the horses' heads turned northward, and the blue-nosed Swiss clerk calling out the names of passengers; a half-dozen cabriolets looking at each other irresolutely and facing all possible ways; two score of unwashed loungers, in red neckerchiefs and velvet jackets, smoking rank, rakish, black cigars; several streets of equal crookedness and filthiness abutting against a grimy church, whence beggars, old women, and priests emerge continually; and far above all, as if suspended in the air, a grim, battlemented castle, a defence, as it seems, against the snowy mountains which march upon Bellinzona from every side to crush its orchards and vineyards and drown it in the marshes of Lago Maggiore.

"*Diligenza compito!*" cries the clerk, moving toward the waiting cabriolet—"Signore Hugenoto."

"Here!" replies a small, consequential-looking person, reconnoitring the interior of the vehicle.

"Le Signore Plaèdo!"

"Ci," responds a dark, erect gentleman, striding forward and saying, in clear Italian, "Are there no other passengers?"

"None," answered the clerk; "you will have a good time together; please remember the guard!"

The guard, however, was in advance, a tall person, wrapped to the eyes in fur, wearing a silver bugle in front of his cap, and covered with buff breeches.

He flourished his whip like a fencing-master, moved in a cloud of cigar-smoke, and, as he placed his bare hand upon the manes of his horses, they reined back, as if it burned or frosted them.

"My ancestry," says the small gentleman, "encourage no imposition. Shall we give the fellow a franc?"

The other had already given double the sum, and it was odd, now that one looked at him, how pale and hard had grown his features.

"God bless me, Andy!" cries the little person, stopping short; "you have not had your breakfast to-day; apply my smelling-bottle to your nose; you are sick, man!"

"Thank you," says the other, "I prefer brandy; I am only glad that we are quite alone."

The paleness faded out of his cheeks as he drank deeply of the spirits, but the jaws were set hard, and the eyes looked stony and pitiless. The man was ailing beyond all doubt.

The whip cracked in front; the great diligence started with a groan and a crackling of joints; the little postilion set the cabriolet going with a chirp and a whistle; the priests and idlers looked up excitedly; the women rushed to the windows to flutter their handkerchiefs, and all the beggars gave sturdy chase, dropping benedictions and damnations as they went.

The small person placed his boots upon the empty cushion before and regarded them with some benevolence; then he touched his mustache with a comb, which he took from the head of his cane.

"It is surprising, Andy," he said, "how the growth of one's feet bears no proportion to that of his head. Observe those pedals. One of my ancestors must have found a wife in China. They have gained no increase after all these pilgrimages—and I flatter myself that they are in some sort graceful—ay? Now remark my head. What does Hamlet, or somebody, say about the front of Jove? This trip to Italy has actually enlarged the diameter of my head thirteen barleycorns! Thirteen, by measurement!"

The tall gentleman said not a word, but compressed his tall shoulders into the corner of the coach, and muffled his face with his coat-collar and breathed like one sleeping uneasily.

"It has been a cheap trip!" exclaimed the diminutive person, changing the theme; "you have been an invaluable courier, Andy. The most ardent patriot cannot call us extravagant."

"How much money have you left?" echoed the other in a suppressed tone. "Count it. I will then tell you to a sou what will carry us to Paris."

The little person drew a wallet from his side-pocket and enumerated carefully certain circular notes. "Eleven times twenty is two hundred and twenty; twenty-five times two hundred and twenty, five thousand five hundred, plus nine gold louis—total, five thousand seven hundred and twenty-five francs."

One eye only of the large gentleman was visible through the folds of his collar. It rested like a charmed thing upon the roll of gold and paper. It was only an eye, but it seemed to be a whole

face, an entire man. It was full of thoughts, of hopes, of acts! Had the little person marked it, thus sinister, and glittering and intense, he would have shrunk as from a burning-glass.

He folded up the wallet, however, and slipped it into his inside-pocket, while the other pushed forward his hat, so that it concealed even the eye, and sat rigid and still in his corner.

"You have not named the fare to Paris."

The tall man only breathed short and hard.

"Don't you recollect?"

"No!"

"I have a 'Galignani' here; perhaps it is advertised. But hallo, Andy!"

The exclamation was loud and abrupt, but the silent person did not move.

"The Confederate Privateer Planter will sail from Dieppe on Tuesday—(that is, to-morrow evening)—she will cruise in the Indian Ocean, if report be true."

The tall man started suddenly and uncovered his face with a quick gesture. It was flushed and earnest now, and he clutched the journal almost nervously, though his voice was yet calm and suppressed.

"To-morrow night, did you say? A cruise on the broad sea—glory without peril, gold without work; I would to God that I were on the Planter's deck, Huguenot!"

"Why not do something for ou-ah cause, Andy?"

"I am to return to Paris for what? To be dunned by creditors, to be marked for a parasite at the hotels, to be despised by men whom I serve, and pitied by men whom I hate. This pirate career suits me. What is society to me, whom it has ostracised? I was a gentleman once—quick at books, pleasing in company, shrewd in business. They say that I have power still, but lack integrity. Be it so! Better a freebooter at sea than upon the land. I have half made up my mind to evil. Huguenot, listen to me! I believe that were I to do one bad, dark deed, it would restore me courage, resolution, energy."

The little gentleman examined the other with some alarm; but just now the teams commenced the ascent of a steep hill, and as he beheld the guard a little way in advance, he forgot the other's earnestness, and raised his lunette.

"Andy," he said, "by my great ancestry! I have seen that man before. Look! the height, the style, the carriage, are familiar. Who is he?"

His co-voyageur was without curiosity; the former pallidness and silentness resumed their dominion over him, and the lesser gentleman settled moodily back to his newspaper.

No word was interchanged for several hours. They passed through shaggy glens, under toppled towers and battlements, by squalid villages, and within the sound of dashing streams. If they descended ever, it was to gain breath for a longer ascent; for now the mountain snows were above them on either side, and the Alps rose sublimely impassable in front. The hawks careened beneath them; the chamois above dared not look down for dizziness, and Huguenot said, at Ariola, that they were taking lunch in a balloon. The manner of Mr. Plade now altered marvellously. It might have been his breakfast that gave him spirit and speech; he sang a merry, bad song, which the rocks echoed back, and all the goitred women at the roadside stopped with their pack burdens to listen. He told a thousand anecdotes. He knew all the story of the pass; how the Swiss, filing through it, had scattered the Milanese; how Suwarrow and Massena had made its sterility fertile with blood.

Huguenot's admiration amounted to envy. He had never known his associate so brilliant, so pleasing; the exaltation was too great, indeed, to arise from any ordinary cause; but Huguenot was not shrewd enough to inquire into the affair. He wearied at length of the talk and of the scene, and when at last they reached the region of perpetual ice, he closed the cabriolet windows, and watched the filtering flakes, and heard the snow crush under the wheels, and dropped into a deep sleep which the other seemed to share.

The clouds around them made the mountains dusky, and the interior of the carriage was quite gloomy. At length the large gentleman turned his head, so that his ear could catch every breath, and he regarded the dim outlines of the lesser with motionless interest. Then he took a straw from the litter at his feet, and, bending forward, touched his comrade's throat. The other snored measuredly for a while, but the titillation startled him at length, and he beat the air in his slumber. When the irritation ceased he breathed tranquilly again, and then the first-named placed his hand softly into the sleeper's pocket. He drew forth the wallet with steady fingers, and as coolly emptied it of its contents. These he concealed in the leg of his boot, but replaced the book where he had found it. For a little space he remained at rest, leaning against the back of the carriage, with his head bent upon his breast and his hands clenched like one at bay and in doubt.

The slow advance of the teams and the frequent changes of direction—sometimes so abrupt as almost to reverse the cabriolet—advised him that they were climbing the mountain by zigzags or terraces. He knew that they were in the *Val Tremola*, or Trembling Way, and he shook his comrade almost fiercely, as if relieved by some idea which the place suggested.

"Hugenot," he said, "rouse up! The grandeur of the Alps is round about us; you must not miss this scene. Come with me! Quit the vehicle! I know the place, and will exhibit it."

The other, accustomed to obey, leaped to the ground immediately, and followed through the snow, ankle deep, till they passed the diligence, which kept in advance. The guard could not be seen—he might have resorted to the interior; and the two pedestrians at once left the roadway, climbing its elbows by a path more or less distinctly marked, so that after a half hour they were perhaps a mile ahead. The agility of Mr. Plade during this episode was the marvel of his companion. He scaled the rocks like a goatherd, and his foot-tracks in the snow were long, like the route of a giant. The ice could not betray the sureness of his stride; the rare, thin atmosphere was no match for his broad, deep chest. He shouted as he went, and tossed great boulders down the mountain, and urged on his flagging comrade by cheer and taunt and invective. No madman set loose from captivity could be guilty of so extravagant, exaggerated elation.

At last they stood upon a little bridge spanning a chasm like a cobweb. A low parapet divided it from the awful gulf. On the other side the mountain lifted its jagged face, clammy with icicles, and far over all towered the sterile peaks, above the reach of clouds or lightnings, forever in the sunshine—forever desolate.

"Stand fast!" said the leader, suddenly cold and calm. "Uncover, that the snow-flakes may give us the baptism of nature! There is no human God at this vast height; they worship *Him* in the flat world below. Give me your hand and look down! You are not dizzy? One should be free from the baseness of fear, standing here upon St. Gothard."

"If I had no qualm before," said Hugenot, "your words would make me shudder."

"You have heard of the 'valley of the shadow'? Was your ideal like this? I told you in Florence of the great poet Dante. You have here at a glance more beauty and dread conjoined than even his mad fancy could conjure up. That is the Tessino, braining itself in cataracts. Yonder, where the clouds make a golden lake, laving forests of firs, lies Italy as the Goths first beheld it, with their spears quivering. See how the eagles beat the mist beneath!—that was a symbol that the Roman standards should be rent."

The other, half in charm, half in awe, listened like one spell-bound, with his fingers tingling and his eyeballs throbbing.

"This silence," said the elder, "is more freezing to me than the bitterness of the cold. The very snow-flakes are dumb; nothing makes discord but the avalanche; it is always twilight; men lie down in the snows to die, but they are numb and cannot cry."

"Be still," replied the other, "your talk is strangely out of place. I feel as if my ancestors in their shrouds were beside me."

"You are not wrong," cried the greater, raising his voice till it became shrill and terrible; "your last moments are passing; that yawning ravine is your grave. I told you an hour ago how one bad, dark deed would redeem me. It is done! I have robbed you, and your death is essential to my safety."

Hugenot sank upon the snow of the parapet, speechless and almost lifeless. He clasped his hands, but could not raise his head; the whole scene faded from his eye. If he had been weak before, he was impotent now.

The strong man held him aloft by the shoulders with an iron grasp, and his cold eye gave evidence to the horrible validity of his words.

"I do not lie or play, Hugenot," he said, in the same clear voice; "I have premeditated this deed for many weeks. You are doomed! Only a miracle can help you. The dangers of the pass will be my exculpation; it will be surmised that you fell into the ravine. There will be no marks of violence upon you but those of the sharp stones. We have been close comrades. Only Omniscience can have seen premeditation. I have brought you into this wilderness to slay you!"

The victim had recovered sufficiently to catch a part of this confession. His lips framed only one reply—the dying man's last straw:

"After death!" he said; "have you thought of that?"

"Ay," answered the other, "long and thoroughly. Phantoms, remorse and hells—they have all had their argument. I take the chances."

It was only a moment's struggle that ensued. The wretch clung to the parapet, and called on God and mercy. He was lifted on high in the strong arms, and whirled across the barrier. The other looked grimly at the falling burden. He wondered if a dog or a goat would have been so long falling. The distance was profound indeed; but to the murderer's sanguine thought the body hung suspended in the air. It would not sink. The clouds seemed to bear it up for testimony; the cold cliffs held aloft their heads for justice; the snow-flakes fell like the ballots of jurymen, voting for revenge—all nature seemed roused to animation by this one act. An icicle dropped with a keen ring like a knife, and the stream below pealed a shrill alarm.

He had done the bad, dark deed. Was he more resolute or courageous now that he had taken blood upon his hands and shadow upon his soul?

The body disappeared at length, carried downward by the torrent; but a wild bird darted after it, as if to reveal the secret of its concealment, and then a noise like a human footfall crackled in the snow.

"I like a man who takes the chances," said a cold, hard voice; "but Chance, Andy Plade, decides against you to-day."

IX.

THE ONE GOOD DEED OF A PRIVATEERSMAN.

The murderer turned from his reverie with hands extended and trembling; the snow was not more bleached than his bloodless face, and his feet grew slippery and infirm. An alcove, which he had not marked, was hewn in the brow of the precipice. It had been intended to shelter pilgrims from the wind and the snow; and there, wrapped in his buff garments, whose hue, assimilating to that of the rock, absorbed him from detection, stood a witness to the deed—the guard to the diligence—none other than Auburn Risque.

For an instant only the accused shrank back. Then his body grew short and compact; he was gathering himself up for a life-struggle.

"Hold off!" said Risque, in his old, hard, measured way; "we guards go armed; if you move, I shall scatter your brains in the snow; if I miss you, a note of this whistle will summon my postilions."

The cold face was never more emotionless; he held a revolver in his hand, and kept the other in his blank, spotted eye, as if locating the vital parts with the end to bring him down at a shot.

"You do not play well," said Risque at length, when the other, ghastly white, sat speechless upon the parapet; "if you were the student of chance, that I have been, you would know that at murder the odds are always against you!"

"You will not betray me?" pleaded Plade; "so inveterate a gamester can have no conventional ideas of life or crime. I am ready to pay for your discretion with half my winnings."

"I am a gambler," said Risque, curtly; "not an assassin! I always give my opponents fair show. But I will not touch blood-money."

"What fair show do you give me?"

"Two hours' start. I am responsible for my passengers. Go on, unharmed, if you will. But at Hospice I shall proclaim you. Every moment that you falter spins the rope for your gallows!"

Plade did not dally, but took to flight at once. He climbed by the angles of the terraces, and saw the diligence far below tugging up the circuitous road. He ran at full speed; no human being was abroad besides, but yet there were other footfalls in the snow, other sounds, as of a man breathing hard and pursued upon the lonely mountain. The fugitive turned—once, twice, thrice; he laughed aloud, and shook his clenched hand at the sky. Still the flat, dead tramp followed close behind, and the pace seemed not unfamiliar. It could not be—his blood ceased to circulate, and stood freezing at the thought—was it the march, the tread of Huguenot?

He dropped a loud curse, like a howl, and kept upon his way. The footfalls were as swift; he saw their impressions at his heels—prints of a small, lithe, human foot, made by no living man. He shut his eyes and his ears, but the consciousness remained, the inexplicable phenomenon of some invisible but familiar thing which would not leave him; which made its register as it passed; which no speed could outstrip, no argument exorcise.

Was it a sick fancy, a probed heart, or did the phantom of the dead man indeed give chase?

Ah! there is but one class of folks whose faith in spirits nothing can shake—the guilty, the bloody-handed.

He came to a perturbed rest at the huge, half-hospitable Hospice, to the enthusiasm of the postilions.

"Will the gentleman have a saddle-horse?"

"A chariot?"

"A cabriolet?"

"Ten francs to Andermatt!"

"Thirty francs to Fluelen!"

"One hundred francs," cried Plade, "for the fleetest pony to Andermatt. Ten francs to the postilion who can saddle him in two minutes. My mother is dying in Lyons."

He climbed one of the dark flights of stairs, and an old, uncleanly monk gave him a glass of Kerschwasser. He descended to the stables, and cursed the Swiss lackeys into speed. He gave

such liberal largess that there was an involuntary cheer, and as he galloped away the great diligence appeared in sight to rouse his haste to frenzy.

The telegraph kept above him—a single line; he knew the tardiness of foot when pursued by the lightning. In one place, the conductor, wrenched from the insulators, dropped almost to the ground. There was a strap upon his saddle; he reined his nag to the side of the road, and, making a knot about the wire, dashed off at a bound; the iron snapped behind; his triumphant laugh pealed yet on the twilight, when the cries of his pursuers rang over the fields of snow. They were aroused; he was fleetly mounted, but they came behind in sledges.

The night closed over the road as he caught the wizard bells. The moonlight turned the peaks to fire. The dark firs shook down their burdens of snow. There were cries of wild beasts from the ravines below. The post-houses were red with firelight. The steed floundered through the snow-drifts driven by blow and halloo. It was a fearful ride upon the high Alps; the sublimity of nature bowed down to the mystery of crime!

Bright noon, on the third day succeeding, saw the fugitive emerge from the railway station at Dieppe. He had escaped the Swiss frontier with his life, but had failed to make sure that escape by reaching the harbor at the appointed time. Broken in spirit, grown old already, he faltered toward the town, and, stopping on the fosse-bridge, looked sorrowfully across the shipping in the dock. Something caught his regard amid the cloud of tri-color; he looked again, shading his eye with a tremulous palm. There could not be a doubt—it was the Confederate standard—the Stars and Bars.

The Planter had been delayed; she waited with steam up and an expectant crew; her slender masts leaned against the sky; her anchor was lifted; a knot of idlers watched her from the quay.

In a moment Mr. Plade was on board. He asked for the commander, and a short, gristly, sunburnt personage being indicated, he introduced himself with that plausible speech which had wooed so many to their fall.

"I am a Charlestonian," said Plade; "a Yankee insulted me at the Grand Hotel; we met in the Bois de Boulogne, and I ran him through the body. His friends in Paris conspire against my life. I ask to save it now, only to die on your deck, that it may be worth something to my country."

They went below, and the privateer put the applicant through a rigid examination.

"This vessel must get to sea to night," he said. "I will not hazard trouble with the French authorities by keeping you here. Spend the afternoon ashore; we sail at eleven o'clock precisely; if at that time you come aboard, I will take you."

Plade protested his gratitude, but the skipper motioned him to peace.

"You seem to be a gentleman," he added; "if I find you so, you shall be my purser. But, hark!" he looked keenly at the other, and laid his hand upon his throat—"I am under the espionage of the Yankee ambassador. There are spies who seek to join my crew for treasonable ends; if I find you one of these, you shall hang to my yard-arm!"

The felon walked into the dim old city, and seated himself in a wine-shop. Some market folks were chanting in *patois*, and their light-heartedness enraged him. He turned up a crooked street, and stopped before an ancient church, grotesque with broken buttresses, pinnacles, and gargoyles. The portal was wide open, and, as he entered, some scores of school-children burst suddenly into song. It seemed to him an accusation, shouted by a choir of angels.

At the end of the city, facing the sea, rose a massive castle. He scaled its stairs, and passed through the courtyard, and, crossing the farther moat, stood upon a grassy hill—once an outwork—whence the blue channel was visible half way to England.

A knot of soldiers came out to regard him, and his fears magnified their curiosity; he ran down the parapet, to their surprise, and re-entered the town by a roundabout way. "I will take a chamber," he said, "and shun observation."

An old woman, in a starched cap, who talked incessantly, showed him a number of rooms in a great stone building. He chose a garret among the chimney-stacks, and lit a fire, and ordered a newspaper and a bottle of brandy. He sat down to read in loneliness. As he surmised, the murder was printed among the "*Faits Divers*;" it gave his name and the story of the tragedy. His chair rattled upon the tiles as he read, and the tongs, wherewith he touched the fire, clattered in his nervous fingers.

The place was not more composed than himself; the flame was the noisiest in the world; it crackled and crashed and made horrible shadows on the walls. There were rats under the floor whose gnawings were like human speech, and the old house appeared to settle now and then with a groan as if unwilling to shelter guilt. As he looked down upon the clustering roofs of the town they seemed wonderfully like a crowd of people gazing up at his retreat. All the dormer-windows were so many pitiless eyes, and the chimney-pots were guns and cannon to batter down his eyrie.

When night fell upon the city and sea, his fancies were not less alarming. He could not rid himself of the idea that the dead man was at his side. In vain he called upon his victim to appear, and laughed till the windows shook. It was there, *there*, always THERE! He did not see it—but it was

there! He felt its breath, its eye, its influence. It leaned across his shoulder; it gossiped with the shadows; it laid its hand heavily upon his pocket where lay the unholy gold. Some prints of saints and the Virgin upon the wall troubled him; their faces followed him wherever he turned; he tore them down at length, and tossed them in the fire, but they blazed with so great flame that he cried out for fear.

The town-bells struck the hours; how far apart were the strokes! They tolled rather than pealed, as if for an execution, and the lamps of some passing carriages made a journey as of torches upon the ceiling.

After nine o'clock there was a heavy tread upon the stairs. It kept him company, and he was glad of its coming; but it drew so close, at length, that he stood upright, with the cold sweat upon his forehead.

The steps halted at his threshold; the door swung open; a corporal and a soldier stood without, and the former saluted formally:

"Monsieur the stranger, will remain in his chamber under guard. I grieve to say that he is an object of grave suspicion. *Au revoir!*"

The corporal retired without waiting for a reply; the soldier entered, and, leaning his musket against the wall, drew a chair before the door and sat down. The firelight fell upon his face after a moment, and revealed to Mr. Plade his old associate, Pisgah!

The former uttered a cry of hope and surprise; the soldier waved him back with a menace.

"I know you," he said; "but I am here upon duty; besides, I have no friendship with a murderer."

"We are both victims of a mistake! This accusation is not true. Will you take my hand?"

"I am forbidden to speak upon guard," answered Pisgah, sullenly. "Resume your chair."

"At least join me in a glass."

"There is blood in it," said Pisgah.

"I swear to you, no! Let me ring for your old beverage, absinthe."

The soldier halted, irresolutely; the liquor came before he could refuse. When once his lips touched the vessel, Mr. Plade knew that there was still a chance for life.

In an hour Mr. Pisgah was impotent from intoxication; his musket was flung down the stairway, the door was bolted upon him, and the prisoner was gone.

He gained the Planter's deck as the screw made its first revolution; they turned the channel-piles with a good-by gun; the motley crew cheered heartily as they cleared the mole.

The pirate was at sea on her mission of plunder—the murderer was free!

The engines stopped abreast the city; the steamer lay almost motionless, for there were lights upon the beach; a shrill "Ahoy!" broke over the intervening waters, and the dip of oars indicated some pursuit. The crew, half drunken, rallied to the edge of the vessel; knives glittered amid the confusion of oaths and the click of pistols, while Mr. Plade hastened to the skipper's side, and urged him for pity and mercy to hasten seaward.

The other motioned him back, coldly, and the boatswain piped all hands upon deck. Lafitte nor Kidd never looked down such desperate faces as this grisly privateer, when his buccaneers were around him.

"Seamen," he spoke aloud, "you are afloat! Gold and glory await you; you shall glut yourselves by the ruin of your enemy, and count your plunder by the light of his burning merchantmen."

The knives flickered in the torchlight, and a cheer, like the howl of the damned, went up.

"On the brink of such fortune, you find yourselves imperilled; treason is with you; this pursuit, which we attend, is a part of its programme! There is, within the sound of my voice, a spy!—a Yankee!"

The weapons rang again; the desperadoes pressed forward, demanding with shrieks and imprecations that the man should be named.

"He is here," answered the captain, turning full upon the astonished fugitive. "He came to me with a story of distress. I pitied him, and gave him shelter; but I telegraphed to Paris to test his veracity, and I find that he lied. No man has been slain in a duel as he states. I believe him to be a Federal emissary, and he is in our power."

A dozen rough hands struck Plade to the deck; he staggered up, with blood upon his face, and called Heaven to witness that he was no traitor.

"Did you speak the truth to me to-day?" cried the accuser.

"I did not; had I done so, you would have refused me relief."

"What are you then? Speak!"

The murderer cowered, with a face so blanched that the blood ceased to flow at its gashes.

"I cannot, I dare not tell!" he muttered.

The skipper made a sign to an attendant. A rope from the yard-arm was flung about the felon's neck, and made fast in a twinkling. He struggled desperately, but the fierce buccaneers held him down; his clothing was rent, and his hairs dishevelled; he made three frantic struggles for speech; but the loud cheers mocked his words as they brandished their cutlasses in his eyes.

Then began that strange lifetime of reminiscence; that trooping of sins and cruelties, in sure, unbroken continuity, through the reeling brain; that moment of years; that great day of judgment, in a thought; that last winkful of light, which flashes back upon time, and makes its frailties luminous. And, higher than all offences, rose that of the fair young wife deserted abroad, left to the alternatives of shame or starvation. Her wail came even now, from the bed of the crowded hospital, to follow him into the world of shadows.

"Monsieur the Commander," hailed the spokesman in the launch, "the government of his Imperial Majesty does not wish to interpose any obstacle to the departure of the Confederate cruiser. It is known, however, that a person guilty of an atrocious crime is concealed on board. In this paper, Monsieur the Capitaine will find all the specifications. The name of the person, Plade. The crime of the person, murder, with premeditation. The giving up of said person is essential to the departure of the cruiser from his Imperial Majesty's waters."

There was blank silence on the deck of the privateer; the torches in the launch threw a glare upon the water and sky. They lit up something struggling between both at the tip of the rocking yard-arm. It was the effigy of a man, bound and suspended, around which swept timidly the bats and gulls, and the sea wind beat it with a shrill, jubilant cry.

"I have done justice unconsciously," said the privateer; "may it be remembered for me when I shall do injustice consciously!"

X.

THE SURVIVING COLONISTS.

The catastrophe of the Colony and the episode having been attained, we have only to leave Mr. Pisgah in Algiers, whither court-martial consigned him, with the penalty of hard labor, and Mr. Risque on the stage route he was so eminently fitted to adorn. The unhappy Freckle continued in the prison of Clichy, and, having nothing else to do, commenced the novel process of thinking. The prison stood high up on Clichy Hill, walled and barred and guarded, like other jails, but within it a fair margin of liberty was allowed the bankrupts, just sufficient to make their fate terrible by temptation. Some good soul had endowed it with a library; newspapers came every day; a café was attached to it, where spirituous liquors were prohibited, to the wrath of the dry throats and raging thirsts of the captives; there was a garden behind it, and a billiard saloon, but these luxuries were not gratuitous; poor Freckle could not even pay his one sou per diem to cook his rations, so that the Prisoners' Relief Association had to make him a present of it. He spent his time between his bare, cheerless bedroom and the public hall. There were many Americans in the place; but none of them were friendly with him when he was found to have no cash. Yet he heard them speak together of their countrymen who had lain in the same jail years before. Yonder was the room of Horace Greeley, incarcerated for a debt which was not his own; here the blood-stains of the Pennsylvania youth who looked out of the window, heedless of warning, and was shot dead by the guard; there the ancient chair, in which Hallidore, the Creole, sat so often, possessor of a million francs, but too obstinate to pay his tailor's bill and go free. While Freckle thought of these, it was suggested to him that he was a very wicked man. The tutions of his patriarchal father came to mind; he was seen on his knees, to the infinite amusement of the other debtors, who were, however, quite too polite to laugh in his face, and he no longer staked his ration of wine at cards, whereby he had commonly lost it, but held long conversations with an ardent old priest who visited the jail. The priest gave Freckle *brevariaries* and catechisms, and told him that there was no peace of mind outside of the apostolic fold.

So Freckle diligently embraced the ancient Romish faith, renounced the tenets of his plain old sire as false and heretical, and earnestly prepared himself to enter the priesthood.

In this frame of mind he was found by Mr. Simp, who had unexpectedly returned to Paris, and, finding himself again prosperous, came to release Freckle from the toils of Clichy.

The latter waved him away. "I wish to know none of you," he said. "I shall serve out this term, and never again speak to an American abroad."

He was firm, and achieved his purpose. Enthusiasm often answers for brains, and Freckle's religious zeal made him a changed man. He entered a Jesuits' school after his discharge, and in another fashion became as stern, severe, and self-denying as had been his father. He sometimes saw his old comrade, Simp, driving down the Champs Elysées as Freckle came from church in Paris, but the gallant did not recognize the young priest in his dark gown and hose, and wide-rimmed hat.

They followed their several directions, and in the end, with the lessening fortunes of the Confederacy, grew more moody, and yet more ruined by the consciousness that after once suffering the agony of expatriation, they had not improved the added chance to make of themselves men, not Colonists.

It is not the pleasantest phase of our human nature to depict, but since we have essayed it, let it close with its own surrounding shadow.

If we have given no light touch of womanhood to relieve its sombre career, we have failed to be artistic in order to be true.

But that which made the Colonists weak has passed away. There are no longer slaves at home—may there be no exiles abroad!

LITTLE GRISETTE.

Little Grisette, you haunt me yet;
My passion for you was long ago,
Before my head was heavy with snow,
Or mine eye had lost its lustre of jet.
In the dim old Quartier Latin we met;
We made our vows one night in June,
And all our life was honeymoon;
We did not ask if it were sin,
We did not go to kirk to know,
We only loved and let the world
Hum on its pelfish way below;
Marked from our castle in the air,
How pigmy its triumphal cars:
Eight stories from the entry stair,
But near the stars!

Little Grisette, rich or in debt,
We were too fond to chide or sigh—
Never so poor that I could not buy
A sweet, sweet kiss from my little Grisette.
If I could nothing gain or get,
By hook, or crook, or song, or story,
Along the starving road to glory,
I marvelled how your nimble thimble,
As to a tune, danced fast and fleeting,
And stopped my pen to catch the music,
But only heard my heart a-beating;
The quaint old roofs and gables airy
Flung down the light for you to wear it,
And made my love a queen in faery,
To haunt my garret.

Little Grisette, the meals you set
Were sweeter to me than banquet feast;
Your face was a blessing fit for a priest,
At your smile the candle went out in a pet;
The wonderful chops I shall never forget!
If the wine was a trifle too sharp or rank,
We kissed each time before we drank.
The old gilt clock, aye wrong, was swinging
The waxen floor your feet reflected;
And dear Béranger's *chansons* singing,
You tricked at *picquet* till detected.
You fill my pipe;—is it your eyes
Whereat I light your cigarette?
On all but me the darkness lies
And my Grisette!

Little Grisette, the soft sunset
Lingered a long while, that we might stay
To mark the Seine from the breezy quay
Around the bridges foam and fret;
How came it that your eyes were wet
When I ambitiously would be
A man renowned across the sea?
I told you I should come again—
It was but half way round the globe—

To bring you diamonds for your faith,
And for your gray a silken robe:
You were more wise than lovers are;
I meant, sweetheart, to tell you true,
I said a tearful "*Au revoir*,"
You said, "*Adieu!*"

Little Grisette, we both regret,
For I am wedded more than wived;
Those careless days in thought revived
But teach me I cannot forget.
Perhaps old age must pay the debt
Young sin contracted long ago—
I only know, I only know,
That phantoms haunt me everywhere
By busy day, in peopled gloam—
They rise between me and my prayer,
They mar the holiness of home!
My wife is proud, my boy is cold,
I dare not speak of what I fret:
'Tis my fond youth with thee I fold,
Little Grisette!

MARRIED ABROAD.

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE OF THE QUARTIER LATIN.

PART I.

TEMPTATION.

To say that Ralph Flare was "lonesome" would convey a feeble idea of his condition. Four months in England had gone by wearily enough; but in this great city of Paris, where he might as well have had no tongue at all, for the uses he could put it to, he pined and chafed—and finally swore.

An oath, if not relief in itself, conduces to that effect, and it happened in this case that a stranger heard it.

"You are English," said the stranger, turning shortly upon Ralph Flare.

"I am not," replied that youth, "I am an American."

"Then we are countrymen," cried the other. "Have you dwelt long in the *Hôtel du Hibou*?"

Ralph Flare stated that he hadn't and that he had, and that he was bored and sick of it, and had resolved to go back to the Republic, and fling away his life in its armies.

"Pooh! pooh!" shouted the other, "I see your trouble—you have no acquaintances. It is six o'clock; come with me to dinner, and you shall know half of Paris, men and women."

They filed down the tortuous Rue Jacob, now thrice gloomy by the closing shadows of evening, and turning into the Rue de Seine, stopped before the doorway of a little painted *boutique*, whereon was written "*Cremerie du Quartier Latin*."

A tall, sallow, bright-eyed Frenchman was seated at a fragment of counter within the smallest apartment in the world, and addressing this man as "Père George" the stranger passed through a second sash doorway and introduced Ralph Flare to the most miscellaneous and democratic assemblage that he had ever beheld in his life.

Two long yellow tables reached lengthwise down a long, narrow *salon*, the floor whereof was made of tiles, and the light whereof fizzed and flamed from two unruly burners. A door at the farther end opened upon a cook-room, and the cook, a scorched and meagre woman, was standing now in the firelight, talking in a high key, as only a Frenchwoman can talk.

Then there was Madame George, fat and handsome, and gossipy likewise, with a baby, a boy, and a daughter; and the patrons of the place, twenty or more in number, were eating and laughing and all speaking at the same time, so that Ralph Flare was at first stunned and afterward astonished.

His new acquaintance, Terrapin, went gravely around the table, shaking hands with every guest, and Ralph was wedged into the remotest corner, with Terrapin upon his right, and upon his left a creature so naïve and petite that he thought her a girl at first, but immediately corrected himself

and called her a child.

Terrapin addressed her as Suzette, and stated that his friend Ralph was a stranger and quite solitary; whereat Suzette turned upon him a pair of soft, twinkling eyes, and laughed very much as a peach might do, if it were possible for a peach to laugh. He could only say a horrible *bon jour*, and make the superfluous intimation that he could not speak French; and when Madame George gave him his choice of a dozen unpronounceable dishes, he looked so utterly blank and baffled that Suzette took the liberty of ordering dinner for him.

"You won't get the run of the language, Flare," said Terrapin, carelessly, "until you find a wife. A woman is the best dictionary."

"You mean, I suppose," said Flare, "a wife for a time."

Little Suzette was looking oddly at him as he faced her, and when Ralph blushed she turned quietly to her *potage* and gave him a chance to remark her.

She had dark, smooth hair, closing over a full, pale forehead, and her shapely head was balanced upon a fair, round neck. There was an alertness in her erect ear, and open nostril, and pointed brows which indicated keen perception and comprehension; yet even more than this generic quickness, without which she could not have been French, the gentleness of Suzette was manifest.

Ralph thought to himself that she must be good. It was the face of a sweet sister or a bright daughter, or one of those school-children with whom he had played long ago. And withal she was very neat. If any commandment was issued especially to the French, it enjoined tidiness; but this child was so quietly attired that her cleanliness seemed a matter of nature, not of command. Her cheap coral ear-drops and the thin band of gold upon her white finger could not have been so fitting had they been of diamonds; and her tresses, inclosed in a fillet of beads, were tied in a breadth of blue ribbon which made a cunning lover's-knot above. A plain collar and wristbands, a bright cotton dress and dark apron, and a delicate slipper below—these were the components of a picture which Ralph thought the loveliest and pleasantest and best that he had ever known.

In his own sober city of the Middle States he would have been ashamed to connect with these innocent features a doubt, a light thought, a desire. Yet here in France, where climate, or custom, or man had changed the relations though not the nature of woman, he did but as the world, in blending with Suzette's tranquil face a series of ideas which he dared not associate with what he had called pure, beautiful, or happy.

Now and then they spoke together, unintelligibly of course, but very merrily, and Ralph's appetite was that of the great carnivora; *potage*, beef, mutton, pullet, vanished like waifs, and then came the salad, which he could not make, so that Suzette helped him again with her sprightly white fingers, contriving so marvellous a dish that Ralph thought her a little magician, and wanted to eat salad till daybreak.

"Now for the cards!" cried Terrapin, when they had finished the *café* and the *eau-de-vie*; and as the parties ranged themselves about the greater table, Terrapin, who knew everybody, gave their names and avocations.

"That is Boetia, a journalist on the *Siècle*; you will observe that he smokes his cigars quite down to the stump. The little man beside him, with a blouse, is Haynau, fellow of the College of Beaux Arts—dead-broke, as usual; and his friend, the sallow chap, is Moise, whose father died last week, leaving him ten thousand francs. Moise, you will see, has a wife, Feefine, though I suspect him of bigamy; and the tall girl, with hair like midnight and a hard voice, is at present unmarried. Those four fellows and their dames are students of medicine. They have one hundred francs a month apiece, and keep house upon it."

"And Suzette," said Ralph Flare, impatiently.

"Oh, she is a *couturière*, a dressmaker, but just now a clerk at a glover's. She has dwelt sagely, generally speaking. She breakfasts upon five sous; a roll, *café*, and a bunch of grapes—her dinner costs eighty centimes, and she makes a franc and a half a day, leaving enough to pay her room-rent."

"It is a little sum—seven dollars and a half a month—how is the girl to dress?"

Terrapin shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing.

They played "ramps," an uproarious game; and Suzette was impetuous and noisy as the rest, with brightened cheeks and eyes and a clear, silvery voice. The stake was a bottle of Bordeaux. Few women play cards honestly, and Suzette was the first to go out; but seeing that Ralph floundered and lost continually, she gave him her attention, looking over his hand, and talking for him, and counting with so dexterous deceit that he escaped also, while Terrapin paid for the wine.

It was not the most reputable amusement in the world; but the hours were winged, and midnight came untimely. Suzette tied on a saucy brown flat streaming with ribbons, and bade them good-night, ending with Ralph, in whose palm her little fingers lay pulsing an instant, bringing the blood to his hand.

How mean the *cremery* and its patrons seemed now that she was gone! The great clamp at the portal of his hotel sounded very ghostly as he knocked; the concierge was a hideous old man in

gown and nightcap.

"*Toujours seul, monsieur,*" he said, with an ugly grin.

"What does that mean, Terrapin?" said Ralph.

"He says that you always come home alone."

"How else should I come?" said Ralph, dubiously.

"How, indeed?" answered Terrapin.

It was without doubt a dim old pile—the Hôtel du Hibou. What murderers, and thieves, and Jacobins might not have ascended the tiles of the grand stairway? There was a cumbrous mantel in his chamber, funereal with griffins, and there were portraits with horribly profound eyes. The sofa and the chairs were huge; the deep window-hangings were talking together in a rustling, mocking way; while the bed in its black recess seemed so very long and broad and high for one person, that Ralph sat down at the stone table, too lonely or too haunted to sleep.

Would not even this old grave be made merry with sunlight, if little Suzette were here?

He opened the book of familiar French phrases, and began to copy some of them. He worked feverishly, determinedly, for quite a time. Then he read the list he had made, half aloud. It was this:

"Good-morning, my pretty one!"

"Will you walk with me?"

"May I have your company to dinner?"

"What is your name?"

"I dare say you laugh at my pronunciation."

"I am lonely in Paris."

"Are you?"

"You ought to see my chambers."

"Let me buy you a bracelet!"

"I love you!"

Ralph's voice stopped suddenly. There were deep echoes in the great room, which made him thrill and shudder. How still and terrible were the silence and loneliness!

A pang, half of guilt, half of fear, went keenly to his heart. It seemed to him that his mother was standing by his shoulder, pointing with her thin, tremulous fingers to the writing beneath him, and saying:

"My boy, what does this mean?"

He held it in the candle-flame, and thought he felt better when it was burned; but he could not burn all those thoughts of which the paper was only a copy.

PART II.

POSSESSION.

If the *cremery* had seemed lonely by gaslight, what must Ralph Flare have said of it next morning, as he sat in his old place and watched the *ouvriers* at breakfast? They came in, one by one, with their baton of brown bread, and called for two sous' worth of coffee and milk. The men wore blouses of blue and white, and jested after the Gallic code with the sewing-girls. This bread and coffee, and a pear which they should eat at noon, would give them strength to labor till nightfall brought its frugal repast. Yet they were happy as crickets, and a great deal more noisy.

Here is little Suzette, smiling and skipping, and driving her glances straight into Ralph Flare's heart.

"Good-day, sir," she cries, and takes a chair close by him, after the manner of a sparrow alighting. She smooths back her pure wristbands, disclosing the grace of the arm, and as she laughs in Ralph's face he knows what she is saying to herself; it is more doubtful that he loves her than that she knows it.

"*Peut-être, monsieur, vous-avez besoin des gants?*"

She gave him the card of her *boutique*, and laughed like a sunbeam playing on a rivulet, and went out singing like the witch that she was.

"I don't want gloves," said Ralph Flare; "I won't go to her shop."

But he asked Père George the direction, notwithstanding; and though his conscience seemed to be blocking up the way—a tangible, visible, provoking conscience—he put his feet upon it and shut his lips, and found the place.

Ralph Flare has often remarked since—for he is quite an artist now—that of all scenes in art or nature that *boutique* was to him the rarest. He has tried to put it into color—the miniature counter, the show-case, the background of boxes, each with a button looking mischievously at him, or a glove shaking its forefinger, or a shapely pair of hose making him blush, and the daintiest child in the world, flushing and flirting and gossiping before him; but the sketch recalls matters which he would forget, his hands lose command, something makes his eye very dim, and he lays aside his implements, and takes a long walk, and wears a sober face all that day.

We may all follow up the sequence of a young man's thoughts in doing a strange wrong for the first time. If Ralph's passions of themselves could not mislead him, there were not lacking arguments and advisers to teach him that this was no offence, or that the usage warranted the sin. He became acquainted, through Terrapin, with dozens of his countrymen; the youngest and the oldest and the most estimable had their open attachments. So far as he could remark, the married and the unmarried tradesmen's wives in Paris were nearly equal in consideration. How could he become perfect in the language without some such incentive and associate?

His income was not considerable, but they told him that to double his expenses was certain economy. He was very lonely, and he loved company. His age was that at which the affections and the instincts alike impel the man to know more of woman—the processes of her mind, her capacities, her emotions, the idiosyncrasies which divided her from his own sex.

Hitherto he had been chaste, though once when he had confessed it to Terrapin, that incredulous person said something about the marines, and repeated it as a good joke; he felt, indeed, that he was not entirely manly. He had half a doubt that he was worthy to walk with men, else why had not his desires, like theirs, been stronger than his virtue; and had not the very feebleness of desire proved also a feebleness of power? But, more than all, he had a weakness for Suzette.

There was old Terrapin, with bonnets and dresses in his wardrobe, and a sewing-basket on his mantel, and with his own huge boots outside the door a pair of tapering gaiters, and in his easy-chair a little being to sing and chatter and mix his punch and make his cigarettes. Ah! how much more entrancing would be Ralph's chamber with Suzette to garnish it! He would make a thousand studies of her face; she should be his model, his professor, his divinity! What was gross in her he would refine; what dark he would make known. They would walk together by the river side, into the parks, into the open country. He would know no regrets for the friends across the sea. Europe would become beautiful to him, and his art would find inspiration from so much loveliness. No indissoluble tie would bind them, to make kindness a duty and love necessity. No social tyranny should prescribe where he should visit, and where she should not. The hues of the picture deepened and brightened as he imagined it. He was resolved to do this thing, though a phantom should come to his bedside every night, and every shadow be his accusation.

He committed to memory some phrases of French; Terrapin was his interpreter, and they went together—those three and a sober *cocher*—to the Bois de Boulogne. Terrapin stated to Suzette in a shockingly informal way that Ralph loved her and would give her a beautiful chamber and relieve her from the drudgery of the glove-shop.

They were passing down the broad, gravelled drive, with the foliage above them edged with moonlight, the mock cataract singing musically below, and the *cocher*, half asleep, nodding and slashing his horses. And while Terrapin turned his head and made himself invisible in cigar-smoke, Ralph folded Suzette to his breast, and kissed her once so demonstratively that the *cocher* awoke with a spring and nearly fell off the box, but was quite too much of a *cocher* to turn and investigate the matter.

That was the ceremony, and that night the nuptials. Few young couples make a better commencement. She gave him a list of her debts, and he paid them. They removed from Ralph's dim quarters to a cheap and cheerful chamber upon the new Boulevard. It was on the fifth floor; the room was just adapted for so little a couple. Superficially observed, the furniture resolved itself into an enormous clock and a monstrously fine mirror; but after a while you might remark four small chairs and a great one, a bureau and a wardrobe, a sofa and a canopied bed; and just without the two gorgeously curtained windows lay a cunning balcony, where they could sit of evenings, with the old ruin of the Hôtel Cluny beneath them, the towers of Notre Dame in the middle ground, and at the horizon the beautifully wooded hill of Père la Chaise.

Suzette had trisful eyes when they rested upon this cemetery. Her baby lay there, without a stone—not without a flower.

"*Pauvre petite Jules!*" she used to say, nestling close to Ralph, and for a little while they would not speak nor move, but the smoke of his cigar made a charmed circle around them, and the stars came out above, and the panorama of the great Boulevard moved on at their feet.

Their first difficulties were financial, of course. Suzette would have liked a silken robe, a new bonnet, a paletot, gloves and concomitants unlimited. She delighted to walk upon the Boulevard, the Rue Rivoli, and into the Palais Royal, looking into the shop-windows and selecting what she would buy when Ralph's remittances came. Her hospitality when his friends visited him did less

honor to her purse than to her heart. She certainly made excellent punches; Terrapin thought her cigarettes unrivalled; she was fond of cutting a fruit-pie, and was quite a *connoisseur* with wines. Ralph did not wonder at her tidiness when the laundry bills were presented, but doubted that the *coiffeur* beautified her hair; and one day, when a cool gentleman in civil uniform knocked at the door, and insisted upon the immediate payment of a bill for fifty francs, he lost his temper and said bad words. What could be done? Suzette was sobbing; Ralph detested "scenes;" he threatened to leave the hotel and Paris, and frightened her very much—and paid the money.

"You said, Suzette, that you had rendered a full account of all your indebtedness. You told me a lie!"

"Poor boy," she replied, "this debt was so old that I never expected to hear of it."

"Have you any more—old or otherwise?"

Suzette said demurely that she did not owe a sou in the world, but was able to recall thirty francs in the course of the afternoon, and assured him, truly, that this was the last.

Still, she lacked economy. They went to the same *crémery*, but her meals cost one half more than his. She never objected to a ride in a *voiture*; she liked to go to the balls, but walked very soberly upon his arm, recognizing nobody, and exacting the same behavior from Ralph. Let him look at an unusually pretty girl, through a shop-window, upon his peril! If a letter came for him signed Lizzie, or Annie, or Mary, she took the dictionary and tried to interpret it, and in the end called him a *vilain* and wept.

Toward the letters signed "Lizzie" she conceived a deep antipathy. With a woman's instinct she discerned that "Lizzie" was more to Ralph than any other correspondent. A single letter satisfied her of this; and when he was reading it, for the second time, she snatched it from his hand and flung it fiercely upon the floor. Ralph's eyes blazed menace and her own cowered.

"Take up that letter, Suzette!"

"I won't!"

"Take it up, I say! I command! instantly!" He had risen to his feet, and was the master now. She stooped, with pale jealousy lying whitely in her temples, and gave it to him meekly, and sat down very stricken and desolate. There was one whom he loved better than her—she felt it bitterly—a love more respectful, more profound—a woman, perhaps, whom he meant to make his wife some day, when SHE should be only a shameful memory!

It may have been the reproach of this infidelity, or the thought of his home, or the infatuation of his present guileful attachment, which kept Ralph Flare from labor.

There was the great Louvre, filled with the riches of the old masters, and the galleries of the Luxembourg with the gems of the French school, so marvellous in color and so superb in composition, and the mighty museum of Versailles, with its miles of battle pictures—yet the third month of his tenure in Paris was hastening by, and he had not made one copy.

Suzette was a bad model. She *posed* twice, but changed her position, and yawned, and said it was ridiculous. He had never made more than a crayon portrait of her. He found, too, that five hundred francs a month barely sufficed to keep them, and once, in the interval of a remittance, they were in danger of hunger. Yet Suzette plied her needle bravely, and was never so proud as when she had spread the dinner she had earned. In acknowledgment of this fidelity Ralph took her to a grand *magasin*, where they examined the goods gravely, as married folks do, consulting each other, and trying to seem very sage and anxious.

There probably was never such a bonnet as Suzette's in the world. It was black, and full of white roses, and floating a defiant ostrich-plume, and tied with broad red ribbons, whereby she could be recognized from one end of the Luxembourg gardens to the other.

The paletot was clever in like manner; she made the dress herself, and its fit was perfection, showing her plump little figure all the plumper, while its black color set off the whiteness of her simple collar, and with those magic gaiters, Ralph's gift also, he used to sit in the big chair, peering at her, and in a quandary as to whether he had ever been so happy before, or ever so disquieted.

"Now, my little woman," said Ralph, "I have redeemed my promises; you have a chamber, and garments, and subsistence—more than any of your friends—and I am with you always; few wives live so pleasantly; but there is one thing which you must do."

Suzette, sitting upon his knee, protested that he could not command any impossible thing which she would not undertake.

"You must work a little; we are both idle, and if we continue so, may have *ennui* and may quarrel. After three days I will not pay for your breakfasts, and every day in which you do not breakfast with me, paying for yourself, I will give you no dinner. Remember it, Suzette, for I am in earnest."

Her color fell a little at this, for she had no love for the needle. It was merrier in the *boutique* to chat with customers, yet she started fairly, and for a week earned a franc a day. The eighth day came; she had no money. Ralph put on his hat and went down the *Rue L'École de Médecin* without her; but his breakfast was unpalatable, indigestible. Five o'clock came round; she was

sitting at the window, perturbedly waiting to see how he would act.

It wrung his heart to think that she was hungry, but he tried to be very firm.

"I am going to dinner, Suzette! I keep my word, you see."

"It is well, Ralph."

That night they said little to each other. The dovecote was quite cold, for the autumn days were running out, and they lighted a hearth fire. Suzette made pretence of reading. She had an impenitent look; for she conceived that she had been cruelly treated, and would not be soothed nor kissed. Ralph smoked, and said over some old rhymes, and, finally rising, put on his cloak.

"I am going out, Suzette; you don't make my room cheerful."

"*Bien!*"

He walked very slowly and heavily down the stairs, to convince her that he was really going or hoping to be recalled, but she did not speak. He saw the light burning from his windows as he looked up from below. He was regretful and angry. At Terrapin's room he drank much raw brandy and sang a song. He even called the astute Terrapin a humbug, and toward midnight grew quarrelsome. They escorted him to his hotel door; the light was still burning in his room. He was sober and repentant when he had ascended the long stairs, though he counterfeited profound drunkenness when he stood before her.

She had been weeping, and in her white night-habit, with her dark hair falling loosely upon her shoulders, she was very lovely. The clock struck one as they looked at each other. She fell upon his neck and removed his garments, and wrapped him away between the coverlets; and he watched her for a long time in the flickering light till a deep sleep fell upon him, so that he could not feel how closely he was clasped in her arms.

PART III.

CONSCIENCE.

Lest it has not been made clear in these paragraphs whether Suzette was a good or a wicked being, we may give the matured and recent judgment of Ralph Flare himself. Put to the test of religion, or even of respectability, this intimacy was baneful. A wild young man had broken his honor for the companionship of a poor, errant girl. She was poor, but she hated to work; she had no regard for his money; she did not share his ambition. Making against her a case thus clear and certain, Ralph Flare entered for Suzette the plea of *not* wicked, and this was his defence!

She was educated in France. Particular sins lose their shame in some countries. Woman in France had not the high mission and respect which she fulfilled in his own land. Suzette was one of many children. Her father was the cultivator of a few acres in Normandy. Her mother died as the infant was ushered into the world. To her father and brothers she was of an unprofitable sex, and her sisters disliked her because she was handsomer than they. Her childhood was cheerless enough, for she had quick instincts, and her education availed only to teach her how grand was the world, and how confined her life. She left her home by stealth, in the night, and alone. In the city of Cherbourg she found occupation. She dwelt with strangers; she was lonely; her poverty and her beauty were her sorrows. She was a girl only till her fifteenth year.

The young mother has but one city of refuge—Paris. Without friends she passed the bitterness of reminiscence. Through the poverty of skill or sustenance she lost her boy, and the great city lay all before her where to choose. Luckily, in France every avenue to struggle was not closed to her sisterhood; with us such gather only the wages of sin. It was not there an irreparable disgrace to have fallen. For a full year she lived purely, industriously, lonely; what adventures ensued Ralph knew imperfectly. She met, he believed that she loved him. It was not probable, of course, that she came out of the wrestle unscathed. She deceived in little things, but he knew when to trust her. She was quick-tempered and impatient of control, but he understood her, and their quarrels were harbingers of their most happy seasons. She was generous, affectionate, artless. He did not know among the similar attachments of his friends any creature so pliable, so true, so beautiful.

It was upon her acquaintances that Ralph placed the blame when she erred. Fanchette was one of these—the dame of a student from Bretagne, a worldly, plotting, masculine woman—the only one whom he permitted to visit her. It was Fanchette who loaned her money when she was indolent, and who prompted her to ask favors beyond his means.

Toward the end of every month Ralph's money ran out, and then he was petulant and often upbraided her. Those were the only times when he essayed to study, and he would not walk with her of evenings, so destitute. Then Fanchette amused her: "Sew in my room," she would say; "Ralph will come for you at eight o'clock." But Ralph never went, and Fanchette poisoned his little girl's mind.

"When will you leave Paris, baby?" said Suzette one evening, as she returned from her friend's and found him sitting moodily by the fire.

"Very soon," he replied crisply; "that is, if ever I have money or resolution enough to start."

"Won't you take me with you, little one?"

"No!"

"You don't love me any more!"

"Pish!"

"Kiss me, my boy!"

"Oh, go away, you bother me—you always bother me when my money is low. Haven't I told you about it before?"

But the next morning as Suzette made her toilet, older and more silently, he felt repentant, and called her to him, and they talked a long while of nothingnesses. He had a cruel way of playing with her feelings.

"Suzette," he would say, "would you like me to take you to my country and live with you forever?"

"Very much, my child!"

"My father has a beautiful farm, which he means to give to me. There is a grand old house upon it, and from the high porch you can see the blue bay speckled with sails. The orchards are filled with apples and pears. You must walk an hour to get around the corn-fields, and there is a picnic ground in the beech-woods, where we might entertain our friends. I have many friends. How jolly you would look in my big rocking-chair, before the fireplace blazing with logs, and with your lap full of chestnuts, telling me of Paris life!"

She was drinking it all in, and the blood was ripe in her cheeks.

"Think, little one," he said, "of passing our days there, you and I! I have made you my wife, for example; I paint great pictures; you are proud of me; everybody respects you; you have your saddle-horse and your tea-parties; you learn to be ashamed of what you were; you are anxious to be better—not in people's eyes only, but in mine, in your own. To do good deeds; to sit in the church hearing good counsel; to be patted upon the forehead by my father—his daughter!—and to call my brother your brother also. Thus honored, contented, good, your hairs turn gray with mine. We walk along hand in hand so evenly that we do not perceive how old we are growing. We may forget everything but our love; that remains when we are gone—a part of our children's inheritance."

He spoke excellent French now; to her it was eloquence. Her arms were around his neck. He could feel her heart, beating. He had expressed what she scarcely dared to conceive—all her holiest, profoundest hopes, her longing for what she had never been, for what she believed she would try to be worthy of.

"Oh, my baby," she cried, half in tears, "you make me think! I have never thought much or often; I wish I was a scholar, as you are, to tell you how, since we have dwelt together, something like that has come to me in a dream. Perhaps it is because you talk to me so that I love you so greatly. Nobody ever spoke to me so before. That is why I am angry when your proud friend Lizzie writes to you. All that good fortune is for her; you are to quit Paris and me. My name will be unworthy to be mentioned to her. How shall I be in this bad city, growing old; yet I would try so earnestly to improve and be grateful!"

"Would you, truly, sweetheart?"

She only sobbed and waited; he coughed in a dry way and unclasped her hands.

"I pity you, poor Suzette," he said, "but it is quite impossible for us to be more to each other. My people would never speak to me if I behaved so absurdly. Go to bed now, and stop crying; good-night."

She staggered up, so crushed and bowed and haggard that his conscience smote him. He could not have done a greater cruelty to one like her—teaching her to hope, then to despair. The next day, and the next, she worked at Fanchette's. His remittance did not come; he was out of temper, and said in jest that he would set out for Italy within a week. There was a pale decision in her countenance the fourth morning. She put on her gray robe and a little cap which she had made. He did not offer to kiss her, and she did not beseech it. He saw her no more until nine o'clock, when she came in with Fanchette, and her cheeks were flushed as with wine. This made him more angry. He said nothing to either of them and went to sleep silently.

The fifth day she returned as before. He was sitting up by the fireplace; his rent was due; he was quite cast down, and said:

"Dear, when my purse was full you never went away two whole days, leaving me alone."

"You are to leave me, Ralph, forever!" But she was touched, and in the morning said that she would come back at midday. Still no remittance. He felt like a bear. Twelve o'clock came—Suzette did not appear. It drifted on to one; he listened vainly for her feet upon the stairs. At two he sat at the window watching; she entered at three, half mild, half timorous, and gave him a paper of sugar plums.

"Where did those come from?" he asked, with a scowl.

"Fanchette gave them to me."

"I don't believe it; there is *kirsch wasser* on your lips; you have been drinking."

She drew her handkerchief from her pocket; a little box, gilt-edged, came out with it, and rolled into the middle of the floor. Suzette leaped for it with a quick pallor; he wrenched it from her hands after a fierce struggle, and delving into the soft cotton with which it was packed, brought out sleeve-buttons of gold and a pearl breastpin. They were new and glittering, and they flashed a burning suspicion into his heart. He forced her unresisting into a chair, and flung them far out of the window, over the house-roofs. Then he sat down a moment to gain breath, and marked her with eyes in which she saw that she was already tried and sentenced.

"Who gave you those things, Suzette?" he asked in a forced, strange monotone.

"My ancient *patronne*."

"What's her name?"

"I don't know."

"Where does she live?"

"I shan't tell you."

He held her wrist tightly and pressed her back till her eyes were compelled to mark his white, pinched lips and altogether bloodless temples. His hand tightened upon her; his full, boyish figure straightened and heightened beyond nature; his regard was terrible. A terrible fear and silence fell around about them.

"These are the gifts of a man," he whispered; "you do not know it better than I. I shall walk out for one hour; at the end of that time there must not be even a ribbon of yours in this chamber."

PART IV.

REMORSE.

He gave the same order to the proprietor as he passed down-stairs, and hurried at a crazy pace across the Pont des Arts to the rooms of Terrapin. That philosopher was playing whist with his friends, and gave as his opinion that Ralph was "spooney."

Ralph drank much, talked much, chafed more. Somebody advised him to travel, but he felt that Europe had nothing to show him like that which he had lost. He told Madame George the story at the *cremery*.

"Ah, monsieur," she said, "that is the way with all love in Paris."

He played "ramps" with the French, but the game impressed him as stupid, and he tried to quarrel with Boetia, who was too polite to be vexed. He drank pure cognac, to the astonishment of the Gauls, but it had no visible effect upon him, and Père George held up his hands as he went away, saying: "Behold these Americans! they do everything with a fever; brandy affects them no more than water."

The room in the fifth story was very cold now. He tried to read in bed, but the novel had no meaning in it. He walked up and down the balcony in the November night, where he had often explained the motions of the stars to her. They seemed to miss her now, and peeped inquisitively. He looked into the bureau and wardrobe, half ashamed of the hope that she had left some *souvenir*. There was not even a letter. She had torn a leaf, on which she had written her name, out of his diary. The sketches he had made of her were gone; if she had only taken her remembrance out of his heart, it would have been well. Then he reasoned, with himself, sensibly and consistently. It was a bad passion at first. How would it have shamed his father and mother had they heard of it! Its continuance was even more pernicious, making him profligate and idle; introducing him to light pleasures and companies; enfeebling him, morally and physically; diverting him from the beautiful arts; weakening his parental love; divorcing him from grand themes and thoughts. He could never marry this woman. Their heart-strings must have been wrung by some final parting; and now that she had been proved untrue, was it not most unmanly that he should permit her to stand even in the threshold of his mind? It was a good riddance, he said, pacing the floor in the firelight; but just then he glanced into the great mirror, and stood fixed to mark the pallor of his face. Say what he might, laugh as he did, with a hollow sound, that absent girl had stirred the very fountains of his feelings. Not learned, not beautiful, not anything to anybody but him—there was yet the difference between her love and her deceit, which made him content or wretched.

He felt this so keenly that he lifted his voice and cursed—himself, her, society, mankind. Then he cried like a child, and called himself a calf, and laughed bitterly, and cried again.

There was no sleep for him that night. He drank brandy again in the morning, and walked to the

banker's. His remittance awaited him, and he came out of the Rue de la Paix with thirty gold napoleons in his pocket.

He met all the Americans at breakfast at Trappe's in the Palais Royal, and strolling to the morgue with a part of them, kept on to Vincennes, and spent a wretched day in the forest. At the Place de la Bastille, returning, he got into a cabriolet alone and searched ineffectually along the Rue Rivoli for a companion who would ride with him. "Go through the Rue de Beaux Arts!" he said, as they crossed Pont Neuf. This is a quiet street in the Latin Quarter filled with cheap *pensions*, in one of which dwelt Fanchette. His heart was wedged in his throat as he saw at the window little Suzette sewing. She wore one of the dresses he had given her. Her face was old and piteous; she was red-eyed and worked wearily, looking into the street like one on a rainy day.

When she saw him, he thought, by her start and flush, that she was going to fall from the chair; but then she looked with a dim, absent manner into his face, like one who essays to remember something that was very dear but is now quite strange. He was pleased to think that she was miserable, and would have given much to have found her begging bread, as she did that night of him.

He had ridden by on purpose to show that he had money, and she sent him by Terrapin's word a petition for a few francs to buy her a chamber. Fanchette's friend had come home from the country, and it would not do for her to occupy their single bedroom; but Ralph made reply by deputy, to the effect that the donor of the jewelry would, he supposed, give her a room. It was a weary week ensuing; he drank spirits all the time, and made love to an English governess in the Tuileries garden, and when Sunday came, with a rainy, windy, dismal evening, he went with Terrapin and Co. to the Closerie des Lilas.

This is the great ball of the Latin Quarter. It stands near the barriers upon the Boulevard, and is haunted with students and grisettes. Commonly it was thronged with waltzers, and the scene on gala nights, when all the lamps were aflame, and the music drowned out by the thunder of the dance, was a compromise between Paradise and Pandemonium. Tonight there was a beggarly array of folk; the multitude of *garçons* contemplated each other's white aprons, and old Bullier, the proprietor, staggering under his huge hat, exhibited a desire to be taken out and interred. The wild-eyed young man with flying, carrotty locks, who stood in the set directly under the orchestra, at that part of the floor called "the kitchen," was flinging up his legs without any perceptible enjoyment, and the policemen in helmets, and cuirassiers, who had hard work to keep order in general, looked like lay figures now, and strolled off into the embowered and sloppy gardens. There were not two hundred folk under the roofs. Ralph had come here with the unacknowledged thought of meeting Suzette, and he walked around with his cigar, leaning upon Terrapin's arm and making himself disagreeable.

Suddenly he came before her. She seemed to have arisen from the earth. She looked so weak and haggard that he was impelled to speak to her; but he was obdurate and hard-hearted. He could have filled her cup of bitterness and watched her drink it to the dregs, and would have been relentless if she was kneeling at his feet.

"Flare, what makes you tremble so?" said Terrapin; "are you cold? Confound it, man, you are sick! Sit here in the draft and take some cognac."

"No," answered Ralph, "I am all right again. You see my girl there? (Don't look at her!) You know some of these girls, old fellow? I mean to treat two of them to a bottle of champagne. She will see it. I mean for her to do so. Who are these passing? Come with me."

He walked by Suzette and her friend as if they had been invisible, and addressed those whom he pursued with such energy that they shrank back. He made one of them take his arm, and hurried here and there, saying honeyed words all the time, by which she was affrighted; but every smile, false as it was, fell into Suzette's heart.

Weary, wan, wretched, she kept them ever in view, crossing his path now and then, in the vain thought that she might have one word from him, though it were a curse. He took his new friends into an alcove. She saw the wine burst from the bottle, and heard the clink of the glasses as they drank good health. She did not know that all his laughter was feigned, that his happiness was delirium, that his vows were lies. She did not believe Ralph Flare so base as to put his foot upon her, whom he had already stricken down.

And he—he was all self, all stone!—he laid no offence at his own door. He did not ask if her infidelity was real or if it had no warrant in his own slight and goading. The poor, pale face went after him reproachfully. Every painful footfall that she made was the patter of a blood-drop. Such unnatural excitement must have some termination. He quarrelled with a waiter. Old Bullier ordered a cuirassier to take him to the door; he would have resisted, but Terrapin whispered: "Don't be foolish, Flare; if you are put out it will be a triumph for the girl;" and only this conviction kept him calm. The cyprians whom he wooed followed him out; he turned upon them bitterly when he had crossed the threshold, and leaping into a carriage was driven to his hotel, where he slept unquietly till daybreak.

See him, at dawn, in deep slumber! his face is sallow, his lips are dry, his chest heaves nervously as he breathes hard. It is a bad sleep; it is the sleep of bad children, to whom the fiend comes, knowing that the older they grow the more surely are they his own.

This is not, surely, the bashful young man who started at the phantom of his mother, and sinned

reluctantly. Aye! but those who do wrong after much admonishment are wickeder than those who obey the first bad impulse. He is ten times more cast away who thinks and sins than he who only sins and does not think.

Ralph Flare was one of your reasoning villains. His conscience was not a better nature rising up in the man, and saying "this is wrong." It was not conscience at all; it was only a fear. Far down as Suzette might be, she never could have been unfeeling, unmerciful as he. It is a bad character to set in black and white, yet you might ask old Terrapin or any shrewd observer what manner of man was Ralph, and they would say, "So-so-ish, a little sentimental, spooney likewise; but a good fellow, a good fellow!" And more curious than all, Suzette said so too.

He rose at daylight, and dressed and looked at himself in the glass. He felt that this would not do. His revenge had turned upon himself. He had half a mind to send for Suzette, and forgive her, and plead with her to come back again. The door opened: she of whom he thought stood before him, more marked and meagre than he; and the old tyranny mounted to his eyes as he looked upon her. He knew that she had come to be pardoned, to explain, and he determined that she should suffer to the quick.

PART V.

TYRANNY.

If this history of Ralph Flare that we are writing was not a fiction, we might make Suzette give way at once under the burden of her grief, and rest upon a chair, and weep. On the contrary, she did just the opposite. She laughed.

Human nature is consistent only in its inconsistencies. She meant to break down in the end, but wished to intimidate him by a show of carelessness, so she first said quietly: "Monsieur Ralph, I have come to see to my washing; it went out with yours; will you tell the proprietor to send it to me?"

"Yes, madame."

"May I sit down, sir? It is a good way up-stairs, and I want to breathe a minute."

"As you like, madame."

He was resting on the sofa; she took a chair just opposite. There was a table between them, and for a little while she looked with a ghastly playfulness into his eyes, he regarding her coldly and darkly; and then, she laughed. It was a terrible laugh to come from a child's lips. It was a woman's pride, drowning at the bottom of her heart, and in its last struggle for preservation sending up these bubbles of sound.

We talk of tragic scenes in common life; this was one of them. The little room with its waxed, inlaid floor, the light falling bloodily in at the crimson curtains and throwing unreal shadows upon the spent fire, the disordered furniture, the unmade bed; and there were the two actors, suffering in their little sphere what only *seems* more suffering in prisons and upon scaffolds, and playing with each other's agonies as not more refined cruelty plays with racks and tortures.

"You are pleased, madame," said Ralph.

"No, I am wondering what has changed you. There are black circles around your eyes; you have not shaved; the bones of your cheeks are sharp like your chin, and you are yellow and bent like a dry leaf."

"I have had an excess of money lately. Being free to do as I like, I have done so."

She looked furtively around the room. "Somebody has gone away from here this morning—is it true?"

He laughed suggestively.

"I saw you with two girls last night; the company did you honor; it was one of them, perhaps."

"You guess shrewdly," he replied.

"This is her room now; it may be she will object to see me here."

"You are right," said Ralph Flare, with mock courtesy, rising up. "When you lived with me I permitted no one to visit me in your absence. My late friends will be vexed. You have finished the business which brought you here, and I must go to breakfast now."

Ralph was a good actor. Had he thought Suzette really meant to go, he would have fallen on his knees.

"Stop, Ralph, my boy," she cried. "I know that you do not love me; I can't see why I ever believed that you did. But let me sit with you a little while. You drove me from you once. I know that you have found one to fill my place; but, *enfant*, I love you. I want to take your head in my arms as I

have done a hundred times, and hear you say one kind word before we part forever."

"There was a time," he said slowly, "when you did not need my embraces. I was eager to give them. I did not give you kindness only; I gave you nourishment, shelter, clothing, money. You were unworthy and ungrateful. You are nothing to me now. Do not think to wheedle me back to be your fool again."

"Oh! for charity, my child, not for love—I am too wretched to hope that—for pity, let me sit by your side five minutes. I cannot put it into words why I beg it, but it is a little thing to grant. If one starved you, or had stolen from you, and asked it so earnestly, you would consent. I only want you to think less bitterly of me. You must needs have some hard thoughts. I have done wrong, my boy, but you do not know all the cause, and as what I mean to say cannot make place in your breast for me now, you will know that it is true, because it has no design. Oh! *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* It is so hard to have but one deep love, and yet find that love the greatest sorrow of one's life. It is so hard to have loved my boy so well, and to know that to the end of his days he hated me."

She said this with all the impetuosity of her race; with utter abandonment of plan or effort, yet with a wild power of love and gesture which we know only upon the stage, but which in France is life, feeling, reality.

She sat down and sobbed, raising her voice till it rolled with a shrill music which made him quiver, through the parted curtain and into the turbulent street. There were troops passing beneath the balcony, and the clangor of drums and bugles climbed between the stone walls, as if to pour all its mockery into the little room.

Ralph Flare hated to see a woman cry; it pained him more than her; so he lifted her in his arms and carried her to the sofa and placed her head upon his breast. For a long while she sat in that strange luxury of grief, and she was fearful that he would send her away before her agitation could pass, and she might speak. His face wore an incredulous sneer as she spoke, though he knew it was absolute truth. She told him how wretched she had been, so wretched that even temptation respected her; how she had never known the intensity of her passion for him till they were asunder; how all previous attachments were as ice to fire compared to this; and how the consciousness of its termination should make her desolate forever.

"I looked upon you," she said, "as one whom I had trained up. Since I have lost my little Jules I have needed something to care for. I taught you to speak my language as if you were a baby. You learned the coinage of the land, and how to walk through the city, and all customs and places, precisely as a child learns them from his mother. Alas! you were wiser than I, and it made me sad to feel it. It was like the mother's regret that her boy is getting above her, in mind, in stature, so that he shall be able to do without her. Yet with that fear there is a pride like mine, when I felt that you were clever. Ah! Ralph, you loved to make me feel how weak and mean I was. You played with my poor heart, sick enough before, and little by little I felt your love gliding away from me, till at last you told me that it was gone. You said you should leave France, never to return—God forgive you if it was not true!—and when you treated me worst, I was tempted to hear kind words from another. Fanchette's friend has a rich cousin who admires me. He is to live in Paris many years. I never loved him, but I am poor, and many women marry only for a home. He offered that and more to me. I would not hear it. Oh! if you had only said one tender word to me in those days of temptation. I begged you for it. When I was humblest at your feet you put your heel upon me most.

"One night when I had the greatest trouble of all he sat beside me and plied his suit, and was pleasanter, my boy, than you have ever been; and then, rising, he placed that box of jewelry in my lap and ran away. I left it upon Fanchette's mantel that night. She filled my head with false thoughts next day. I never meant while you were in Paris to do you any wrong; but I put those jewels in my pocket, meaning to give them up again; you found them, and I was made wretched."

Ralph made that dry, biting cough which he used to express unbelief. She only bent her head and wept silently.

"When all was gone, poor me! I have found much sorrow in my little life, but we are light-hearted in France, and we live and laugh again. Perhaps you have made me more like one of your countrywomen. I do not know—only that I can never be happy any more.

"Since we have dwelt apart my tempter has been to see me every day. He has grand chambers which he will give me, and rich wardrobes, and a watch, and a voiture. It is a dazzling picture for one who toils, going all her days on foot, and lovely only to be deceived. But I hate that man now, because he has come between you and me, and I have slept upon my tears alone."

She melted again into a long, loud wail, and he proposed nervously that they should walk into the gardens near by. He said little, and that contemptuously, tossing his cane at the birds, much interested in a statue, delighted with the visitors beneath the maroon trees; and she followed him here and there, very weak, for she had eaten no breakfast, and not so deceived but she knew that he labored to wound her. He asked her into a café, cavalierly, and was very careful to make display of his napoleons as he paid. He did not invite her, but she followed him to his hotel again, and here, as if with terrible *ennui*, he threw himself upon his bed and feigned to sleep, while she crouched at his table and wrote him a contrite letter. It was sweetly and simply worded, and asked that he should let her return to him for his few remaining days in Paris. If he could not grant so much, might she speak to him in the street; come to see him sometimes, if only to be

reviled; love him, though she could not hope to be loved? She gave him this note with her face turned away, and faltered the request that he would think ere he replied, and hurried to the balcony without, that she might not trouble him with the presence of her sorrow.

How the street beneath her, into which she looked, had changed since the nights when they talked together upon this balcony! There was bright sunshine, but it fell leeringly, not laughingly, upon the columns of the Odean Theatre, upon the crowds on the Boulevard, upon the decrepit baths of Julian, upon the far heights of Belleville, upon her more cheerlessly than upon all.

She listened timorously for his word of recall. She wondered if he were not writing a reply. Yes, that was his manner; he was cold and sharp of speech, but he was an artist with his pen. She thought that her long patience had moved him. Perhaps she should be all forgiven. Aye! they should dwell together a few days longer. It was a dismal thought that it must be for a few days, yet that would be some respite, and then they could part friends; though her heart so clung to his that a parting should rend it from her, she wanted to live over their brief happiness again.

"Oh!" said Suzette, in the end, laying her cheek upon the cold iron of the balcony, "I wish I had died at my father's home of pining for something to love rather than to have loved thus truly, and have it accounted my shame. If I were married to this man I could not be his fonder wife; but because I am not he despises me. All day I have crawled in the dust; I have made myself cheap in his eyes. If I were prouder he might not love me more, but his respect would be something."

She rallied and took heart. Pride is the immortal part of woman. With a brighter eye she entered the room. Her letter, blotted with tears, lay crumpled and torn upon the floor at his bedside, and he, with his face to the wall, was snoring sonorously.

"Ralph Flare," cried Suzette, "arise! that letter is the last olive branch you shall ever see in my hand; *adieu!*"

He opened his eyes yawningly. Suzette, with trembling lips and nostrils, clasped the door-knob. It shut behind her with a shock. Her feet were quick upon the stairs; he pursued her like one suddenly gone mad, and called her back with something between a moan and a howl.

"Do not go away, Suzette," he cried; "I only jested. I meant this morning to search you out and beg you to come back. I would not lose you for France—for the world. Be not rash or retaliatory! become not the companion of this Frenchman who has divided us. We will commence again. I have tested your fidelity. You shall have all the liberty that you need, everything that I have; say to me, sweetheart, that you will stay!"

For a moment her bright eyes were scintillant with wrath and indignation. He who had racked her all day for his pleasure was bound and prostrate now. Should she not do as much for her revenge?

"I have no other friend now," he pleaded; "my nights have been sleepless, solitary. In the days I have drunk deeply, squandered my money, tried all dissipations, and proved them disappointments. If you leave me I swear that I will plague myself and you."

"Oh! Ralph," said Suzette, "I do not wonder at the artfulness of women after this day's lesson. Something impels me to return your cruelty; it is a bad impulse, and I shall disobey it. I thank God, my baby, that I cannot do as you have done to me."

She wept again for the last time, but he kissed her tears away, and wondered where the great shame lay, upon that child or upon him?

PART VI.

DESERTION.

When the last fresh passion was over, Suzette, whose face had grown purer and sadder, roused Ralph Flare to his more legitimate ambition. "My child," she said, "if you will work in the gallery every day I will sew in one of the great *magasans*."

To see that he commenced fairly, she went with him into the Louvre, and he selected a fine Rembrandt—an old man, bearded and scarred, massively characterized, and clothed in magic light and shadow.

As Ralph stood at his easel, meditating the master, Suzette now fluttered around him, now ran off to the far end of the long hall, where he could see her in miniature, the sweetest portrait in France. At last he was really absorbed, and she went into the city to fulfil her promise. She was nimble of finger, and though the work distressed her at first, she thought of his applause, and persevered.

Their method was the marvel of the unimaginative Terrapin, who made some philosophic comments upon the "spoonery" socially considered, and cut their acquaintance.

They breakfasted at the *cremery* at seven o'clock with the *ouvriers*, and dined at one of Duvall's bouillon establishments. Suzette found the work easier as she progressed. She was finally

promoted to the place of *coupeur*, or cutter, and had the superintendence of a work-room, where she made four francs a day, and so paid all her expenses. At the end of the second month he took the money which he otherwise would have required for board, and bought her a watch and chain at the *Palais Royale*. At the same time he put the finishing touch to his picture, and when hung upon his wall, between their photographs, Suzette danced before it, and took half the credit upon herself.

Foolish Suzette! she did not know how that old man was her most dangerous rival. He had done what no beautiful woman in France could do—weakened her grasp upon Ralph Flare's heart. For now Ralph's old enthusiasm for his profession reasserted itself. It was his first and deepest love after all.

"My baby," he said one night, "there was a great artist named Raphael—and he had a little mistress, whom I don't think a whit prettier than mine. She was called the *Fornarina*, just as you may be called the *Couturiere*, and he painted her portrait in the characters of saints and of the Virgin. She will be remembered a thousand years, because Raphael so loved and painted her. But he was not a great artist only because he loved the *Fornarina*. He had something that he loved better, and so have I."

"One more beloved than Suzette?" she cried.

"Yes! it is art. I loved you more than my art before; but I am going back to my first love."

Suzette tossed her head and said that she could never be jealous of a picture, and went her way with a simple faith and toiled; and as she toiled the more, so grew her love the purer and her content the more equal. She was not the aerial thing she had been. Retaining her elasticity of spirit, she was less volatile, more silent, more careful, more anxious.

It is wiser, not happier, to reach that estate called thought; for now she asked herself very often how long this chapter of her life would last. Must the time come when he must leave her forever? She thought it the bitterest of all to part as they had done before, with anger; but any parting must be agony where she had loved so well. As he lay sleeping, he never knew what tears of midnight were plashing upon his face. He could not see how her little heart was bleeding as it throbbed. Yet she went right on, though sometimes the tears blinded her, till she could not see her needle; but the consciousness that this love and labor had made her life more sanctified was, in some sort, compensation.

One Sunday she rose before Ralph, and thinking that she was unobserved, stole out of the hotel and up the Boulevard. He followed her, suspiciously. She crossed the Place de la Sorbonne, turned the transept of the Pantheon, and entered the old church of St. Etienne du Mont.

It was early mass. The tapers which have been burning five hundred years glistened upon the tomb of the holy St. Genevieve. Here and there old women and girls were kneeling in the chapels, whispering their sins into the ears of invisible priests. And beneath the delicate tracery of screen and staircase, and the gloriously-painted windows, and the image of Jesus crucified looking down upon all, some groups of poor people were murmuring their prayers and making the sign of the cross.

Ralph entered by a door in the choir. He saw Suzette stand pallidly beside the holy water, and when she had touched it with the tips of her fingers, and made the usual rites, she staggered, as if in shame, to a remote chair, and kneeling down covered her face with her missal. Now and then the organ boomed out. The censers were swung aloft, dispensing their perfumes, and all the people made obeisance. Ralph did not know what it all meant. He only saw his little girl penitent and in prayer, and he knew that she was carrying her sin and his to the feet of the Eternal Mercy.

He feigned sleep in the same way each Sunday succeeding, and she disappeared as before. After a while she spoke of her family, and wondered if her father would forgive her. She would not have forgiven him three months ago, but was quite humble now.

She sent her photograph to the old man, and a letter came back, the first she had received for two years.

She felt unwilling, also, to receive further gifts or support from Ralph. If I were his wife, she said, it might be well, but since it is not so, I must not be dependent.

Foolish Suzette again! She did not know that men love best where they most protect. The wife who comes with a dower may climb as high as her husband's pocket, but seldom lies snugly at his heart. Her changed conduct did not draw him closer to her. He felt uneasy and unworthy. He missed the artfulness which had been so winning. He had jealousies no longer to keep his passion quick, for he could not doubt her devotion. There was nothing to lack in Suzette, and that was a fault. She had become modest, docile, truthful, grave. A noble man might have appreciated her the better. Ralph Flare was a representative man, and he did not.

His friends in America thought his copy from Rembrandt wonderful. Their flattery made his ambition glow and flame. His mother, whose woman's instinct divined the cause of his delay in Paris, sent him a pleading letter to go southward; and thus reprimanded, praised, rewarded, what was he to do?

He resolved to leave France—and without Suzette!

He had not courage to tell her that the separation was final. He spoke of an excursion merely, and took but a handful of baggage. She had doubts that were like deaths to her; but she believed him, and after a feverish night went with him in the morning to the train. He was to write every day.

Would she take money?

"No."

But she might have unexpected wants—sickness, accident, charity?

"If so," she said trustfully, "would not her boy come back?"

He had just time to buy his ticket and gain the platform. He folded her in his arms, and exchanged one long, sobbing kiss. It seemed to Ralph Flare that the sound of that kiss was like a spell—the breaking of the pleasantest link in his life—the passing from sinfulness to a baser selfishness—the stamp and seal upon his bargain with ambition, whereby for the long future he was sold to the sorrow of avarice and the deceitfulness of fame.

There was a sharp whistle from the locomotive—who invented that whistle to pierce so many bosoms at parting?—the cars moved one by one till the last, in which he was seated, sprang forward with a jerk; and though she was quite blind, he saw her handkerchief waving till all had vanished, and he would have given the world to have shed one tear.

He has gone on into the free country, and to-night he will sleep under the shadow of the mountains.

She has turned back into the dark city, and she will not sleep at all in her far-up chamber.

It is only one heart crushed, and thousands that deserve more sympathy beat out every day. We only notice this one because it shall lie bleeding, and get no sympathy at all.

PART VII.

DISSOLVING VIEW.

That he might not meet with his own countrymen, Ralph halted at Milan, and in the great deserted gallery of the Brera went steadily to work. If, as it often happened, Suzette's pale face got between him and the canvas, he mentioned his own name and said "renown," and took a turn in the remote corridor where young Raphael's *Sposializo* hung opposite that marvel of Guercino's—poor Hagar and her boy Ishmael driven abroad. These adjuncts and the fiercer passion of self had their effect.

He never wrote to Suzette, but sent secretly for his baggage, and was well pleased with the consciousness that he could forget her. After three months he set out for Florence and studied the masterpieces of Andrea del Sarto, and tried his hand at the *Flora* of Titian.

He went into society somewhat, and was very much afraid his unworthy conduct in Paris might be bruited abroad. Indeed, he could hardly forgive himself the fondness he had known, and came to regard Suzette as a tolerably bad person, who had bewitched him. He burned all her letters, and a little lock of hair he had clipped while she was asleep once, and blotted the whole experience out of his diary. The next Sunday he went to hear the Rev. Mr. Hall preach, and felt quite consoled.

The summer fell upon Val d'Arno like the upsetting of a Tuscan *Scaldino*, and Ralph Flare regretfully took his departure northward. All the world was going to Paris—why not he? Was he afraid? Certainly not; it had been a great victory over temptation to stay away so long. He would carry out the triumph by braving a return.

In accordance with his principles of economy, he took a third-class ticket at Basle. He could so make better studies of passengers; for, somehow, your first-class people have not character faces. The only character you get out of them is the character of wine they consume.

He left the Alps behind him, and rolled all day through the prosaic plains of France; startling the pale little towns, down whose treeless streets the sun shone, oh! so drearily, and taking up boors and market-folks at every monastic station. There was a pretty young girl sitting beside Ralph in the afternoon, but he refused to talk to her, for he was schooling himself, and preferred to scan the features of an odd old couple who got in at Troyes.

They were two old people of the country, and they sat together in the descending shadows of the day, quite like in garb and feature, their chins a little peakish, and the hairs of both turning gray. The man was commonplace, as he leaned upon a staff, and between their feet were paniers of purchases they had been making, which the woman regarded indifferently, as if her heart reached farther than her eyes, and met some soft departed scene which she would have none other see.

"She has a good face," said Flare. "I wish she would keep there a moment more. By George, she

looks like somebody I have known."

The old man nodded on his staff. The rumble of the carriages subdued to a lull all lesser talk or murmurs, and the sky afar off brought into sharp relief the two Gallic profiles, close together, as if they were used to reposing so; yet in the language of their deepening lines lay the stories of lives very, very wide apart.

"The old girl's face is soft," said Ralph Flare. "She has brightened many a bit of Belgian pike road, and the brown turban on her head is in clever contrast to the silver shimmer of her hairs. How anomalous are life and art! How unconscious is this old lady of the narrow escape she is making from perpetuation! Doubtless she works afield beside that old Jacques Bonhomme, and drinks sour wine or Normandy cider on Sundays. That may be the best fate of Suzette, but it must be an amply dry reformation for any little grisette to contemplate. For such prodigals going home there is no fatted calf slain. No fathers see them afar off and run to place the ring upon their fingers. They renounce precarious gayety for persistent slavery. The keen wit of the student is exchanged for the pipe and mug and dull oath of the boor. I wish every such girl back again to so sallow a fate, and pity her when she gets there."

And so, with much unconscious sentimentality, and the two old market people silent before him, Ralph Flare's eyes half closed also, and the lull of the wheels, the long lake streaks of the sedative skies, the coming of great shadows like compulsions to slumber, made his forehead fall and the world go up and down and darken.

It was the old woman who shook him from that repose; she only touched him, but her touch was like a lost sense restored. He thrilled and sat stock still, with her withered blue hand on his arm, and heard the pinched lips say, unclosing with a sort of quiver:

"Baby!"

He looked again, and seemed to himself to grow quite old as he looked, and he said,

"Enfant perdu!"

The turban kept its place, the peaked chin kept as peaked; there seemed even more silver in the smooth hair, and the old serge gown drooped as brownly; but the sweet old face grew soft as a widow's looking at the only portrait she guards, and a tear, like a drop of water exhumed, ran to the tip of her nostril.

"Suzette!" he said, "my early sin; do you come back as well with the turning of my hairs? Has the first passion a shadow long as forever? Why have we met?"

"Not of my seeking was this meeting, Ralph. Speak softly, for my husband sleeps, and he is old like thee and me. If my face is an accusation, let my lips be forgiveness. The love of you made my life dutiful; the loss of you saddened my days, but it was the sadness of religion! I sinned no more, and sought my father's fields, and delayed, with my hand purified by his blessing, the residue of his sands of life. I made my years good to my neighbors, the sick, the bereaved. I met the temptations of the young with a truer story than pleasure tells, and when I married it was with the prelude of my lost years related and forgiven. With children's faces the earnestness and beauty of life returned; for this, for more, for all, may your reward be bountiful!"

There is no curse like the dream of old age. Ralph Flare felt, with the sudden whitening of each separate hair, the sudden remembrance of each separate folly; and the moments of grief he had wrung from the little girl of the Quartier Latin revived like one's mean acts seen through others' eyes.

"Pardon you, child, Suzette?" he said; "to me you were more than I hoped, more than I wished. I asked your face only, and you gave me your heart. For the unfaithfulness, for the wrath, for the unmanliness, for the tyranny with which I treated you, my soul upbraids me."

"How thankful am I," she answered; "the terror to me was that you had learned in the Quartier lessons to make your after-life monotonous. I am happy."

Their hands met; to his gray beard fell the smile upon her mouth; they forget the Quartier Latin; they felt no love but forgiveness, which is the tenderest of emotions. The whistle blew shrilly; the train stopped; Ralph Flare awoke from sleep; but the old couple were gone.

He went to Paris, and, contrary to his purpose, inquired for her. She had been seen by none since his departure. He wrote to the Maire of her commune, and this was the reply:

"Ralph, Merci! Pardonne!"

"SUZETTE."

He felt no loss. He felt softened toward her only; and he turned his back on the Quartier Latin with a man's easy satisfaction that he could forget.

On the sloping market-place,
In the village of Compeigne,
Every Saturday her face,
Like a Sunday, comes again;
Daylight finds her in her seat,
With her panier at her feet,
Where her pigeons lie in pairs;
Like their plumage gray her gown,
To her sabots drooping down;
And a kerchief, brightly brown,
Binds her smooth, dark hairs.

All the buyers knew her well,
And, perforce, her face must see,
As a holy Raphael
Lures us in a gallery;
Round about the rustics gape,
Drinking in her comely shape,
And the housewives gently speak,
When into her eyes they look,
As within some holy book,
And the gables, high and crook,
Fling their sunshine on her cheek.

In her hands two milk-white doves,
Happy in her lap to lie,
Softly murmur of their loves,
Envied by the passers-by;
One by one their flight they take,
Bought and cherished for her sake,
Leaving so reluctantly;
Till the shadows close approach,
Fades the pageant, foot and coach,
And the giants in the cloche
Ring the noon for Picardie.

Round the village see her glide,
With a slender sunbeam's pace!
Mirrored in the Oise's tide,
The gold-fish float upon her face;
All the soldiers touch their caps;
In the cafés quit their naps
Garçon, guest, to wish her back;
And the fat old beadles smile
As she kneels along the aisle,
Like Pucelle in other while,
In the dim church of Saint Jacques.

Now she mounts her dappled ass—
He well-pleased such friend to know—
And right merrily they pass
The armorial château;
Down the long, straight paths they tread
Till the forest, overhead,
Whispers low its leafy love;
In the archways' green caress
Rides the wondrous dryadess—
Thrills the grass beneath her press,
And the blue-eyed sky above.

I have met her, o'er and o'er,
As I strolled alone apart,
By a lonely carrefour
In the forest's tangled heart,
Safe as any stag that bore
Imprint of the Emperor;
In the copse that round her grew
Tiptoe the straight saplings stood,
Peeped the wild boar's satyr brood,
Like an arrow clove the wood
The glad note of the cuckoo.

How I wished myself her friend!
(So she wished that I were more)
Jogging toward her journey's end

At Saint Jean au Bois before,
Where her father's acres fall
Just without the abbey wall;
By the cool well loiteringly
The shaggy Norman horses stray,
In the thatch the pigeons play,
And the forest round alway
Folds the hamlet, like a sea.

Far forgotten all the feud
In my New World's childhood haunts,
If my childhood she renewed
In this pleasant nook of France;
Might she make the blouse I wear,
Welcome then her homely fare
And her sensuous religion!
To the market we should ride,
In the Mass kneel side by side,
Might I warm, each eventide,
In my nest, my pretty pigeon.

THE DEAF MAN OF KENSINGTON.

A TALE OF AN OLD SUBURB.

CHAPTER I.

THE MURDER.

Between the Delaware River and Girard Avenue, which is the market street of the future, and east of Frankfort Road, lies Kensington, a respectable old district of the Quaker City, and occupying the same relation to it that Kensington in England does to London. Beyond both Kensingtons is a Richmond, but the English Richmond is a beauteous hill, with poetical recollections of Pope and Thomson, while our Richmond is the coal district of Philadelphia, flat to the foot and dingy to the eye.

Kensington, however, was once no faint miniature of the staid British suburb. The river bending to the eastward there conducts certain of the streets crookedly away from the rectangular Quaker demon who is ever seeking to square them. Along the water side, or near it, passes a sort of Quay Street, between ship-yards and fish-houses on the one side, and shops or small tenements on the other, and this street scarcely discloses the small monument on the site of the Treaty Tree, where William Penn in person satisfied the momentary expectations of his Indian subjects.

Nearly parallel to the water side street is another, wider and more aristocratic, and lined with many handsome dwellings of brick, or even brown-stone, where the successful shipbuilders, fishtakers, coal men, and professional classes have established themselves or their posterity. This street was once called Queen, afterward Richmond Street, and it is crossed by others, as Hanover, Marlborough, and Shackamaxon, which attest in their names the duration of royal and Indian traditions hereabout. Pleasant maple, sometimes sycamore and willow trees shade these old streets, and they are kept as clean as any in this ever-mopped and rinsed metropolis, while the society, though disengaged from the great city, had its better and worse class, and was fastidious about morals and behavior, and not disinclined to express its opinion.

One winter day in a certain year Kensington had a real sensation. The Delaware was frozen from shore to shore, and one could walk on the ice from Smith's to Treaty Island, and from Cooper's Point to the mouth of the Cohocksink. On the second afternoon of the great freeze fires were built on the river, and crowds assembled at certain smooth places to see great skaters like Colonel Page cut flourishes and show sly gallantry to the buxom housewives and grass widows of Kensington and the Jerseys. A few horses were driven on the ice, and hundreds of boys ran merrily with real sleighs crowded down with their friends. A fight or two was improvised, and unlicensed vendors set forth the bottle that inebriates. In the midst of the afternoon gayety a small boy, kneeling down to buckle up to a farther hole the straps on his guttered skates, saw just at his toe something like human hair. The small boy rose to his feet and stamped with all his might around that object, not in any apprehension but because small boys like to know; and when the ice had been well broken, kneeling down and pulling it out in pieces with his mitten, the small boy felt something cold and smooth, and then he poked his finger into a human eye. It was a dead man. No sooner had the urchin found this out than he belled out at the top of his voice, running and falling as he yelled: "Murder! Murder! Murder!"

From all parts of the ice, like flies chasing over a silver salver toward some sweet point of corruption, the hundreds and thousands swarmed at the news that a dead body had been found. When they arrived on the spot, spades, picks, and ice-hooks had been procured by those nearest shore, and the whole mystery brought from the depths of the river to the surface.

There lay together on the ice two men, apparently several days in the water, and with the usual look of drowned people of good condition—glassy and of fixed expression, as if in the moment of death a consenting grimness had stolen into their countenances, neither composed nor terrified.

The bodies had been already recognized when the main part of the crowd arrived. Kensington people, generally, knew them both.

"It's William Zane and his business partner, Saylor Rainey! They own one of the marine railways at Kensington. Come to think of it, I haven't seen them around for nearly a week, neighbor!" exclaimed an old man.

"It's a case of drowning, no doubt," spoke up a little fellow who did a river business in old chains and junk. "You see they had another ship-mending place on the island opposite Kensington, and rowin' theirselves over was upset and never missed!"

"Quare enough too!" added a third party, "for yisterday I had a talk with young Andrew Zane, this one's son (touching the body with his foot), and Andrew said—a little pale I thought he was—says he, 'Pop's *about*.'"

Here a little buzz of mystery—so grateful to crowds which have come far over slippery surface and expect much—undulated to the outward boundaries. As the people moved the ice cracked like a cannon shot, and they dispersed like blackbirds, to rally soon again.

"Here's a doctor! Now we'll know about it! *He's* here!" was exclaimed by several, as an important little man was pushed along, and the thickest crowd gave him passage. The little man borrowed a boy's cap to kneel on, adjusted a sort of microscopic glass to his nose, as if plain eyes had no adequate use to this scientific necessity, and he called up two volunteers to turn the corpses over, keep back the throng, give him light, and add imposition to apprehension. Finally he stopped at a place in the garments of the principal of the twain. "Here is a hole," he exclaimed, "with burned woollen fibre about it, as if a pistol had been fired at close quarters. Draw back this woollen under-jacket! There—as I expected, gentlemen, is a pistol shot in the breast! What is the name of the person? Ah! thank you! Well, William Zane, gentlemen, was shot before he was drowned?"

The great crowd swayed and rushed forward again, and again the ice cracked like artillery. Before the multitude could swarm to the honey of a crime a second time, the news was dispersed that both of the drowned men had bullet wounds in their bodies, and both had been undoubtedly murdered. Some supposed it was the work of river pirates; others a private revenge, perpetrated by some following boat's party in the darkness of night. But more than one person piped shrilly ere the people wearily scattered in the dusk for their homes on the two shores of the river: "How did it happen that young Zane, the old un's son, said yisterday that his daddy was about, when he's been frozen in at least three days?"

CHAPTER II.

THE FLIGHT.

A handsome residence on the south side of Queen Street had been the home of the prosperous ship-carpenter, William Zane. His name was on the door on a silver plate. As the evening deepened and the news spread, the bell was pulled so often that it aided the universal alarm following a crime, and a crowd of people, reinforced by others as fast as it thinned out, kept up the watch on ever-recurring friends, coroner's officers and newspaper reporters, as they ascended the steps, looked grave, made inquiries, and returned to dispense their information.

But there was very little indignation, for Zane had been an insanely passionate man, rather hard and exacting, and had he been found dead alone anywhere it would probably have been said at once that he brought it on himself. His partner, Rainey, however, had conducted himself so negatively and mildly, and was of such general estimation, that the murder of the senior member of the firm took on some unusual public sympathy from the reflected sorrow for his fellow-victim. The latter had been one of Zane's apprentices, raised to a place in the establishment by his usefulness and sincere love of his patron. Just, forbearing, soft-spoken, and not avaricious, Saylor Rainey deserved no injury from any living being. He was unmarried, and, having met with a disappointment in love, had avowed his intention never to marry, but to bequeath all the property he should acquire to his partner's only son, Andrew Zane.

What, then, was the motive of this double murder? The public comprehension found but one theory, and that was freely advanced by the rash and imputative in the community of Kensington: The murderer was he who had the only known temptation and object in such a crime. Who could gain anything by it but Andrew Zane, the impulsive, the mischief-making and oft-restrained son of his stern sire, who, by a double crime, would inherit that undivided property, free from the

control of both parent and guardian?

"It is parricide! that's what it is!" exclaimed a fat woman from Fishtown. "At the bottom of the river dead men tell no tales. The rebellious young sarpint of a son, who allus pulled a lusty oar, has chased them two older ones into the deep water of the channel, where a pistol shot can't be heard ashore, and he expected the property to be his'n. But there are gallowses yet, thank the Lord!"

"Mrs. Whann, don't say that," spoke up a deferential voice from the face of a rather sallow-skinned young man, with long, ringleted, yellow hair. "Don't create a prejudice, I beg of you. Andrew Zane was my classmate. He gave his excellent father some trouble, but it shouldn't be remembered against him now. Suppose, my friends, that you let me ring the bell and inquire?"

"Who's that?" asked the crowd. "He's a fine, mature-looking, charitable young man, anyway."

"Its the old Minister Van de Lear's son, Calvin. He's going to succeed his venerable and pious poppy in Kensington pulpit. They'll let him in."

The door closed when Calvin Van de Lear entered the residence of the late William Zane. When it reopened he was seen with a handkerchief in his hand and his hat pulled down over his eyes, as if he had been weeping.

"Stop! stop! don't be going off that way!" interposed the fat fishwife. "You said you would tell us the news."

"My friends," replied Calvin Van de Lear, with a look of the greatest pain, "Andrew Zane has not been heard from. I fear your suspicions are too true!"

He crossed the street and disappeared into the low and elderly residence of his parents.

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed a grave and gentle old man. "That Andrew Zane should not be here to meet a charge like this! But I'll not believe it till I have prayed with my God."

Within the Zane residence all was as in other houses on funeral eves. In the front parlor, ready for an inquest or an undertaker, lay the late master of the place, laid out, and all the visitors departed except his housekeeper, Agnes, and her friend, "Podge" Byerly. The latter was a sunny-haired and nimble little lady, under twenty years of age, who taught in one of the public schools and boarded with her former school-mate, Agnes Wilt. Agnes was an orphan of unknown parentage, by many supposed to have been a niece or relative of Mr. Zane's deceased wife, whose place she took at the head of the table, and had grown to be one of the principal social authorities in Kensington. In Reverend Mr. Van de Lear's church she was both teacher and singer. The young men of Kensington were all in love with her, but it was generally understood that she had accepted Andrew Zane, and was engaged to him.

Andrew was not dissipated, but was fond of pranks, and so restive under his father's positive hand that he twice ran away to distant seaports, and thus incurred a remarkable amount of intuitive gossip, such as belongs to all old settled suburban societies. This occasional firmness of character in the midst of a generally light and flexible life, now told against him in the public mind. "He has nerve enough to do anything desperate in a pinch," exclaimed the very wisest. "Didn't William Zane find him out once in the island of Barbadoes grubbing sugar-cane with a hoe, and the thermometer at 120 in the shade? And didn't he swear he'd stay there and die unless concessions were made to him, and certain things never brought up again? Didn't even his iron-shod father have to give way before he would come home? Ah! Andrew is light-hearted, but he is an Indian in self-will!"

To-night Agnes was in the deepest grief. Upon her, and only her, fell the whole burden of this double crime and mystery, ten times more terrible that her lover was compromised and had disappeared.

"Go to bed, Podge!" said Agnes, as the clock in the engine-house struck midnight. "Oblige me, my dear! I cannot sleep, and shall wait and watch. Perhaps Andrew will be here."

"I can't leave you up, Aggy, and with that thing so near." She locked toward the front parlor, where, behind the folding-doors, lay the dead.

"I have no fear of *that*. He was always kind to me. My fears are all in this world. O *darling!*"

She burst into sobs. Her friend kissed her again and again, and knew that feelings between love and crime extorted that last word.

"Aggy," spoke the light-hearted girl, "I know that you cannot help loving him, and as long as he is loved by you I sha'n't believe him guilty. Must I really leave you here?"

Her weeping friend turned up her face to give the mandatory kiss, and Podge was gone.

Agnes sat in solitude, with her hands folded and her heart filled with unutterable tender woe, that so much causeless cloud had settled upon the home of her refuge. She could not experience that relief many of us feel in deep adversity, that it is all illusion, and will in a moment float away like other dreams. Brought to this house an orphan, and twice deprived of a mother's love, she had only entered woman's estate when another class of cares beset her. Her beauty and sweetness of disposition had brought her more lovers than could make her happy. There was but one on whom she could confer her heart, and this natural choice had drawn around her the perils

which now overwhelmed them all. Accepting the son, she incurred the father's resentment upon both; for he, the dead man yonder, had also been her lover.

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed the anguished woman, kneeling by her chair and laying her cheek upon it, while only such tears as we shed in supreme moments saturated her handkerchief, "what have I done to make such misery to others? How sinful I must be to set son and father against each other! Yet, Heavenly Father, I can but love!"

There was a cracking of something, as if the dead man in the great, black parlor had carried his jealousy beyond his doom and was breaking from his coffin to upbraid her. A door burst open in the dining-room, which was behind her, and then the dining-room door also unclosed, and was followed by a cold, graveyard draft. A moment of superstition possessed Agnes. "Guard me, Saviour," she murmured.

At the dining-room threshold, advancing a little over the sill, as if to rush upon her, was the figure of a man, dressed, head to foot, in sailor's garments—heavy woollens, comforter, tarpaulin overalls, and knit cap. He looked at her an instant, standing there, shivering, and then he retired a pace or two and closed the door to the cellar, by which he had entered the house. Even this little movement in the intruder had something familiar about it. He advanced again, directly and rapidly, toward her, but she did not scream. He threw both arms around her, and she did not cry. Something had entered with that bold figure which extinguished all crime and superstition in the monarchy of its presence—Love.

A kiss, as fervent and long as only the reunited ever give with purity, drew the soul of the suspected murderer and his sweetheart into one temple.

"Agnes," he whispered hoarsely, when it was given, "they have followed me hard to-night. Every place I might have resorted to is watched. All Kensington—my oldest friends—believe me guilty! I cannot face it. With this kiss I must go."

"Oh, Andrew, do not! Here is the place to make your peace; here take your stand and await the worst."

"Agnes," he repeated, "I have no defence. Nothing but silence would defend me now, and that would hang me to the gallows. I come to put my life and soul into your hands. Can you pray for me, bad as I am?"

"Dear Andrew," answered Agnes, weeping fast, "I have no power to stop you, and I cannot give you up. Yes, I will pray for you now, before you start on your journey. Go open those folding-doors and we will pray in the other room."

"What is there?"

"Your father."

He stopped a long while, and his cheek was blanched.

"Go first," he whispered finally. "I am not afraid."

She led the way to the bier, where the body, with the frost hardly yet thawed from it, lay under the dim light of the chandelier. Turning up the burners it was revealed in its relentless, though not unhappy, expression—a large and powerful man, bearded and with tassels of gray in his hair.

The young man in his coarse sailor's garb, muffled up for concealment and disguise, placed his arm around Agnes, and his knees were unsteady as he gazed down on the remains and began to sob.

"Dear," she murmured, also weeping, "I know you loved him!"

The young man's sobs became so loud that Agnes drew him to a chair, and as she sat upon it he laid his head in her lap and continued there to express a deep inward agony.

"I loved him always," he articulated at last, "so help me God, I did! And a *parricide*! Can you survive it?"

"Andrew," she replied, "I have taken it all to heaven and laid the sin there. Forever, my darling, intercession continues for all our offences only there. It must be our recourse in this separation every day when we rise and lie down. Though blood-stained, he can wash as white as snow."

"I will try, I will try!" he sobbed; "but your goodness is my reliance, dearest. I have always been disobedient to my father, but never thought it would come to this."

"Nor I, Andrew. Poor, rash uncle!"

"Agnes," whispered Andrew Zane, rising with a sudden fear, "I hear people about the house—on the pavement, on the doorsteps. Perhaps they are suspecting me. I must fly. Oh! shall we ever meet again under a brighter sky? Will you cling to me? I am going out, abandoned by all the world. Nothing is left me but your fidelity. Will it last? You know you are beautiful!"

"Oh, sad words to say!" sighed Agnes. "Let none but you ever say them to me again. Beautiful, and to the end of such misery as this! My only love, I will never forsake you!"

"Then I can try the world again, winter as it is. Once more, oh, God! let me ask forgiveness from

these frozen lips. My father! pursue me not, though deep is my offence! Farewell, farewell forever!"

He disappeared down the cellar as he had come, and Agnes heard at the outer window the sound of his escaping. When all was silent she fell to the floor, and lay there helplessly weeping.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEAF MAN.

The inquest was held, and the jury pronounced the double crime murder by persons unknown, but with strong suspicion resting on Andrew Zane and an unknown laborer, who had left Pettit's or Treaty Island, at night, in an open boat with William Zane and Sayler Rainey. A reward was offered for Andrew Zane and the laborer.

The will of the deceased persons made Andrew Zane full legatee of both estates, and left a life interest in the Queen Street house, and \$2000 a year to "Agnes Wilt, my ward and housekeeper." The executors of the Zane estate were named as Agnes Wilt, Rev. Silas Van de Lear, and Duff Salter. The two dead men were interred together in the old Presbyterian burial-ground, and after a month or two of diminishing excitement, Kensington settled down to the idea that there was a great mystery somewhere; that Andrew Zane was probably guilty; but that the principal evidence against him was his own flight.

As to Agnes, there was only one respectable opinion—that she was a superb work of nature and triumph of womanhood, notwithstanding romantic and possibly awkward circumstances of origin and relation. All men, of whatever time of life and for whatsoever reason, admired her—the mean and earthy if only for her mould, the morally discerning for her beautiful quality that pitied, caressed, encouraged, or elevated all who came within her sphere.

"Preachers of the Gospel ought to have such wives," said the Rev. Silas Van de Lear, looking at his son Calvin, "as Agnes Wilt. She is the most handy churchwoman in all my ministration in Kensington, which is now forty years. Besides being pious, and virtuous, and humble before God, she is very comely to the eye, and possesses a house and an independent income. A wife like that would naturally help a young minister to get a higher call."

Young Calvin, who was expected to succeed his father in the venerable church close by, and was studying divinity, said with much cool maturity:

"Pa, I've taken it all in. She's the only single girl in Kensington worth proposing to. It's true that we don't know just who she is, but it's not that I'm so much afraid of as her, her—in short, her piety."

"Piety does not stand in the way of marriage," answered the old man, who was both bold and prudent, wise and sincere. "In the covenant of God nothing is denied to his saints in righteousness. The sense of wedded pleasure, the beauty that delights the eye, love, appetite, children, and financial independence—all are ours, no less as of the Elect than as worldly creatures. The love of God in the heart warms men and women toward each other."

"Oh, as to that!" exclaimed Calvin, "I've been warmed toward Miss Agnes since I was a boy. I think she is superb. But she is a little too good for me. She looks at me whenever I talk to her, whereas the proper way of humility would be to look down. She has been in love with Andrew Zane, you know!"

"That," said the preacher, "is probably off; though I never discovered in Andrew more evil than a light heart and occasional rebellion. If she loves him still, do not be in haste to jar her sensibility. It is thoughtfulness which engenders love."

The young women of Kensington were divided about Agnes Wilt. The poorer girls thought her perfect. But some marriageable and some married women, moving in her own sphere of society, criticised her popularity, and said she must be artful to control so many men. There are no depths to which jealousy cannot go in a small suburban society. Agnes, as an orphan, had felt it since childhood, but nothing had ever happened until now to concentrate slander as well as sympathy upon her. It was told abroad that she had been the mistress of her deceased benefactor, who had fallen by the hands of his infuriated son. Even the police authorities gave some slight consideration to this view. Old people remarked: "If she has been deceiving people, she will not stop now. She will have other secret lovers."

Inquiries had been made for some time as to who the unknown executor, Duff Salter, might be, when one day Rev. Mr. Van de Lear walked over to the Zane house with a broad-shouldered, grave, silent-eyed man, who wore a very long white beard reaching to his middle. As he was also tall and but little bent, he had that mysterious union of strength and age which was perfected by his expression of long and absolute silence.

"Agnes," said Mr. Van de Lear, "this is an old Scotch-Irish friend and classmate of the late Mr. Zane, Duff Salter of Arkansas. He cannot hear what I have said, for he is almost stone deaf. However, go through the motions of shaking hands. I am told he has heard very little of anything

for the past ten years. An explosion in a quicksilver mine broke his ear-drums."

Agnes, dressed in deep black, shook hands with the grave stranger dutifully, and said:

"I am sure you are welcome, sir."

Mr. Salter looked at her closely and gently, and seemed to be pleased with the inspection, for he took a small gold box from his pocket, unlocked it and sniffed a pinch of snuff, and then gave a sneeze, which he articulated, plain as speech, into the words: "Jericho! Jericho!" Then placing the box in the pocket of his long coat, he remarked:

"Miss Agnes, as one of the executors is a lady, and another is our venerable friend here, who has no inclination to attend to the settlement of Mr. Zane's estate, it will devolve upon me to examine the whole subject. I am a stranger in the East. As Mr. Van de Lear may have told you, I don't hear anything. Will I be welcome as a boarder under your roof as long as I am looking into my old friend's books and papers?"

"Not only welcome, but a protection to us, sir," answered Agnes.

He took a set of ivory tablets from his pocket, with a pencil, and handing it to her politely, said:

"Please write your answer."

She wrote "Yes."

The deaf lodger gave as little trouble as could have been expected. He had a bedroom, and moved a large secretary desk into it, and sat there all day looking at figures. If he ever wanted to make an inquiry, he wrote it on the tablets, and in the evening had it read and answered. Agnes was a good deal of the time preoccupied, and Podge Byerly, who wrote as neatly as copper-plate, answered these inquiries, and conducted a little conversation of her own. Podge was a slender blonde, with fine blue eyes and a mischievous, sylph-like way of coming and going. Her freedom of motion and address seemed to concern the stranger. One day she wrote, after putting down the answer to a business inquiry:

"Are you married?"

He hesitated some time and wrote back, "I hope not."

She retorted, "Could one forget if one was married?"

He replied on the same tablet: "Not when he tried."

Podge rubbed it all off, and thought a minute, and then concluded that evening's correspondence:

"You are an old tease!"

The next morning, as usual, she wrapped herself up warmly and took the omnibus for her school, and saw him watching her out of the upper window. That night, instead of any inquiries, he stalked down in his worked slippers—the dead man's—and long dressing gown, and, after smiling at all, took Podge Byerly's hand and looked at it. This time he spoke in a sweet, modulated voice,

"Very pretty!"

She was about to reply, when he gave her the ivory tablet, and put his finger on his lip.

She wrote, "Did you ever fight a duel?"

He shook his head "No."

She wrote again, "What else do they do in Arkansas?"

He replied, "They love."

Then Mr. Duff Salter sneezed very loudly, "Jericho! Jericho! Jericho!" Podge ran off at such a serious turn of responses, but was too much of a woman not to be lured back of her own will. He wrote later in the evening this touching query:

"How do the birds sing now? Are they all dumb?"

She answered, "Many can hear who never heard them."

He wrote again, "Are you suspicious?"

She replied, "*Very*. Are you?"

He shook his head "No."

"I believe he *is*," said Podge, turning to Agnes, who had entered. "He looks as if he had asked that question of himself."

Duff Salter seized his handkerchief and sneezed into it, "Jericho-o! Jericho-wo!"

Podge was sure he was suspicious the next night when she read on his tablets the rather imputative remark,

"Is there anything demoralizing in teaching public schools?"

She replied tartly, "Yes, stupid old visitors and parents!"

"Excuse me!" he wrote; "I meant politicians."

She replied in the same spirit as before, "I think politicians are divine!"

Duff Salter looked a little wondering out of those calm gray eyes and his strong, yet benevolent Scotch-Irish countenance. Podge, who now talked freely with Agnes in his presence, said confidently:

"I believe I can tantalize this good old granny by giving him doubts about me! I am real bad, Aggy; you know that! It is no story to tell it!"

"Oh! we are both bad enough to try to improve," exclaimed Agnes absently.

"Jericho! Jericho! Jericho!" sneezed Duff Salter.

He came down every evening, and began respectfully to bow to Agnes and to smile on Podge, and then stretched his feet out to the ottoman, drew his tablets up to the small table and proceeded to write. They hallooed into his ear once or twice, but he said he was deaf as a mill-stone, and might be cursed to his face and wouldn't understand it. They had formed a pleasing opinion of him, not unmixed with curiosity, when one night he wrote on the back of a piece of paper:

"Have you any idea who wrote this anonymous note to me?"

Podge Byerly took the note and found in a woman's handwriting these words:

"Mr. Duff Salter, I suppose you know where you are. Your hostesses are very insinuating and artful—and what else, *you can find out!* One man has been murdered in that family; another has disappeared. They say in Kensington the house of Zane is haunted.

"A WARNER."

Podge read the note, and her tears dropped upon it. He moved forward as if to speak to her, but correcting himself hastily, he wrote upon the tablets:

"Not even a suspicious person is affected the least by an anonymous letter. I only keep it that possibly I may detect the sender!"

CHAPTER IV.

A SUITOR.

Duff Salter and the ladies were sitting in the back parlor one evening following the events just related, when the door-bell rang, and Podge Byerly went to see who was there. She soon returned and closed the door of the front parlor, leaving a little crack, by accident, and lighted the gas there.

"Aggy," whispered Podge, coming in, "there's Mr. Calvin Van de Lear, our future minister. He's elegantly dressed, and has a nosegay in his hand."

"Can't you entertain him, dear?"

"I would be glad enough, but he asked in a very decided way for you."

"For me?"

Agnes looked distressed.

"Yes; he said very distinctly, 'I called to pay my respects particularly to Miss Agnes to-night.'"

Agnes left the room, and Duff Salter and Podge were again together. Podge could hear plainly what was said in the front parlor, and partly see, by the brighter light there, the motions of the visitor and her friend. She wrote on Duff Salter's tablet, "A deaf man is a great convenience!"

"Why?" wrote the large, grave man.

"Because he can't hear what girls say to their beaux."

"Is that a beau calling on our beautiful friend?"

"I'm afraid so!"

"How do you feel when a beau comes?"

"We feel important."

"You don't feel grateful, then; only complimented."

"No; we feel that on one of two occasions we have the advantage over a man. We can play him like a big fish on a little angle."

"When is the other occasion?"

"Some women," wrote Podge, "play just the same with the man they marry!"

Duff Salter looked up surprised.

"Isn't that wrong?" he wrote.

She answered mischievously, "A kind of!"

The large, bearded man looked so exceedingly grave that Podge burst out laughing.

"Don't you know," she wrote, "that the propensity to plague a man dependent on you is inherent in every healthy woman?"

He wrote, "I do know it, and it's a crime!"

Podge thought to herself "This old man is dreadfully serious and suspicious sometimes."

As Duff Salter relapsed into silence, gazing on the fire, the voice of Calvin Van de Lear was heard by Podge, pitched in a low and confident key, from the parlor side:

"I called, Agnes, when I thought sufficient time had elapsed since the troubles here, to express my deep interest in you, and to find you, I hoped, with a disposition to turn to the sunny side of life's affairs."

"I am not ready to take more than a necessary part in anything outside of this house," replied Agnes. "My mind is altogether preoccupied. I thank you for your good wishes, Mr. Van de Lear."

"Now do be less formal," said the young man persuasively. "I have always been Cal. before—short and easy, Cal. Van de Lear. *You* might call me almost anything, Aggy."

"I have changed, sir. Our afflictions have taught me that I am no longer a girl."

"You won't call me Cal., then?"

"No, Mr. Van de Lear."

"I see how it is," exclaimed the visitor. "You think because I am studying for orders I must be looked up to. Aggy, that's got nothing to do with social things. When I take the governor's place in our pulpit I shall make my sermons for this generation altogether crack, sentimental sermons, and drive away dull care. That's my understanding of the good shepherd."

"Mr. Van de Lear, there are some cares so natural that they are almost consolation. Under the pressure of them we draw nearer to happiness. What merry words should be said to those who were bred under this roof in such misfortunes as I have now—as the absent have?"

Podge saw Agnes put her handkerchief to her face, and her neck shake a minute convulsively. Duff Salter here sneezed loudly: "Jericho! Jerichew! Je-ry-cho-o!" He produced a tortoise-shell snuff-box, and Podge took a pinch, for fun, and sneezed until the tears came to her eyes and her hair was shaken down. She wrote on the tablets,

"Men could eat dirt and enjoy it."

He replied, "At last dirt eats all the men."

"It's to get rid of them!" wrote Podge. "My boys at school are dirty by inclination. They will chew anything from a piece of India rubber shoe to slippery elm and liquorice root. One piece of liquorice will demoralize a whole class. They pass it around."

Duff Salter replied, "The boys must have something in their mouths; the girls in their heads!"

"But not liquorice root," added Podge.

"No; they put the boys in their heads!"

"Pshaw!" wrote Podge, "girls don't like boys. They like nice old men who will pet them."

Here Podge ran out of the room and the conversation in the front parlor was renewed. The voice of Calvin Van de Lear said:

"Agnes, looking at your affairs in the light of religious duty, as you seem to prefer, I must tell you that your actions have not always been perfect."

Nothing was said in reply to this.

"I am to be your pastor at some not distant day," spoke the same voice, "and may take some of that privilege now. As a daughter of the church you should give the encouragement of your beauty and favor only to serious, and approved, and moral young men. Not such scapegraces as Andrew Zane!"

"Sir!" exclaimed Agnes, rising. "How dare you speak of the poor absent one?"

"Sit down," exclaimed Calvin Van de Lear, not a bit discomposed. "I have some disciplinary power now, and shall have more. A lady in full communion with our church—a single woman without a living guardian—requires to hear the truth, even from an erring brother. You have no right to go

outside the range at least of respectable men, to place your affections and bestow your beauty and religion on a particularly bad man—a criminal indeed—one already fled from this community, and under circumstances of the greatest suspicion. I mean Andrew Zane!"

"Hush!" exclaimed Agnes; "perhaps he is dead."

A short and awkward quiet succeeded, broken by young Van de Lear's interruption at last:

"Aggy, I don't know but it is the best thing. Is it so?"

"For shame, sir!"

"He wouldn't have come to any good. I know him well. We went to school together here in Kensington. Under a light and agreeable exterior he concealed an obstinacy almost devilish. All the tricks and daredevil feats we heard of, he was at the head of them. After he grew up his eyes fell on you. For a time he was soberer. Then, perceiving that you were also his father's choice, he conspired against his father, repeatedly absconded, and gave that father great trouble to find and return him to his home, and still stepped between Mr. Zane and his wishes. Was that the part of a grateful and obedient son?"

Not a word was returned by Agnes Wilt.

"How ill-advised," continued Calvin Van de Lear, "was your weakness during that behavior! Do you know what the tattle of all Kensington is? That you favored both the father and the son! That you declined the son only because his father might disinherit him, and put off the father because the son would have the longer enjoyment of his property! I have defended you everywhere on these charges. They say even more, *Miss Agnes*—if you prefer it—that the murder of the father was not committed by Andrew Zane without an instigator, perhaps an accessory."

The voice of Agnes was heard in hasty and anxious imploration:

"For pity's sake, say no more. Be silent. Am I not bowed and wretched enough?"

She came hastily to the fissure of the door and looked in, because Duff Salter just then sneezed tremendously:

"Jericho-o-o-o! Jer-ry-cho-o-o!"

Podge Byerly reappeared with a pack of cards and shuffled them before Duff Salter's face.

They sat down and played a game of euchre for a cent a point, the tablets at hand between them to write whatever was mindful. Duff Salter was the best player.

"I believe," wrote Podge, "that all Western men are gamblers. Are you?"

He wrote, to her astonishment,

"I was."

"Wasn't it a sin?"

"Not there."

"I thought gambling was a sin everywhere?"

"It is everywhere done," wrote Duff Salter. "You are a gambler."

"That's a fib."

"You risk your heart, capturing another's."

"My heart is gone," added Podge, blushing.

"What's his name?" wrote Duff Salter.

"That's telling."

Again the voices of the two people in the front parlor broke on Podge's ear:

"You must leave me, Mr. Van de Lear. You do not know the pain and wrong you are doing me."

"Agnes, I came to say I loved you. Your beauty has almost maddened me for years. Your resistance would give me anger if I had not hope left. I know you loved me once."

"Sir, it is impossible; it is cruel."

"Cruel to love you?" repeated the divinity student. "Come now, that's absurd! No woman is annoyed by an offer. I swear I love you reverently. I can put you at the head of this society—the wife of a clergyman. Busy tongues shall be stilled at your coming and going, and the shadow of this late tragedy will no more plague your reputation, protected in the bosom of the church and nestled in mine."

Sounds of a slight struggle were heard, as if the amorous young priest were trying to embrace Agnes.

Podge arose, listening.

The face of Duff Salter was stolid, and unconscious of anything but the game of cards.

"I tell you, sir!" exclaimed Agnes, "that your attentions are offensive. Will you force me to insult you?"

"Oh! that's all put on, my subtle beauty. You are not alarmed by these delicate endearments. Give me a kiss!"

"Calvin Van de Lear, you are a hypocrite. The gentleman you have slandered to win my favor is as dear to me as you are repulsive. Nay, sir, I'll teach you good behavior!"

She threw open the folding-doors just as Duff Salter had come to a terrific sneeze.

"Jericho! Jericho! Jer-rick-co-o-o-oh!"

Looking in with bold suavity, Calvin Van de Lear made a bow and took up his hat.

"Good-night," he said, "most reputable ladies, two of a kind!"

"I think," wrote Duff Salter frigidly, as the young man slammed the door behind him, "that we'll make a pitcher of port sangaree and have a little glass before we go to bed. We will all three take a hand at cards. What shall we play?"

"Euchre—cut-throat!" exclaimed Podge Byerly, rather explosively.

Duff Salter seemed to have heard this, for, with his grave eyes bent on Agnes, he echoed, dubiously:

"Cut-throat!"

With an impatient motion Podge Byerly snatched at the cards, and they fell to the floor.

Agnes burst into tears and left the room.

"Upon my word," thought Podge Byerly, "I believe this old gray rat is a detective officer!"

There was a shadow over the best residence on Queen Street.

Anonymous letters continued to come in almost by every mail, making charges and imputations upon Agnes, and frequently connecting Podge Byerly with her.

Terrible epithets—such as "Murderess!" "A second Mrs. Chapman!" "Jezebel," etc.—were employed in these letters.

Many of them were written by female hands or in very delicate male chirography, as if men who wrote like women had their natures.

There was one woman's handwriting the girls learned to identify, and she wrote more often than any—more beautifully in the writing, more shameless in the meaning, as if, with the nethermost experience in sensuality, she was prepared to subtletize it and be the universal accuser of her sex.

"What fiends must surround us!" exclaimed Agnes. "There must be a punishment deeper than any for the writers of anonymous letters. A murderer strikes the vital spot but once. Here every commandment is broken in the cowardly secret letter. False witness, the stab, illicit joy, covetousness, dishonor of father and mother, and defamation of God's image in the heart, are all committed in these loathsome letters."

"Yes," added Podge Byerly, "the woman who writes anonymous letters, I think, will have a cancer, or wart on her eye, or marry a bow-legged man. The resurrectionists will get her body, and the primary class in the other world will play whip-top with the rest of her."

Agnes and Podge went to church prayer-meeting the night following Calvin Van de Lear's repulse at their dwelling, and Mr. Duff Salter gave each of them an arm.

Old Mr. Van de Lear led the exercises, and, after several persons had publicly prayed by the direction of the venerable pastor, Calvin Van de Lear, of his own motion and as a matter of course, took the floor and launched into a florid supplication almost too elegant to be extempore.

As he continued, Podge Byerly, looking through her fingers, saw a handsome, high-colored woman at Calvin's side, stealing glances at Agnes Wilt.

It was the wife of Calvin Van de Lear's brother, Knox—a blonde of large, innocent eyes, who usually came with Calvin to the church.

While Podge noticed this inquisitive or stray glance, she became conscious that something in the prayer was directing the attention of the whole meeting to their pew.

People turned about, and, with startled or bold looks, observed Agnes Wilt, whose head was bowed and her veil down.

The voice of Calvin Van de Lear sounded high and meaningful as Podge caught these sentences:

"Lord, smite the wicked and unjust as thou smotest Sapphira by the side of Ananias. We find her now in the mask of beauty, again of humility, even, O Lord, of religion, leading the souls of men down to death and hell. Thou knowest who stand before Thee to do lip service. All hearts are

open to Thee. If there be any here who have deceived Thine elect by covetousness, or adultery, or *murder*, Lord, make bare Thine arm!"

The rest of the sentence was lost in the terrific series of sneezes from Duff Salter, who had taken too big a pinch of snuff and forgot himself, so as to nearly lift the roof off the little old brick church with his deeply accentuated,

"Jer-i-cho-whoe!"

Even old Silas Van de Lear looked over the top of the pulpit and smiled, but, luckily, Duff Salter could hardly hear his own sneezes.

As they left the church Agnes put down her veil, and trembled under the stare of a hundred investigating critics.

When they were in the street, Podge Byerly remarked:

"Oh! that we had a man to resent such meanness as that. I think that those who address God with slant arrows to wound others, as is often done at prayer-meeting, will stand in perdition beside the writers of anonymous letters."

"They are driving me to the last point," said Agnes. "I can go to church no more. When will they get between me and heaven? Yet the Lord's will be done."

CHAPTER V.

THE GHOST.

Spring broke on the snug little suburb, and buds and birds fulfilled their appointments on the boughs of willows, ailanthuses, lindens, and maples. Some peach-trees in the back yard of the Zane House hastened to put on their pink scarves and bonnets, and the boys said that an old sucker of Penn's Treaty Elm down in a ship-yard was fresh and blithsome as a second wife. In the hearts and views of living people, too, spring brought a budding of youthfulness and a gush of sap. Duff Salter acknowledged it as he looked in Podge Byerly's blue eyes and felt her hands as they wrapped his scarf around him, or buttoned his gloves. Whispering, and without the tablets this time, he articulated:

"Happy for you, Mischief, that I am not young as these trees!"

"We'll have you set out!" screamed Podge, "like a piece of hale old willow, and you'll grow again!"

Duff Salter frequently walked almost to her school with Podge Byerly, which was far down in the old city. They seldom took the general cut through Maiden and Laurel Streets to Second, but kept down the river bank by Beach Street, to see the ship-yards and hear the pounding of rivets and the merry adzes ringing, and see youngsters and old women gathering chips, while the sails on the broad river came up on wind and tide as if to shatter the pier-heads ere they bounded off.

In the afternoons Duff Salter sometimes called on Rev. Silas Van de Lear, who had great expectations that Duff would build them a much-required new church, with the highest spire in Kensington.

"Here, Brother Salter, is an historic spot," wrote the good old man. "I shouldn't object to a spire on my church, with the figure of William Penn on the summit. Friend William and his sons always did well by our sect."

"Is it an established fact that he treated with the Indians in Kensington?" asked Duff Salter, on his ivory tablets.

"Indisputable! Friend Penn took Thomas Fairman's house at Shackamaxon—otherwise Eel-Hole—and in this pleasant springtime, April 4, 1683, he met King Tammany under the forest elm, with the savage people in half-moon circles, looking at the healthy-fed and business-like Quaker. There Tammany and his Indian allies surrendered all the land between the Pennypack and Neshaminy."

"A Tammany haul!" interrupted young Calvin Van de Lear, rather idiotically. "What did the shrewd William give?"

"Guns, scissors, knives, tongs, hoes, and Indian money, and gew-gaws—not much. Philadelphia had no foundation then, and Shackamaxon was an established place. We are the Knickerbockers here in Kensington."

"An honest Quaker would not build a spire," wrote Duff Salter, with a grim smile.

Duff Salter was well known to the gossips of Kensington as a fabulously rich man, who had spent his youth partly in this district, and was of Kensington parentage, but had roved away to Mexico as a sailor boy, or clerk, or passenger, and refusing to return, had become a mule-driver in the mines of cinnabar, and there had remained for years in nearly heathen solitude, until once he arrived overland in Arkansas with a train from Chihuahua, the whole of it, as was said, laden with silver treasure, and his own property. He had been disappointed in love, and had no one to leave

his riches to. This was the story told by Reverend Silas Van de Lear.

The people of Kensington were less concerned with the truth of this tale than with the future intentions of the visitor.

"How long he tarries in Zane's homestead!" said the people that spring. "Hasn't he settled that estate yet?"

"It never will be settled if he can help it," said public Echo, "as long as there are two fine young women there, and one of them so fascinating over men!"

Indeed, Duff Salter received letters, anonymous, of course—the anonymous letter was then the suburban press—admonishing him to beware of his siren hostess.

"She has ruined two men," said the elegant female handwriting before observed. *"You must want to be the subject of a coroner's inquest. That house is bloody and haunted, rich Mr. Duff Salter! Beware of Lady Agnes, the murderess! Beware, too, of her accomplice, the insinuating little Byerly!"*

Duff Salter walked out one day to make the tour of Kensington. He passed out the agreeable old Frankford road, with its wayside taverns, and hay carts, and passing omnibuses, and occasional old farm-like houses, interspersed with newer residences of a city character, and he strolled far up Cohocksink Creek till it meandered through billowy fields of green, and skirted the edges of woods, and all the way was followed by a path made by truant boys. Sitting down by a spring that gushed up at the foot of a great sycamore tree, the grandly bearded traveller, all flushed with the roses of exercise, made no unpleasing picture of a Pan waiting for Echo by appointment, or holding talk with the grazing goats of the poor on the open fields around him.

"How changed!" spoke the traveller aloud. "I have caught fishes all along this brook, and waded up its bed in summer to cool my feet. The girl was beside me whose slender feet in innocent exposure were placed by mine to shame their coarser mould. We thought we were in love, or as near it as are the outskirts to some throbbing town partly instinctive with a coming civic destiny. Alas! the little brook that once ran unvexed to the river, freshening green marshes at its outlet, has become a sewer, discolored with dyes of factories, and closed around by tenements and hovels till its purer life is over. My playmate, too, flowed on to womanhood, till the denser social conditions shut her in; she mingled the pure current of her life with another more turgid, and dull-eyed children, like houses of the suburbs, are builded on her bosom. I am alone, like this old tree, beside the spring where once I was a sapling, and still, like its waters, youth wells and wells, and keeps us yet both green in root. Come back, O Love! and freshen me, and, like a rill, flow down my closing years!"

Duff Salter's shoulder was touched as he ceased to speak, and he found young Calvin Van de Lear behind him.

"I have followed you out to the country," said the young man, howling in the elder's ear, "because I wanted to talk to you aloud, as I couldn't do in Kensington."

Duff Salter drew his storied ivory tablets on the divinity student, and said, crisply, "Write!"

"No, old man, that's not my style. It's too slow. Besides, it admits of nothing impressive being said, and I want to convince you."

"Jericho! Jericho!" sneezed Duff Salter. "Young man, if you stun my ear that way a third time I'll knock you down. I'm deaf, it's true, but I'm not a hallooing scale to try your lungs on. If you won't write, we can't talk."

With impatience, yet smiling, Calvin Van de Lear wrote on the tablets,

"Have you seen the ghost?"

"Ghost?"

"Yes, the ghosts of the murdered men!"

"I never saw a ghost of anything in my life. What men?"

"William Zane and Sayler Rainey."

"Who has seen them?"

"Several people. Some say it's but one that has been seen. Zane's ghost walks, anyway, in Kensington."

"What for?"

"The fishwomen and other superstitious people say, because their murderers have not been punished."

"And the murderers are—"

"Those who survived and profited by the murder, of course?"

"Jer-ri-choo-woo!" exploded Duff Salter. "Young man," he wrote deliberately, "you have an idle tongue."

"Friend Salter, you are blind as well as deaf. Do you know Miss Podge Byerly?"

"No. Do you?"

"She's common! Agnes Wilt uses her as a stool-pigeon. She fetches, and carries, and flies by night. One of the school directors shoved her on the public schools for intimate considerations. Perhaps you'll see him about the house if you look sharp and late some night."

"Jer-rich-co! Jericho!"

Duff Salter was decidedly red in the face, and his grave gray eyes looked both fierce and convicted. He *had* seen a school director visiting the house, but thought it natural enough that he should take a kind interest in one of the youthful and pretty teachers. The deaf man returned to his pencil and tablets.

"Do you know, Mr. Van de Lear, that what you are saying is indictable language? It would have exposed you to death where I have lived."

The young man tossed his head recklessly. Duff Salter now saw that his usually sallow face was flushed up to the roots of his long dry hair and almost colorless whiskers, as if he had been drinking liquors. Forgetting to use the tablets, Calvin spoke aloud, but not in as high a key as formerly:

"Mr. Salter, Agnes Wilt has no heart. She was a step-niece of the late Mrs. Zane—her brother's daughter. The girl's father was a poor professional man, and died soon after his child was born, followed at no great distance to the grave by his widow. While a child, Agnes was cold and subtle. She professed to love me—that was the understanding in our childhood. She has forgotten me as she has forgotten many other men. But she is beautiful, and I want to marry her. You can help me."

"What do you want with a cold and calculating woman?" wrote Duff Salter stiffly. "What do you want particularly with such a dangerous woman—a demon, as you indicate?"

"I want to save her soul, and retrieve her from wickedness. Upon my word, old man, that's my only game. You see, to effect that object would set me up at once with the church people. I'm told that a little objection to my prospects in the governor's church begins to break out. If I can marry Agnes Wilt, she will recover her position in Kensington, and make me more welcome in families. I don't mind telling you that I have been a little gay."

"That's nothing," wrote Duff Salter smilingly. "So were the sons of Eli."

"Correct!" retorted Calvin. "I need a taming down, and only matrimony can do it. Now, with your aid I can manage it. Miss Wilt does not fancy me. She can be made to do so, however, by two causes."

"And they are—"

"Her fears and her avarice. I propose to bring this murder close home to her. If not a principal in it, she is an undoubted accessory after the fact. Andrew Zane paid her a visit the night the dead bodies were discovered in the river."

"You are sure of this?"

"Perfectly. I have had a detective on his track; too late to arrest the rascal, but the identity of a sailor man who penetrated into the house by the coal-hole is established by the discovery of the clothing he exchanged for that disguise—it was Andrew Zane. Concealment of that fact from the law will make her an accessory."

"Jericho! Jericho!" sneezed Duff Salter, but with a pale face, and said:

"That fact established would be serious; but it would be a gratuitous and vile act for you, who profess to love her."

"It is love that prompts me—love and pain! A divine anger, I may call it. I propose to make myself her rescuer afterward, and establish myself in her gratitude and confidence. You are to help me do this by watching the house from the inside."

"Dishonorable!"

"You were the friend of William Zane, the murdered man. Every obligation of friendship impels you to discover his murderer. You are rich; lend me money to continue my investigations. I know this is a cool proposition; but it is better than spending it on churches."

"Very well," wrote Duff Salter, "as the late Mr. Zane's executor, I will spend any proper sum of money to inflict retribution upon his injurers. I will watch the house."

They went home through Palmer Street, on which stood the little brick church—the street said to be occasionally haunted by Governor Anthony Palmer's phantom coach and four, which was pursued by his twenty-one children in plush breeches and Panama hats, crying, "Water lots! water fronts! To let! to lease!"

As Duff Salter entered the house he saw the school director indicated by Calvin Van de Lear sitting in the parlor with Podge Byerly. For the first time Duff Salter noticed that they looked

both intimate and confused. He tried to reason himself out of this suspicion. "Pshaw," he said; "it was my uncharitable imagination. I'll go back, as if to get something, and look more carefully."

As the deaf man reopened the parlor-door he saw the school director making a motion as if to embrace Podge, who was full of blushes and appearing to shrink away.

"There's no imagination about that," thought Duff Salter. "If I could only hear well enough my ears might counsel me."

He felt dejected, and his suspicions colored everything—a most deplorable state of mind for a gentleman. Agnes, too, looked guilty, as he thought, and hardly addressed a smile to him as he passed up to his room.

Duff Salter put on his slippers, lighted his gas, drew the curtains down and set the door ajar, for in the increasing warmth of spring his grate fire was almost an infliction.

"I have not been wise nor just," he said to himself. "My pleasing reception in this house, and feminine arts, have altogether obliterated my great duty, which was to avenge my friend. Yes, suspicion was my duty. I should have been suspicious from the first. Even this vicious young Van de Lear, shallow as he is, becomes my unconscious accuser. He says, with truth, that every obligation of friendship impels me to discover the murderers of William Zane."

Duff Salter arose, in the warmth of his feelings, and paced up and down the floor.

"Ah, William Zane," he said, "how does thy image come back to me! I was the only friend he would permit. In pride of will and solitary purpose he was the greatest of all. Rough, unpolished, a poor scholar, but full of energy, he desired nothing but he believed it his. He desired me to be his friend, and I could not have resisted if I would. He made me go with him even on his truant expeditions, and carry his game bag along the banks of the Tacony, or up the marshes of Rancocus. Yet it was a happy servitude; for beneath his impetuous mastery was a soul of devotion. He loved like Jove, and permitted no interposition in his flame; his dogmatism and force were barbarous, but he gave like a child and fought like a lion. I saw him last as he was about to enter on business, in the twenty-first year of his age, an anxious young man with black hair in natural ringlets, a pale brow, gray eyes wide apart, and a narrow but wilful chin. He was ever on pivot, ready to spring. And murdered!"

Duff Salter looked at the door standing ajar, attracted there by some movement, or light, or shadow, and the very image he was describing met his gaze. There were the black ringlets, the pale forehead, the anxious yet wilful expression, and the years of youthful manhood. It was nothing in this world if not William Zane!

Duff Salter felt paralyzed for a minute, as the blood flowed back to his heart, and a sense of fright overcame him. Then he moved forward on tip-toe, as if the image might dissolve. It did dissolve as he advanced; with a tripping motion it receded and left a naked space. In the darkness of the stairway it absorbed itself, and the deaf man grasped the balustrade where it had stood, and by his trembling shook the rails violently. He then staggered back to his mantel, first bolting the door, as if instinctively, and swallowed a draught of brandy from a medicinal bottle there.

"There is a ghost abroad!" exclaimed Duff Salter with a shudder. "I have seen it."

He turned the gas on very brightly, so as to soothe his fears with companionable light. Then, while the perspiration stood upon his forehead, Duff Salter sat down to think.

"Why does it haunt me?" he said. "Yet whom but me should it haunt?—the executor of my friend, intrusted with his dying wishes, bound to him by ancient ties, and recreant to the high duty of punishing his murderers? The ghost of William Zane admonishes me that there can be no repose for my spirit until I take in hand the work of vengeance. Yes, if women have been accessory to that murder, they shall not be spared. Miss Agnes is under surveillance; let her be blameless, or beware!"

CHAPTER VI.

ENCOMPASSED.

"He looks scared out of last year's growth," remarked Podge Byerly when Duff Salter came downstairs next day.

"Happy for him, dear, he is not able to hear what is around him in this place!" exclaimed Agnes aloud.

They always talked freely before their guest, and he could scarcely be alarmed even by an explosion.

Duff wrote on his tablets during breakfast:

"I must employ a smart man to do errands for me, and rid me of some of the burdens of this deafness. Do you know of any one?"

"A mere laborer?" inquired Agnes.

"Well, an old-fashioned, still-mouthed fellow like myself—one who can understand my dumb motions."

Agnes shook her head.

Said Duff Salter to himself:

"She don't want me to find such an one, I guess." Then, with the tablets again, he added, "It's necessary for me to hunt a man at once, and keep him here on the premises, close by me. I have almost finished up this work of auditing and clearing the estate. I intend now to pay some attention to the tragedy, accident, or whatever it was, that led to Mr. Zane's cutting off. You will second me warmly in this, I am sure."

Agnes turned pale, and felt the executor's eyes upon her.

Podge Byerly was pale too.

Duff Salter did not give them any opportunity to recover composure.

"To leave the settlement of this estate with such a cloud upon it would be false to my trust, to my great friend's memory, and, I may add, to all here. There is a mystery somewhere which has not been pierced. It is very probably a domestic entanglement. I shall expect you (to Agnes), and you, too," turning to Podge, "to be absolutely frank with me. Miss Agnes, have you seen Andrew Zane since his father's body was brought into this house!"

Agnes looked around helplessly and uncertain. She took the tablets to write a reply. Something seemed to arise in her mind to prevent the intention. She burst into tears and left the table.

"Ha!" thought Duff Salter grimly, "there will be no confession there. Then, little Miss Byerly, I will try to throw off its guard thy saucy perversity; for surely these two women understand each other."

After breakfast he followed Podge Byerly down Queen Street and through Beach, and came up with her as she went out of Kensington to the Delaware water-front about the old Northern Liberties district.

Duff bowed with a little of diffidence amid all his gravity, and sneezed as if to hide it:

"Jericho!—Miss Podge, see the time—eight o'clock, and an hour before school. Let us go look at the river."

They walked out on the wharf, and were wholly concealed from shore by piles of cord-wood and staves.

"I like to get off here, away from listeners, where I need not be bellowed at and tire out well-meaning lungs. Now—Jericho! Jericho!" he sneezed, without any sort of meaning. "Miss Podge," said Duff Salter, "if you look directly into my eyes and articulate distinctly, I can hear all you say without raising your voice higher than usual. How much money do you get for school teaching?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Is that all? What do you do with it?"

"Support my mother and brother."

"And yourself also?"

"Oh! yes."

"She can't do it!" exclaimed Duff Salter inwardly; "that director comes in the case. Miss Podge, how old is your brother?"

"Twenty-four. He's my junior," she said archly. "I'm old."

"Why do you support a man twenty-four years old? Did he meet with an accident?"

"He was taken sick, and will never be well," answered Podge warily.

"Excuse me!" exclaimed Duff Salter, "was it constitutional disease? You know I am interested."

"No, sir. He was misled. A woman, much older than himself, infatuated him while a boy, and he married her, and she broke his health and ruined him."

Podge's eyes fell for the first time.

Duff Salter grasped her hand.

"And you tell me!" he exclaimed, "that you keep three grown people on five hundred dollars a year? Don't you get help from any other quarter?"

"Agnes has given me board for a hundred dollars a year," said Podge, "but times have changed with her now, and money is scarce. She would take other boarders, but public opinion is against her on all sides. It's against me too. But for love we would have separated long ago."

Podge's tears came.

"What right had you," exclaimed Duff Salter, rather angrily, "to maintain a whole family on the servitude of your young body, wearing its roundness down to bone, exciting your nervous system, and inviting premature age upon a nature created for a longer girlhood, and for the solace of love?"

She did not feel the anger in his tones; it seemed like protection, for which she had hungered.

"Why, sir, all women must support their poor kin."

"Men don't do it!" exclaimed Duff Salter, pushing aside his gray apron of beard to see her more distinctly. "Did that brother who rushed in vicious precocity to maintain another and a wicked woman ever think of relieving you from hard labor?"

"He never could be anything less to me than brother!" exclaimed Podge; "but, Mr. Salter, if that was only all I had to trouble me! Oh, sir, work is occupation, but work harassed with care for others becomes unreal. I cannot sleep, thinking for Agnes. I cannot teach, my head throbs so. That river, so cold and impure, going along by the wharves, seems to suck and plash all day in my ears, as we see and hear it now. At my desk I seem to see those low shores and woods and marshes, on the other side, and the chatter of children, going all day, laps and eddies up like dirty waves between me and that indistinct boundary. I am floating on the river current, drowning as I feel, reaching out for nothing, for nothing is there. All day long it is so. I was the best teacher in my rank, with certainty of promotion. I feel that I am losing confidence. It is the river, the river, and has been so since it gave up those dead bodies to bring us only ghosts and desolation."

"It was a faithful witness," spoke Duff Salter, still harsh, as if under an inner influence. "Yes, a boy—a little boy such as you teach at school—had the strength to break the solid shield of ice under which the river held up the dead and bring the murder out. Do you ever think of that as you hear a spectral river surge and buoy upward, whose waves are made by children's murmurs—innocent children haunting the guilty?"

"Do you mean me, Mr. Salter? Nothing haunts me but care."

"I have been haunted by a ghost," continued Duff Salter. "Yes, the ghost of my playmate has come to my threshold and peeped on me sitting there inattentive to his right to vengeance. We shall all be haunted till we give our evidence for the dead. No rest will come till that is done."

"I must go," cried Podge Byerly. "You terrify me."

"Tell me," asked Duff Salter in a low tone, "has Andrew Zane been seen by Agnes Wilt since he escaped?"

"Don't ask me."

"Tell me, and I will give you a sum of money which shall get you rest for years. Open your mind to me, and I will send you to Europe. Your brother shall be my brother; your invalid mother will receive abundant care. I will even ask you to love me!"

An instant's blushes overspread Podge's worn, pale face, and an expression of restful joy. Then recurring indignation made her pale again to the very roots of her golden hair.

"Betray my friend!" she exclaimed. "Never, till she will give me leave."

"I have lost my confidence in you both," said Duff Salter coldly, releasing Podge's arm. "You have been so indifferent in the face of this crime and public opinion as to receive your lovers in the very parlor where my dead friend lay. Agnes has admitted it by silence. I have seen your lover releasing you from his arms. Miss Byerly, I thought you artless, even in your arts, and only the dupe, perhaps, of a stronger woman. I hoped that you were pure. You have made me a man of suspicion and indifference again." His face grew graver, yet unbelieving and hard.

Podge fled from his side with alarm; he saw her handkerchief staunching her tears, and people watching her as she nearly ran along the sidewalk.

"Jericho! Jerichoo! Jer—"

Duff Salter did not finish the sneeze, but with a long face called for a boat and rower to take him across to Treaty Island.

Podge arrived at school just as the bell was ringing, and, still in nervousness and tears, took her place in her division while the Bible was read. She saw the principal's eye upon her as she took off her bonnet and moistened her face, and the boys looked up a minute or two inquiringly, but soon relapsed to their individual selfishness. When the glass sashes dividing the rooms were closed and the recitations began, the lapping sound of the river started anew. A film grew on her eyes, and in it appeared the distant Jersey and island shore, with the uncertain boundary of point, cove, and marsh, like a misty cold line, cheerless and void of life or color, as it was every day, yet standing there as if it merely came of right and was the river's true border, and was not to be hated as such. Podge strained to look through the illusion, and walked down the aisle once, where it seemed to be, and touched the plaster of the wall. She had hardly receded when it reappeared, and all between it and her mind was merely empty river, wallowing and lapping and sucking and subsiding, as if around submerged piers, or wave was relieving wave from the

weight of floating things like rafts, or logs, or buoys, or bodies. Into this wide waste of muddy ripples every sound in the school-room swam, and also sights and colors, till between her eyelash and that filmy distant margin nothing existed but a freshet, alive yet with nothing, eddying around with purposeless power, and still moving onward with an under force. The open book in her hand appeared like a great white wharf, or pier, covered with lime and coal in spots and places, and pushed forward into this hissing, rippling, exclaiming deluge, which washed its base and spread beyond. Podge could barely read a question in the book, and the sound of her voice was like gravel or sand pushed off the wharf into the river and swallowed there. She thought she heard an answer in a muddy tone and gave the question out again, and there seemed to be laughter, as if the waters, or what was drowned in them, chuckled and purred, going along. She raised her eyes above the laughers, and there the boundary line of Jersey stood defined, and all in front of it was the drifting Delaware. It seemed to her that boys were darting to and fro and swapping seats, and one boy had thrown a handful of beans. She walked down the aisle as if into water, wading through pools and waves of boys, who plashed and gurgled around her. She walked back again, and a surf of boys was thrown at her feet. The waters rose and licked and spilled and flowed onward again. Podge felt a sense of strangling, as if going down, in a hollow gulf of resounding wave, and shouted:

"Help! Save me! Save me!"

She heard a voice like the principal teacher's, say in a lapping, watery way, "Miss Byerly, what is the meaning of this? Your division is in disorder. Nobody has recited. Unless you are ill I must suspend you and call another teacher here."

"Help! I'm floating off upon the river. Save me! I drown! I drown!"

The scholars were all up and excited. The principal motioned another lady teacher to come, and laid Podge's head in the other's lap.

"Is it brain fever?" he asked.

"She has been under great excitement," Podge heard the other lady say. "The Zane murder occurred in her family. Last night, I have been told, Miss Byerly refused Mr. Bunn, our principal school director, and a man of large means, who had long been in love with her."

"Where is he?" said the principal.

"I heard it from his sister," said the other lady. "Mortified at her refusal, because confident that she would accept him, he sailed this day for Europe."

These were the last words Podge Byerly heard. Then it seemed that the waters closed over her head.

Agnes, left alone in the homestead, had a few days of perfect relief, except from anonymous letters and newspaper clippings delivered by mail. That refined handwriting which had steadily poured out the venom of some concealed hostility survived all other correspondence—delicate as the graceful circles of the tiniest fish-hooks whose points and barbs enter deepest in the flesh.

"Whom can this creature be?" asked Agnes, bringing up her strong mind from its trouble. "I can have made no such bitter enemy by any act of mine. A man would hardly pursue so light a purpose with such stability. There is more than jealousy in it; it is sincere hate, drawn, I should think, from a deep social or mental resentment, and enraged because I do not sink under my troubles. Yes, this must be a woman who believes me innocent but wishes my ruin. Some one, perhaps, who is sinning unsuspected, and, in her envy of another and purer one, gloats in the scandal which does not justly stain me. The anonymous letter," thought Agnes, "is a malignant form of conscience, after all!"

But life, as it was growing to be in the Zane house, was hardly worth living. Podge Byerly was broken down and dangerously ill at her mother's little house. All of Agnes's callers had dropped off, and she felt that she could no longer worship, except as a show, at Van de Lear's church; but this deprivation only deepened Agnes's natural devotion. Duff Salter saw her once, and oftener heard her praying, as the strong wail of it ascending through the house pierced even his ears.

"That woman," said Duff, "is wonderfully armed; with beauty, courage, mystery, witchery, she might almost deceive a God."

The theory that the house was haunted confirmed the other theory that a crime rested upon its inmates.

"Why should there be a ghost unless there had been a murder?" asked the average gossip and Fishtowner, to whom the marvellous was certain and the real to be inferred from it. Duff Salter believed in the ghost, as Agnes was satisfied; he had become unsocial and suspicious in look, and after two or three days of absence from the house, succeeding Podge's disappearance, entered it with his new servant.

Agnes did not see the servant at all for some days, though knowing that he had come. The cook said he was an accommodating man, ready to help her at anything, and of no "airs." He entered and went, the cook said, by the back gate, always wiped his feet at the door, and appeared like a

person of not much "bringing up." One day Agnes had to descend to the kitchen, and there she saw a strange man eating with the cook; a rough person with a head of dark red hair and grayish red beard all round his mouth and under his chin. She observed that he was one-legged, and used a common wooden crutch on the side of the wooden leg. Two long scars covered his face, and one shaggy eyebrow was higher than the other.

"I axes your pardon," said the man; "me and cook takes our snack when we can, mum."

A day or two after Agnes passed the same man again at the landing on the stairway. He bowed, and said in his Scotch or Irish dialect,

"God bless ye, mum!"

Agnes thought to herself that she had not given the man credit for a certain rough grace which she now perceived, and as she turned back to look at him he was looking at her with a fixed, incomprehensible expression.

"Am I being watched?" thought Agnes.

One day, in early June, as Agnes entered the parlor, she found Reverend Silas Van de Lear there. At the sight of this good old man, the patriarch of Kensington, by whom she had been baptized and received into the communion, Agnes Wilt felt strongly moved, the more that in his eyes was a regard of sympathy just a little touched with doubt.

"My daughter!" exclaimed the old man, in his clear, practised articulation, "you are daily in my prayers!"

The tears came to Agnes, and as she attempted to wipe them away the good old gentleman drew her head to his shoulder.

"I cannot let myself think any evil of you, dear sister, in God's chastising providence," said the clergyman. "Among the angels, in the land that is awaiting me, I had expected to see the beautiful face which has so often encouraged my preaching, and looked up at me from Sabbath-school and church. You do not come to our meetings any more. My dear, let us pray together in your affliction."

The old man knelt in the parlor and raised his voice in prayer—a clear, considerate, judicial, sincere prayer, such as age and long authority gave him the right to address to heaven. He was not unacquainted with sorrow himself; his children had given him much concern, and even anguish, and in Calvin was his last hope. A thread of wicked commonplace ran through them all; his sterling nature in their composition was lost like a grain of gold in a mass of alloy. They had nothing ideal, no reverence, no sense of delicacy. Taking to his arms a face and form that pleased him, the minister had not ingrafted upon it one babe of any divinity; that coarser matrix received the sacred flame as mere mud extinguishes the lightning. He fell into this reminiscence of personal disappointment unwittingly, as in the process of his prayer he strove to comfort Agnes. The moment he did so the cold magistracy of the prayer ceased, and his voice began to tremble, and there ran between the ecclesiastic and his parishioner the electric spark of mutual grief and understanding.

The old man hesitated, and became choked with emotion.

As he stopped, and the pause was prolonged, Agnes herself, by a powerful inner impulsion, took up the prayer aloud, and carried it along like inspiration. She was not of the strong-minded type of women, rather of the wholly loving; but the deep afflictions of the past few months, working down into the crevices and cells of her nature, had struck the impervious bed of piety, and so deluged it with sorrow and the lonely sense of helplessness that now a cry like an appeal to judgment broke from her, not despair nor accusation, but an appeal to the very equity of God.

It arose so frankly and in such majesty, finding its own aptest words by its unconscious instinct, that the aged minister was presently aware of a preternatural power at his side. Was this woman a witch, genius, demon, or the very priestess of God, he asked.

The solemn prayer ranged into his own experience by that touch of nature which unlocks the secret spring of all, being true unto its own deep needs. The minister was swept along in the resistless current of the prayer, and listened as if he were the penitent and she the priest. As the petition died away in Agnes's physical exhaustion, the venerable man thought to himself:

"When Jacob wrestled all night at Peniel, his angel must have been a woman like this; for she has power with God and with men!"

CHAPTER VII.

FOCUS.

Calvin Van de Lear had been up-stairs with Duff Salter, and on his way out had heard the voice of Agnes Wilt praying. He slipped into the back parlor and listened at the crevice of the folding-door until his father had given the pastoral benediction and departed. Then with cool effrontery Calvin

walked into the front parlor, where Agnes was sitting by the slats of the nearly darkened window.

"Pardon me, Agnes," he said. "I was calling on the deaf old gentleman up-stairs, and perceiving that devotions were being conducted here, stopped that I might not interrupt them."

Calvin's commonplace nature had hardly been dazed by Agnes's prayer. He was only confirmed in the idea that she was a woman of genius, and would take half the work of a pastor off his hands. In the light of both desire and convenience she had, therefore, appreciated in his eyes. To marry her, become the proprietor of her snug home and ravishing person, and send her off to pray with the sick and sup with the older women of the flock, seemed to him such a comfortable consummation as to have Heaven's especial approval. Thus do we deceive ourselves when the spirit of God has departed from us, even in youth, and construe our dreams of selfishness to be glimmerings of a purer life.

Calvin was precocious in assurance, because, in addition to being unprincipled, he was in a manner ordained by election and birthright to rule over Kensington. His father had been one of those strong-willed, clear-visioned, intelligent young Eastern divinity students who brought to a place of more voluptuous and easy burgher society the secular vigor of New England pastors. Being always superior and always sincere, his rule had been ungrudgingly accepted. Another generation, at middle age, found him over them as he had been over their parents—a righteous, intrepid Protestant priest, good at denunciation, counsel, humor, or sympathy. The elders and deacons never thought of objecting to anything after he had insisted upon it, and in this spirit the whole church had heard submissively that Calvin Van de Lear was to be their next pastor. This, of course, was conditional upon his behavior, and all knew that his father would be the last man to impose an injurious person on the church; they had little idea that "Cal." Van de Lear was devout, but took the old man's word that grace grew more and more in the sons of the Elect, and the young man had already professed "conviction," and voluntarily been received into the church. There he assumed, like an heir-apparent, the vicarship of the congregation, and it rather delighted his father that his son so promptly and complacently took direction of things, made his quasi pastoral rounds, led prayer-meetings, and exhorted Sunday-schools and missions. A priest knows the heart of his son no more than a king, and is less suspicious of him. The king's son may rebel from deferred expectation; the priest's son can hardly conspire against his father's pulpit. In the minister's family the line between the world and the faith is a wavering one; religion becomes a matter of course, and yet is without the mystery of religion as elsewhere, so that wife and sons regard ecclesiastical ambition as meritorious, whether the heart be in it piously or profanely. Calvin Van de Lear was in the church fold of his own accord, and his father could no more read that son's heart than any other member's. Indeed, the good old man was especially obtuse in the son's case, from his partiality, and thus grew up together on the same root the flower of piety and hypocrisy, the tree and the sucker.

"Calvin," replied Agnes, "I do not object to your necessary visits here. Your father is very dear to me."

"But can't I return to the subject we last talked of?" asked the young man, shrewdly.

"No. That is positively forbidden."

"Agnes," continued Calvin, "you must know I love you!"

Agnes sank to her seat again with a look of resignation.

"Calvin," she said, "this is not the time. I am not the person for such remarks. I have just risen from my knees; my eyes are not in this world."

"You will be turning nun if this continues."

"I am in God's hands," said Agnes. "Yet the hour is dark with me."

"Agnes, let me lift some of your burden upon myself. You don't hate me?"

"No. I wish you every happiness, Calvin."

"Is there nothing you long for—nothing earthly and within the compass of possibility?"

"Yes, yes!" Agnes arose and walked across the floor almost unconsciously, with the palms of her hands held high together above her head. As she walked to and fro the theological student perceived a change so extraordinary in her appearance since his last visit that he measured her in his cool, worldly gaze as a butcher would compute the weight of a cow on chance reckoning.

"What is it, dear Agnes?"

He spoke with a softness of tone little in keeping with his unfeeling, vigilant face.

"Oh, give me love! Now, if ever, it is love! Love only, that can lift me up and cleanse my soul!"

"Love lies everywhere around you," said the young man. "You trample it under your feet. My heart—many hearts—have felt the cruel treatment. Agnes, *you* must love also."

"I try to do so," she exclaimed, "but it is not the perfect love that casteth out fear! God knows I wish it was."

Her eyes glanced down, and a blush, sudden and deep, spread over her features. The young man

lost nothing of all this, but with alert analysis took every expression and action in.

"May I become your friend if greater need arises, Agnes? Do not repulse me. At the worst—I swear it!—I will be your instrument, your subject."

Agnes sat in the renewed pallor of profound fear. God, on whom she had but a moment before called, seemed to have withdrawn His face. Her black ringlets, smoothed upon her noble brow in wavy lines, gave her something of a Roman matron's look; her eyebrows, dark as the eyes beneath that now shrank back yet shone the larger, might have befitted an Eastern queen. Lips of unconscious invitation, and features produced in their wholeness which bore out a character too perfect not to have lived sometime in the realms of the great tragedies of life, made Agnes in her sorrow peerless yet.

"Go, Calvin!" she said, with an effort, her eyes still upon the floor; "if you would ever do me any aid, go now!"

As he passed into the passageway Calvin Van de Lear ran against a man with a crutch and a wooden leg, who looked at him from under a head of dark-red hair, and in a low voice cursed his awkwardness. The man bent to pick up his crutch, and Calvin observed that he was badly scarred and had one eyebrow higher than the other.

"Who are you, fellow?" asked Calvin, surprised.

"I'm Dogcatcher!" said the man. "When ye see me coming, take the other side of the street."

Calvin felt cowed, not so much at these mysterious words as at a hard, lowering look in the man's face, like especial dislike.

Agnes Wilt, still sitting in the parlor, saw the lame servant pass her door, going out, and he looked in and touched his hat, and paused a minute. Something graceful and wistful together seemed to be in his bearing and countenance.

"Anything for me?" asked Agnes.

"Nothing at all, mum! When there's nobody by to do a job, call on Mike."

He still seemed to tarry, and in Agnes's nervous condition a mysterious awe came over her; the man's gaze had a dread fascination that would not let her drop her eyes. As he passed out of sight and shut the street door behind him Agnes felt a fainting feeling, as if an apparition had looked in upon her and vanished—the apparition, if of anything, of him who had lain dead in that very parlor—the stern, enamored master of the house whose fatherhood in a fateful moment had turned to marital desire, and crushed the luck of all the race of Zanes.

Duff Salter was sitting at his writing table, with an open snuff-box before him, and, as Calvin Van de Lear entered his room, Duff took a large pinch of snuff and shoved the tablets forward. Calvin wrote on them a short sentence. As Duff Salter read it he started to his feet and sneezed with tremendous energy:

"Jeri-cho! Jericho! Jerry-cho-o-o!"

He read the sentence again, and whispered very low:

"Can't you be mistaken?"

"As sure as you sit there!" wrote Calvin Van de Lear.

"What is your inference?" wrote Duff Salter.

"Seduction!"

The two men looked at each other silently a few minutes, Duff Salter in profound astonishment, Calvin Van de Lear with an impudent smile.

"And so religious!" wrote Duff Salter.

"That is always incidental to the condition," answered Calvin.

"It must be a great blow to your affection?"

"Not at all," scrawled the minister's son. "It gives me a sure thing."

"Explain that!"

"I will throw the marriage mantle over her. She will need me now!"

"But you would not take a wife out of such a situation?"

"Oh! yes. She will be as handsome as ever, and only half as proud."

Duff Salter walked up and down the floor and stroked his long beard, and his usually benevolent expression was now dark and ominous, as if with gloom and anger. He spoke in a low tone as if not aware that he was heard, and his voice sounded as if he also did not hear it, and could not, therefore, give it pitch or intonation:

"Is this the best of old Kensington? This is the East! Where I dreamed that life was pure as the

water from the dear old pump that quenched my thirst in boyhood—not bitter as the alkali of the streams of the plains, nor turbid like the rills of the Arkansas. I pined to leave that life of renegades, half-breeds, squaws, and nomads to bathe my soul in the clear fountains of civilization,—to live where marriage was holy and piety sincere. I find, instead, mystery, blood, dishonor, hypocrisy, and shame. Let me go back! The rough frontier suits me best. If I can hear so much wickedness, deaf as I am, let me rather be an unsocial hermit in the woods, hearing nothing lower than thunder!"

As Duff Salter went to his dinner that day he looked at Agnes sitting in her place, so ill at ease, and said to himself,

"It is true."

Another matter of concern was on Mr. Duff Salter's mind—his serving-man. Such an unequal servant he had never seen—at times full of intelligence and snap, again as dumb as the bog-trotters of Ireland.

"What was the matter with you yesterday?" asked the deaf man of Mike one day.

"Me head, yer honor!"

"What ails your head?"

"Vare-tigo!"

"How came that?"

"Falling out of a ship!"

"What did you strike but water?"

"Wood; it nearly was the death of me. For weeks I was wid a cracked head and a cracked leg, yer honor!"

Still there was something evasive about the man, and he had as many moods and lights as a sea Proteus, ugly and common, like that batrachian order, but often enkindled and exceedingly satisfactory as a servant. He often forgot the place where he left off a certain day's work, and it had to be recalled to him. He was irregular, too, in going and coming, and was quite as likely to come when not wanted as not to be on the spot when due and expected. Duff Salter made up his mind that all the Eastern people must have bumped their heads and become subject to vertigo.

One day Duff Salter received this note:

"MR. DEAF DUFF: Excuse the familiarity, but the coincidence amuses me. I want you to make me a visit this evening after dark at my quarters in my brother, Knox Van de Lear's house, on Queen Street nearly opposite your place of lodging. If Mars crosses the orbit of Venus to-night, as I expect—there being signs of it in the milky way,—you will assist me in an observation that will stagger you on account of its results. Do not come out until dark, and ask at my brother's den for

CAL."

"I will not be in to-night, Mike," exclaimed Duff Salter a little while afterward. "You can have all the evening to yourself. Where do you spend your spare time?"

"On Traity Island," replied Mike with a grin. "I doesn't like Kinsington afther dark. They say it has ghosts, sur."

"But only the ghosts of they killed as they crossed from Treaty Island."

"Sure enough! But I've lost belafe in ghosts since they have become so common. Everybody belaves in thim in Kinsington, and I prefer to be exclusive and sciptical, yer honor."

"Didn't you tell me yesterday that you believed in spirits going and coming and hoping and waiting, and it gave you great comfort?"

"Did I, sur? I forgit it inthirely. It must have been a bad day for my vartigo."

Duff Salter looked at his man long and earnestly, and from head to foot, and the inspection appeared to please him.

"Mike," he said, in his loud, deafish voice, "I am going to cure you of your vertigo."

"Whin, dear Mister Salter."

"Perhaps to-morrow," remarked Duff Salter significantly. "I shall have a man here who will either confer it on you permanently or cure you instantly."

Duff Salter put on his hat, took his stick, and drew the curtains down.

Mike was sitting at the writing table arranging some models of vessels and steam tugs as his employer turned at the doorway and looked back, and, with a countenance more waggish than

exasperated, Duff Salter shook his cane at the unobservant Irishman, and sagely gestured with his head.

Agnes was about to take the head of the tea-table as he came down the stairs.

"No," motioned Duff Salter, and pointed out of doors.

He gave a slight examination to Agnes, so delicate as to be almost unnoticed, though she perceived it.

Duff sat at the tea side and wrote on his tablets:

"How is little Podge coming on?"

"Growing better," replied Agnes, "but she will be unfit to teach her school for months. Kind friends have sent her many things."

Duff Salter waited a little while, and wrote:

"I wish I could leave everybody happy behind me when I go away."

"Are you going soon?"

"I am going at once," wrote Duff Salter with a sudden decision. "I am not trusted by anybody here, and my work is over."

Agnes sat a little while in pain and wistfulness. Finally she wrote:

"There is but one thing which prevents our perfect trust in you; it is your distrust of us."

"I *am* distrustful—too much so," answered, in writing, the deaf man. "A little suspicion soon overspreads the whole nature, and yet, I think, one can be generous even with suspicion. Among the disciples were a traitor, a liar, a coward, and a doubter; but none upbraided the last, poor Thomas, and he is sainted in our faith. Do you know that suspicion made me deaf? Yes; if we mock Nature with distrust, she stops our ears. Do you not remember what happened to Zacharias, the priest? He would not believe the angel who announced that his wife would soon become a mother, and for his unbelief was stricken dumb!"

The deaf guest had either stumbled into this illustration, or written it with full design. He looked at Agnes, and the pale and purple colors came and went upon her face as she bent her body forward over the table. Duff Salter arose and spoke with that lost voice, like one in a vacuum, while he folded his tablet.

"Agnes," he said, "it has been cruel to a man of such a sceptical soul as mine to educate him back from the faith he had acquired to the unfaith he had tried to put behind him. Why did you do it? The suppression of the truth is never excusable. The secret you might have scattered with a word, when suspicion started against you, is now diffused through every family and rendezvous in Kensington."

She looked miserable enough, and still received the stab of her guest's magisterial tongue like an affliction from heaven.

"I had also become infected with this imputation," continued Duff Salter. "All things around you looked sinister for a season. A kind Providence has dispelled these black shadows, and I see you now the victim of an immeasurable mistake. Your weakness and another's obstinacy have almost ruined you. I shall save you with a cruel hand; let the remorse be his who hoped to outlive society and its natural suspicions by a mere absence."

"I will not let you upbraid him," spoke Agnes Wilt. "My weakness was the whole mistake."

"Agnes," said the grave, bearded man, "you must walk through Kensington to-morrow with me in the sight of the whole world."

She looked up and around a moment, and staggered toward a sofa, but would have fallen had not Duff Salter caught her in his arms and placed her there with tender strength. He whispered in her ear:

"Courage, little *mother!*"

CHAPTER VIII.

A REAL ROOF-TREE.

Ringling the bell at the low front step of a two-story brick dwelling, Duff Salter was admitted by Mr. Knox Van de Lear, the proprietor, a tall, plain, commonplace man, who scarcely bore one feature of his venerable father. "Come in, Mr. Salter," bellowed Knox, "tea's just a-waitin' for you. Pap's here. You know Cal, certain! This is my good lady, Mrs. Van de Lear. Lottie, put on the oysters and waffles! Don't forgit the catfish. There's nothing like catfish out of the Delaware, Mr. Salter."

"Particularly if they have a corpse or two to flavor them," said Calvin Van de Lear in a low tone.

Mrs. Knox Van de Lear, a fine, large, blonde lady, took the head of the table. She had a sweet, timid voice, quite out of quantity with her bone and flesh, and her eyelashes seemed to be weak, for they closed together often and in almost regular time, and the delicate lids were quite as noticeable as her bashful blue eyes.

"Lottie," said Rev. Silas Van de Lear, "I came in to-night with a little chill upon me. At my age chills are the tremors from other wings hovering near. Please let me have the first cup of coffee hot."

"Certainly, papa," said the hostess, making haste to fill his cup. "You don't at all feel apprehensive, do you?"

"No," said the old man, with his teeth chattering. "I haven't had apprehensions for long back. Nothing but confidence."

"Oh, pap!" put in Knox Van de Lear, "you'll be a preachin' when I'm a granddaddy. You never mean to die. Eat a waffle!"

"My children," said the old man, "death is over-due with me. It gives me no more concern than the last hour shall give all of us. I had hoped to live for three things: to see my new church raised; to see my son Calvin ready to take my place; to see my neighbor, Miss Wilt, whom I have seen grow up under my eye from childhood, and fair as a lily, brush the dew of scandal from her skirts and resume her place in our church, the handmaid of God again."

"Amen, old man!" spoke Calvin irreverently, holding up his plate for oysters.

"Why, Cal," exclaimed the hostess, closing her delicately-tinted eyelids till the long lashes rested on the cheek, "why don't you call papa more softly?"

"My son," spoke the little old gentleman between his chatterings, "in the priestly office you must avoid abruptness. Be direct at all important times, but neither familiar nor abrupt. I cannot name for you a model of address like Agnes Wilt."

"Isn't she beautiful!" said Mrs. Knox. "Do you think she can be deceitful, papa?"

"I have no means to pierce the souls of people, Lottie, more than others. I don't believe she is wicked, but I draw that from my reason and human faith. That woman was a pillar of strength in my Sabbath-school. May the Lord bring her forth from the furnace refined by fire, and punish them who may have persecuted her!"

"Cal is going into a decline on her account," said Knox. "I know it by seeing him eat waffles. She refused Cal one day, and he came home and eat all the cold meat in the house."

"Mr. Salter," the hostess said, raising her voice, "you have a beautiful woman for a landlady. Is she well?"

"Very melancholy," said Duff Salter. "Why don't you visit her?"

"Really," said the hostess, "there is so much feeling against Agnes that, considering Papa Van de Lear's position in Kensington, I have been afraid. Agnes is quite too clever for me!"

"I hope she will be," said Duff Salter, relapsing to his coffee.

"He didn't hear what you said, Lot," exclaimed Calvin. "The old man has to guess at what we halloo at him."

"Have you appraised the estate of the late William Zane?" asked the minister, with his bold pulpit voice, which Salter could hear easily.

"Yes," replied the deaf guest. "It comes out strong. It is worth, clear of everything and not including doubtful credits, one hundred and eighty thousand dollars."

"That is the largest estate in Kensington," exclaimed the clergyman.

"I shall release it all within one week to Miss Agnes," said Duff Salter. "You are too old, Mr. Van de Lear, to manage it. I have finished my work as co-executor with you. The third executor is Miss Wilt. With the estate in her hands she will change the tone of public opinion in Kensington, perhaps, and the fugitive heir must return or receive no money from the woman he has injured!"

"I am entirely of your opinion," said Reverend Mr. Van de Lear. "Agnes was independent before; this will make her powerful, and she needs all the power she can get to meet this insensate suburban opinion. When I was a young man, commencing to minister here, I had rivals enough, and deeply sympathize with those who must defend themselves against the embattled gossip of a suburban society."

Mrs. Knox Van de Lear opened and closed her eyes with a saintly sort of resignation.

"I am glad for Agnes," she said. "But I fear the courts will not allow her, suspected as she is, to have the custody of so much wealth that has descended to her through the misfortunes of others, if not by crimes."

"You are right, Lot," said Calvin. "Her little game may be to get a husband as soon as she can,

who will resist a trustee's appointment by the courts."

"Can *she* get a husband, Cal?"

"Oh, yes! She's lightning! There's old Salter, rich as a Jew. She's smart enough to capture him and add all he has to all that was coming to Andrew Zane."

Mr. Salter drew up his napkin and sneezed into it a soft articulation of "Jericho! Jericho!"

"Cal, don't you think you have some chance there yet?" asked Knox Van de Lear. "I hoped you would have won Aggy long ago. It's a better show than I ever had. You see I have to be at work at six o'clock, winter and summer, and stay at the bookbindery all day long, and so it goes the year round."

"Indeed, it is so!" exclaimed the hostess, slowly shutting down her silken lids of pink. "My poor husband goes away from me while I still sleep in the dark of dawn; he only returns at supper."

"Well, haven't you got brother Cal?" asked the bookbinder. "He's better company than I am, Lottie."

"But Calvin is in love with Miss Wilt," said the lady, softly unclosing her eyes.

"No," coolly remarked Calvin, "I am not in love with her. You know that, Lottie."

"Well, Calvin, dear, you would be if you thought she was pure and clear of crime."

"Don't ask me foolish questions!" said Calvin.

The lady at the head of the table wore a pretty smile which she shut away under her eyelids again and again, and looked gently at Calvin.

"Dear Agnes!" ejaculated Mrs. Knox, "I never blamed her so much as that bold little creature, Podge Byerly! No one could make any impression upon Agnes's confidence until that bright little thing went to board with her. It is so demoralizing to take these working-girls, shop-girls and school-teachers, in where religious influences had prevailed! They became inseparable; Agnes had to entertain such company as Miss Byerly brought there, and it produced a lowering of tone. She looked around her suddenly when these crimes were found out, and all her old mature friends were gone. It is so sad to lose all the wholesome influences which protect one!"

Duff Salter had been eating his chicken and catfish very gravely, and as he stopped to sneeze and apologize he noticed that Calvin Van de Lear's face was insolent in its look toward his brother's wife.

"Wholesome influence," said Calvin, "will return at the news of her money, quick enough!"

"Poor dear Cal!" exclaimed the lady; "he is still madly in love!"

"My friends," spoke up Duff Salter, "your father is a very sick man. Let us take him to a chamber and send for his doctor."

Mr. Van de Lear had been neglected in this conversation; it was now seen that he was in collapse and deathly pale. He leaned forward, however, from strong habit, to close the meal with a blessing, and his head fell forward upon the table. Duff Salter had him in his arms in a moment, and bore him into the little parlor and placed him on a sofa.

"Give me some music, children," he murmured. "Oh, my brother Salter! I would that you could hear with me the rustling sounds I hear in music now! There are voices in it keeping heavenly time, saying, 'Well done! well done!' My strong, kind brother, let me lean upon your breast. Had we met in younger days I feel that we would have been very friendly with each other."

Duff Salter already had the meagre little man upon his breast, and his long, hale beard descended upon the pale and aged face.

Mrs. Knox Van de Lear seated herself at the piano and began a hymn, and Calvin Van de Lear accompanied her, singing bass. The old man closed his eyes on Duff Salter's breast, and Mr. Knox Van de Lear went out softly to send for a physician. Duff Salter, looking up at a catch in the singing, saw that Calvin Van de Lear was leaning familiarly on the lady's shoulder while he turned the leaves of the book of sacred music.

"I am very sick," said the old clergyman, still shaken by the chills. "Perhaps we shall meet together no more. My fellow-executor, do my part in this world! In all my life of serving the church and its Divine Master, I have first looked out for the young people. They are most helpless, most valuable. See that Sister Agnes is mercifully cared for! If young Andrew Zane returns, deal gently with him too. Let us be kind to the dear boys, though they go astray. The dear, dear boys!"

Duff Salter received the brave little man's head again upon his breast, and said to himself:

"May God speedily take him away in mercy!"

The doctor, returning with Knox Van de Lear, commanded the minister to be instantly removed to a chamber, and Duff Salter, unassisted, walked up-stairs with him like a father carrying his infant to bed. As they placed the wasted figure away beneath the coverlets, he put his arm around Duff

Salter's neck.

"Brother," he said hoarsely, the chill having him in its grasp, "God has blessed you. Can you help my new church?"

"I promise you," said Duff Salter, "that after your people have done their best I will give the remainder. It shall be built!"

"Now, God be praised!" whispered the dying pastor. "And let Thy servant depart in peace."

"Amen!" from somewhere, trembled through the chamber as Duff Salter, his feet muffled like his voice, in the habit of mute people who walk as they hear, passed down the stairway.

Duff Salter took his seat in the dining-room, which was an extension of Knox Van de Lear's plain parlor, and buried his face in his palms. Years ago, when a boy, he had attended preaching in Silas Van de Lear's little chapel, and it touched him deeply that the nestor of the suburb was about to die; the last of the staunch old pastors of the kirk who had never been silent when liberty was in peril. The times were not the same, and the old man was too brave and simple for the latter half of his century. As Duff Salter thought of many memories associated with the Rev. Silas Van de Lear's residence in Kensington, he heard his own name mentioned. It was a lady's voice; nothing but acute sensibility could have made it so plain to a deaf man:

"Husband," said the lady with the slumberous eyelids, "go out with the pitcher and get us half a gallon of ale. Cal and Mr. Salter and myself are thirsty."

"I have been for the doctor, Lottie; let Cal go."

"Cal?" exclaimed the lady, very quietly raising her lashes. "It would not do for him to go for *ale*! He is to be the junior pastor, my dear, as soon as papa is buried, over the Van de Lear church."

"All right," said the tired husband, "I'll go. We must all back up Cal."

As soon as the door closed upon Mr. Knox Van de Lear, a kiss resounded through the little house, and a woman's voice followed it, saying:

"Imprudent!"

"Oh, bah!" spoke Calvin Van de Lear. "Salter is deaf as a post. Lottie, Agnes Wilt has been ruined!"

In the long pause following this remark the deaf man peeped through his fingers and saw the lady of the house kiss her husband's brother again and again.

"I am so glad," she whispered. "Can it be true?"

"It's plain as a barn door. She'll be a mother before shad have run out, or cherries come in."

"The proud creature! And now, Cal dear, you see nothing exceptionally saint-like there?"

"I see shame, friendlessness, wealth, and welcome," spoke the young man. "It's just my luck!"

"But the deaf man? Will he not take her part?"

"No. I shall show him to-night what will cure his partiality. Lottie, you must let me marry her."

The large, blonde lady threw back her head until the strong, animal throat and chin stood sharply defined, and white and scarlet in color as the lobster's meat.

"Scoundrel!" she hissed, clenching Calvin's wrist with an almost maniacal fury.

At this moment a bell began to toll on the neighboring fire company's house, and Knox Van de Lear entered with the pitcher of ale.

"They're tolling the fire bell at the news of father's dying," said Knox.

Calvin filled a glass of ale, and exclaimed:

"Here's to the next pastor of Kensington!" as he laughingly drained it off.

"Oh, brother Cal!" remarked the hostess as she softly dropped her eyelids and smiled reprovingly; "this irreverence comes of visiting Miss Agnes Wilt too often. I must take you in charge."

Duff Salter gave a furious sneeze:

"Jericho! Oh! oh! Jericho!"

Calvin Van de Lear closed the door between the dining-room and the parlor, and drew Duff Salter's tablets from his pocket and wrote:

"I want you to go up on the house roof with me."

Duff looked at him in surprise, and wrote in reply:

"Do you mean to throw me off?"

Calvin's sallow complexion reddened a very little as he laughed flippantly, and stroked his dry

side-whiskers and took the tablets again:

"I want you to see the ghost's walk," he wrote. "Come along!"

Passing the sick father's door, Calvin led Duff Salter up to the garret floor, where a room with rag carpet, dumb-bells, boxing-gloves, theological books, and some pictures far from modest, disclosed the varied tastes of an entailed pulpit's expectant. Calvin drew down the curtain of the one window and lighted a lamp. There was a table in the middle of the floor, and there the two men conducted a silent conversation on the ivory tablets.

"This is my room," wrote Calvin. "I stay here all day when I study or enjoy myself. The governor doesn't come in here to give me any advice or nose around."

"Is Mrs. Knox Van de Lear serious as to religious matters?"

"Very," wrote Calvin, sententiously, and looked at Duff Salter with the most open countenance he had ever been seen to show. Duff merely asked another question:

"Has she a good handwriting? I want to have a small document very neatly written."

Calvin went over to a trunk, unlocked it, and took out a bundle of what appeared to be lady's letters, and selecting one, folded the address back and showed the chirography.

"Jericho! Jerry-cho! cho! O cho!" sneezed Duff Salter. "The most admirable writing I have ever seen."

Calvin took the tablets.

"I have been in receipt of some sundry sums of money from you, Salter, to follow up this Zane mystery. I hope to be able to show you to-night that it has not been misinvested."

"You have had two hundred dollars," wrote Duff Salter. "What are your conclusions?"

"Andrew Zane is in Kensington."

"Where?"

"In the block opposite are several houses belonging to the Zane estate. One of them stood empty until within a month, when a tenant unknown to the neighborhood, with small furniture and effects—evidently a mere servant—moved in. My brother's wife has taken a deep interest in the Zane murder, and being at home all day, her resort is this room, where she can see, unobserved, the whole *menage* and movement in the block opposite."

"Why did she feel so much interested?"

"Honor bright!" Calvin wrote. "Well, Mrs. Knox was a great admirer of the late William Zane. They were very intimate—some thought under engagement to marry. Suddenly she accepted my brother, and old Zane turned out to be infatuated with his ward. We may call it rivalry and reminiscence."

"Jer-i-choo-wo!"

Duff Salter, now full of smiles, proffered a pinch of snuff to his host, who declined it, but set out a bottle of brandy in reciprocal friendship.

"Go on," indicated Salter to the tablets.

"One morning, just before daybreak, my brother's wife, glancing out of this window—"

"In this room, you say, before daybreak?"

Calvin looked viciously at Duff Salter, who merely smiled.

"She saw," said Calvin Van de Lear, "an object come out of the trap-door on Zane's old residence and move under shelter of the ridge of the roof to the newly-tenanted dwelling in the same block, and there disappear down the similar trap."

"Jericho! Jericho!—Proceed."

"It was our inference that probably Andrew Zane was making stealthy visits to Agnes, and we applied a test to her. To our astonishment we found she had only seen him once since the murder, and that was the night the bodies were discovered."

"How could you extract that from a self-contained woman like Agnes Wilt?" asked Duff Salter, deeply interested.

"We got it from Podge Byerly."

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed Duff Salter aloud, knocking over the snuff-box and forgetting to sneeze. "Mr. Calvin Van de Lear, it is a damned lie."

Calvin locked up with some surprise but more conceit.

"I'm a first-class eavesdropper," he wrote, and held it up on the tablet to Duff's eyes. "We got the fact from Podge's bed-ridden brother, a scamp who destroyed his health by excesses and came back on Podge for support. Knowing how corruptible he was, I got access to him and paid him out of your funds to wheedle out of Podge all that Lady Agnes told her. She had no idea that her brother communicated with any person, as he was unable to walk, and she told him for his amusement secrets she never dreamed could go out of the house. We corresponded with him by mail."

"Calvin," wrote Duff Salter, "you never thought of these things yourself."

"To give the devil his credit, my brother's wife suggested that device."

"Jericho-o-o-oh!"

Duff Salter was himself again.

"Well, Salter," continued the heir-apparent of Kensington, "we laid our heads together, and the mystery continued to deepen why Andrew Zane infested the residence of his murdered father if he never revealed himself to the woman he had loved. Not until the discovery that Agnes Wilt had been ruined could we make that out."

They were both looking at each other intently as Duff Salter read the last sentence.

"It then became plain to us," continued Calvin, "that Andrew Zane wanted to abandon the woman he had seduced, as was perfectly natural. He haunted and alarmed the house and kept informed on all its happenings, but cut poor Agnes dead."

"The infamous scoundrel!" exclaimed Duff Salter, looking very dark and serious.

"Now, Salter," continued Calvin, "we had a watch set on that ridge of roofs every night, and another one at the old Zane house, front and rear, and the apparition on the roof was so irregular that we could not understand what occasions it took to come out until we observed that whenever your servant was out of the neighborhood a whole night, the roof-walker was sure to descend into Zane's trap."

"Jer-i-cho-ho-ho!"

"To-night, as we have made ourselves aware, your servant is not in Kensington. We saw him off to Treaty Island. I am watching at this window for the man on the roof. The moment he leaves the trap-door of the tenant's house, it will be entered by officers at the waving of this lamp at my window. One officer will proceed along the roof and station himself on the Zane trap, closing that outlet. At the same time the Zane house will be entered front and rear and searched. The time is due. It is midnight. Come!"

Calvin pointed to a ladder that led from the corner of his study to the roof, and Duff Salter nodded his head acquiescently.

They went up the ladder and thrust their heads into the soft night of early summer.

There was starlight, but no moon.

The engine bell just ceased to toll as they looked forth on the scattered suburb, and at points beheld the Delaware flowing darkly, indicated by occasional lights of vessels reflected upward, and by the very distant lamps on the Camden shore.

Most of the houses within the range of vision were small, patched, and irregular, except where the black walls of the even blocks on some principal streets strode through.

Scarcely a sound, except the tree frogs droning, disturbed the air, and Kensington basked in the midnight like some sleeping village of the plains, stretching out to the fields of cattle and the savory truck farms.

Duff Salter mentally exclaimed:

"Here, like two angels of good or evil, we spy upon the dull old hamlet, where nothing greater has happened than to-night since the Indians bartered their lands away for things of immediate enjoyment. Are not most of these people Indians still, ready to trade away substantial lands of antique title for the playthings of a few brief hours? Yes, heaven itself was signed away by man and woman for the juices of one forbidden fruit. Here, where the good old pastor, like another William Penn, is running his stakes beyond the stars and peopling with angels his possessions there, the savage children are occupied with the trifles of lust, covetousness, and deceit. They are no worse than the sons of Penn, who became apostates to his charity and religion before the breath had left his body. So goes the human race, whether around the Tree of Knowledge or Kensington's Treaty Tree."

Duff Salter felt his arm pulled violently, and heard his companion whisper,

"There! Do you see it?"

Across the street, only a few hundred feet distant, an object emerged from the black mass of the buildings and moved rapidly along the opposite ridge of houses against the sky, drawing nearer the two watchers as it advanced, and passing right opposite.

Duff Salter made it out to be a woman or a figure in a gown.

It looked neither to the right nor left, and did not stoop nor cower, but strode boldly as if with right to the large residence of the Zanes, where in a minute it faded away.

Duff Salter felt a little superstitious, but Calvin Van de Lear shot past him down the ladder.

Duff heard the curtain at the window thrown up as the divinity student flashed his lamp and saw the door of the house whence the apparition had come, forced by the police.

As he descended the ladder Calvin Van de Lear extended Duff's hat to him, and pointed across the way.

They were not very prompt reaching the door of the Zane residence, but were still there in time to employ Duff Salter's key, instead of violence, to make the entry.

"Gentlemen," said the deaf man, with authority, "there is no occasion of any of you pressing in here to alarm a lady. Mr. Van de Lear and myself will make the search of the house which you have already guarded, front, back, and above, and rendered it impossible for the object of your warrant to escape."

The dignity and commanding stature of Duff Salter had their effect.

Calvin Van de Lear and Duff Salter entered the silent house, lighted the gas, and walked from room to room, finally entering the apartment of Duff Salter himself.

There sat Mike, the serving-man, in his red hair, uneven eyebrows, crutch, and wooden leg, as quietly arranging the models of vessels and steamers as if he had not anticipated a midnight call nor ceased his labor since Duff Salter had gone out.

"Damnation!" exclaimed Calvin Van de Lear, pale with exertion and rage, "are you here? I thought you were at Treaty Island."

"Misther Salter," said the Irishman, "I returned, do you see, because I forgot something and wanted a drop of your brandy, sur."

Duff Salter walked up to the speaker and seized him by the lapels of his coat, and placing the other hand upon his head, tore off the entire red-haired scalp which covered him.

"Andrew Zane," said Duff Salter in a low voice, "your disguise is detected. Yield yourself like a man to your father's executor. You are my prisoner!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN COURT.

Agnes Wilt awoke and said her prayers, unconscious of any event of the night. At the breakfast-table she met Duff Salter, who took both her hands in his.

"Agnes," said Duff Salter—"let me call you so hereafter—did you hear the bell toll last night?"

"No," she replied with agitation. "For what, Mr. Salter?"

"The good priest of Kensington is dying."

"Beloved friend!" she said, as the tears came to her eyes. "And must he die uncertain of my blame or innocence? Yet he will learn it in that wiser world!"

"Agnes, I require perfect submission from you for this day. Will you give it in all things?"

She looked at him a moment in earnest reflection, and said finally:

"Yes, unless my conscience says 'no.'"

"Nothing will be asked of you that you cannot rightfully do. Decision is what is needed now, and I will bring you through triumphantly if you will obey me."

"I will."

"At eleven o'clock we must go to the magistrate's office. I will walk there with you."

"Am I to be arrested?" she asked, hesitating.

"If you go with me it will not be an arrest."

"Mr. Salter," she cried, in a burst of anguish, "I am not fit to be seen upon the streets of Kensington."

He took her in his arms like a daughter.

"Yes, yes, poor girl! The mother of God braved no less. You can bear it. But all this morning I must be closely engaged. An important event happened last night. At eleven, positively, be ready

to go out with me."

Agnes was ready, and stepped forth into the daylight on the main thoroughfare of Queen Street. Almost every window was filled with gazers; the sidewalks were lined with strollers, loiterers, and people waiting. She might have fainted if Duff Salter's arm had not been there to sustain her.

A large fishwife, with a basket on her head, was standing beside her comely grown daughter, who had put her large basket down, and both devoured Agnes with their eyes.

"Staying in the house, Beck," exclaimed the mother of the girl, "has been healthy for some people."

"Yes, mammy," answered the girl; "it's safer standing in market with catfish. He! he! he!"

A shipbuilder's daughter was on the front steps, a slender girl of dark, smooth skin and features, talking to a grown boy. The girl bowed: "How do you do, Miss Agnes?" The grown boy giggled inanely.

Two old women, near neighbors of Agnes, had their spectacles wiped and run out to a proper focus, and the older of the two had a double pair upon her most insidious and suspicious nose. As Agnes passed, this old lady gave such a start that she dropped the spectacles off her nose, and ejaculated through the open window, "Lord alive!"

At Knox Van de Lear's house the fine-bodied, feline lady with nictitating eyes, drew aside the curtain, even while the dying man above was in frigid waters, that she might slowly raise and drop her ambrosial lids, and express a refined but not less marked surprise. Agnes, by an excitement of the nerves of apprehension, saw everything while she trembled. She could read the dates of all the houses on the painted cornices of the water-spouts, and saw the cabalistic devices of old insurance companies on the property they covered. Pigeons flying about the low roofs clucked and chuckled as if their milky purity had been incensed, and little dogs seemed to draw near and trot after, too familiarly, as if they scented sin.

There were two working-men from Zane & Rainey's ship-yard who had known kindness to their wives from Agnes when those wives were in confinement. Both took off their hats respectfully, but with astonishment overwhelming their pity.

Half the fire company had congregated at one corner of the street—lean, runners of men in red shirts, and with boots outside their trousers. They did not say a word, but gazed as at a riddle going by. Yet at one place a Sabbath scholar of Agnes came out before her, and, making a courtesy, said:

"Teacher, take my orange blossom!"

The flower was nearly white, and very fragrant. Duff Salter reached out and put it in his button-hole.

So excited were the sensibilities of Agnes that it seemed to her the old door-knockers squinted; the idle writing of boys on dead walls read with a hidden meaning; the shade-trees lazily shaking in summer seemed to whisper; if she looked down, there now and then appeared, moulded in the bricks of the pavement, a worn letter, or a passing goose foot, the accident of the brickyard, but now become personal and intentional. The little babies, sporting in their carriages before some houses, leaned forward and looked as wise and awful as doctors in some occult diagnosis. Cartwheels, as they struck hard, articulated, "What, out! Boo! boohoo!" Sunshine all slanted her way. Hucksters' cries sounded like constables' proclamation: "Oyez! oyez!"

With the perceptions, the reflections of Agnes were also startlingly alert. She seemed two or three unfortunate people at once. Now it was Lady Jane Grey going to the tower. Now it was Beatrice Cenci going to torture. Now it was Mary Magdalene going to the cross. At almost every house she felt a kindness speak for her, except mankind; a recollection of nursing, comforting, praying with some one, but all forgotten now. "*Via Crucia, Via Crucia,*" her thorn-torn feet seemed to patter in the echoes of her ears and mind, and there arose upon her spirit the sternest curse of women, direful with God's own rage, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception."

Thus she reached the magistrate's little office, around the door of which was a little crowd of people, and Duff Salter led her in the private door to the residence itself. A cup of tea and a decanter of wine were on the table. The magistrate's wife knew her, and kissed her. Then Agnes broke down and wept like a little child.

The magistrate was a lame man, and a deacon in Van de Lear's church, quite gray, and both prudent and austere, and making use of but few words, so that there was no way of determining his feelings on the case. He took his place behind a plain table and opened court by saying,

"Who appears? Now!"

Duff Salter rose, the largest man in the court-room. His long beard covered his whole breast-bone; his fine intelligent features, clear, sober eyes, and hale, house-bleached skin, bore out the authority conceded to him in Kensington as a rich gentleman of the world.

"Mr. Magistrate," said Duff Salter, "this examination concerns the public and the ends of justice only as bears upon the death of the late citizens of Kensington, William Zane and Saylor Rainey.

It is a preliminary examination only, and the person suspected by public gossip has not retained counsel. With your permission, as the executor of William Zane, I will conduct such part of the inquiry here as my duty toward the deceased, and my knowledge of the evidence, notwithstanding my frontier notions of law, suggest to me."

"You prosecute?" asked the magistrate, and added, "Yes, yes! I will!"

Calvin Van de Lear got up and bowed to the magistrate.

"Your Honor, my deep interest in Miss Agnes Wilt has driven me to leave the bedside of a dying parent to see that her interests are properly attended to in this case. Whenever she is concerned I am for the defence."

"Yes!" exclaimed the magistrate. "Salter, have you a witness?"

"Mike Donovan!" called Duff Salter.

A red-haired Irishman, with one eyebrow higher than the other, and scars on his face, walked into the alderman's court from the private room, and was sworn.

"Donovan," spoke Duff Salter, standing up, "relate the occurrences of a certain night when you rowed the prisoner, Andrew Zane, and certain other persons, from Treaty Island to an uncertain point in the River Delaware."

"Stop! stop!" exclaimed Calvin Van de Lear, rising. "It seems to me I have seen that fellow's face before. Donovan, hadn't you a wooden leg when last I saw you?"

"No doubt of it," answered the Irishman.

"Why haven't you got it on now?" cried Calvin, scowling.

"Because, yer riverence, me own legs was plenty good enough on this occasion."

"Now, now, I won't!" ordered the sententious little magistrate.

"Proceed with the narrative," cried Duff Salter, "and repeat no part of the conversation in that boat."

"It was a dark and lowering night," said the waterman, "as we swung loose from Traity Isle. I sat a little forward of the cintree, managing the oars. Mr. Andrew Zane was in the bow, on the watch for difficulties. In the stern sat the boss, Mr. William Zane. Between him and me—God's rest to him!—sat the murdered gintleman, well-beloved Saylor Rainey! The tide was running six miles an hour. We steered by the lights of Kinsington."

"Then you are confident," said Duff Salter, "that the whole length of the skiff separated William Zane from his son?"

"As confident, yer honor, as that the batteau had two inds. They niver were nearer, the one to the tother, than that, for the whole of the xpidition. And scarcely one word did Mr. Andrew utter on the whole ov that bloody passage."

"Say nothing, for the present, about any conversations," commanded Duff Salter, "but go on with the occurrences briefly."

"I had been a very little while, ye must understand me, gintlemen, in the employ of thim two partners. After they entered the boat they spoke nothing at all, at all, for several minutes. It was all I could do wid the strong tide to keep the boat pinte for Kinsington, and I only noticed that Mr. Rainey comminced the conversation in a low tone of voice. Just at that time, or soon afterward, your Honor, a large vessel stood across our bow, going down stream in the night, and I put on all my strength, at Mr. William Zane's order, to cross in front of her, and did so. I was so afraid the ship would take us under that I put my whole attintion to my task, not daring to disobey so positive a boss as Mr. Zane, though it was agin my judgment, indade."

All in the court and outside the door and windows were giving strict attention. Even Andrew Zane, whose face had been rather sullen, listened with a pale spot on his cheeks.

"Go on," said Duff Salter gently. "You relate it very well."

"As we had cleared the ship, gintlemen, I paused an instant to wipe the sweat from my brows, though it was a cold night, for I was quite spint. I then perceived that Mr. Rainey and the master were disputing and raising their voices higher and higher, and what surprised me most of all, your Honor, was the unusual firmness of Mr. Rainey, who was ginerally very obedient to the boss. He faced the boss, and would not take his orders, and I heard him once exclaim: 'Shame on you, sir; he is your son!'"

"Stop! stop!" cried Duff Salter. "You were not to repeat conversations. What next?"

"In the twinklin' of an eye," resumed the witness, "the masther had sazed his partner by the throat and called him a villain. They both stood up in the boat, the masther's hand still in Mr. Rainey's collar, and for an instant Mr. Rainey shook himself loose and cried—"

"Not a word!" exclaimed Duff Salter. "What was *done*?"

"Mr. Rainey cried out something, all at once. The masther fetched a terrible oath and fell back

upon his seat. 'You assisted in this villainy!' he shouted. They clinched, and I saw something shine dimly in Mr. William Zane's hand. The report told me what it was. I lifted one oar in a feeling of horror, and the boat swung round abruptly on the blade of the other, and Mr. Rainey, released from the mather's grip, fell overboard in the dark night."

Nothing was said by any person in the court except a suppressed "Bah!" from Calvin Van de Lear.

"Silence! Order! I won't!" exclaimed the lame magistrate, rising from his seat. "Now! Go on!"

"I dropped both oars in me terror, and one of them floated away in the dark. We all stood up in the boat. 'My God!' exclaimed the mather, 'what have I done?' As quick as the beating of my heart he placed the pistol at his own head. I saw the flash and heard the report. Mr. William Zane fell overboard."

There was a shudder of horror for a moment, and then a voice outside the window, hoarse and cheery, shouted to the outer crowd, "Andrew is innocent! Three cheers for Andrew Zane!"

The people in and out of the warm and densely-packed office simultaneously gave cheers, calling others to the scene, and the old magistrate, lame as he was, arose and looked happy.

"No arrests!" he cried. "Right enough! Good! Now, attention!"

But Andrew Zane kept his seat with an expression of obstinacy, and glared at Calvin Van de Lear, who was trembling with rage.

"Well got up, on my word!" exclaimed Calvin. "Who is this fellow?"

"Go on and finish your story!" commanded Duff Salter.

"God forgive Mike Donovan, your Honor!" continued the witness. "I'm afraid if Mr. William Zane had been the only man overboard I wouldn't have risked me life. He was a hard, overbearin' mather. But I thought of his poor son, standin' paralyzed-like, and the kind Mr. Rainey drownin' in the wintry water, and I jumped down in the dark flood to rescue one or both. From that day to this, the two partners I never saw. It was months before I saw America at all, or the survivin' okkepant of the boat."

"You may explain how that came to be," intimated Duff Salter, grimly superintending the court.

"Well, sir! As I dived from the skiff my head encountered a solid something which made me see a thousand flashes av lightning in one second. I was so stunned that I had only instinct—I belave ye call it that—to throw my ar-rum around the murthering object and hold like death. Ye know, judge, how drownin' men will hold to straws. That straw, yer Honor, was the spar of a vessel movin' through the water. It was, I found out afterward, one of the pieces which had wedged the ship on the Marine Railway, where she had been gettin' repaired, and she comin' off hurriedly about dusk, had not been loosened from her. I raised my voice by a despairin' effort, and screamed 'Help! help!' When I came to I was on an Austrian merchant ship, bound to Wilmington, North Carolina, for naval stores, and then to Trieste. The blow of the spar had given me a slight crack av the skull."

"That crack is wide open yet," said Calvin Van de Lear.

"Begorra," returned the Irishman, facing placidly around until he found the owner of the voice, "Mr. Calvin Van de Lear, it would take many such a blow, sur, to fracture your heart!"

"Go on now, Donovan, and finish your tale. You were carried off to Trieste?" spoke Duff Salter.

"I was, sir. At Wilmington no news had been recaved of any tragedy in Philadelphia, and when I told my story there to a gentleman he concluded I was ravin' and a seein' delusions. The Austrian was short av a crew, and the docthor said if they could get away to sea he could make me effective very soon. I was too helpless to go on deck or make resistance. Says I, 'It's the will av God.'"

A round of applause greeted this story as it was ended, and cheerful hands were extended to the witness and the prisoner. Calvin Van de Lear, however, exclaimed:

"Alderman, what has all this to do with the prisoner's ignominious flight for months from his home and from persons he abandoned to suspicion and shame? This man is an impostor."

"Will you take the stand, Mr. Andrew Zane?" asked Duff Salter.

"No," replied the late fugitive. "I have been hunted and slandered like a wolf. I will give no evidence in Kensington, where I have been so shamefully treated. Let me be sent to a higher court, and there I will speak."

"Alas!" Duff Salter said, with grave emphasis, "it is you father's old and obstinate spirit which is speaking. You are the ghost I thought was his at the door of my chamber. Mr. Magistrate, swear me!"

Duff Salter gravely kissed the Testament and stood ready to depose, when Calvin Van de Lear again interrupted.

"Are you not deaf?" asked the divinity student. "Where are your tablets that you carry every day? You seem to hear too well, I consider."

"You are right," cried Duff Salter, turning on his interrogator like a lion. "I am wholly cured of deafness, and my memory is as acute as my hearing."

Calvin Van de Lear turned pale to the roots of his dry, yellow whiskers.

"Devil!" he muttered.

"My testimony covers only a single point," resumed the strong, direct, and imposing witness. "I saw the face of this prisoner for the first time since his babyhood in his father's house not many weeks ago. It resembled his father's youthful countenance, as I knew it, so greatly that I really believed his parent haunted the streets of Kensington, according to the rumor. The supposed apparition drove me to investigate the mysterious death of William Zane. I believed that Agnes knew the story, but was under this prisoner's command of secrecy. Seeking an assistant, the witness, Donovan, forced himself upon me. In a short time I was confounded by the contradictions of his behavior. Looking deeper into it, I suspected that in his suit of clothing resided at different times two men: the one an agent, the other a principal; the one a reality, the other a disguise. I armed myself and had the duller and less observant of these doubles row me out upon the Delaware on such a night as marked the tragedy he witnessed. When we reached the middle of the river I forced the story of the coincidence from him by reasoning and threats."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Calvin Van de Lear. "Is this an Arkansas snake story?"

"The young Zane had gratified a wilful passion to penetrate the residence of his father, and look at its inmates and the situation from safe harborage there. He found that Donovan in his roving sailor's life had played the crippled sea beggar in the streets of British cities, tying up his natural leg and fitting a wooden leg to the knee—a trick well known to British ballad singers. That leg was in Donovan's sea-chest, as it had been left in this city, and also the crutch necessary to walk with it. Mr. Zane and Donovan had exchanged the leg and crutch, and the former matched his fellow with a wig and patches. Thus convertible, they had for a little while deceived everybody, but for further convenience Mr. Zane ensconced himself as a tenant in a neighboring house, and when the apparatus was in request by Donovan, he crossed on the roofs between the trap-doors, and still was master of his residence."

"What does all this disclose but the intrigue of despairing guilt?" exclaimed young Van de Lear. "He had destroyed the purity of a lady and abandoned her, and was afraid to show his real face in Kensington."

"We will see as to that," replied Duff Salter. "I had hoped to respect the lady's privacy, but Mr. Zane has refused to testify. Call Agnes Wilt."

All in the magistrate's office rose at the mention of this name, only Andrew Zane keeping his seat amid the crowd. Calvin Van de Lear officiously sought to assist the witness in, but Duff Salter pressed him back and gave the sad and beautiful woman his arm. She was sworn, and stood there blushing and pale by turns.

"What is your name?" asked Duff Salter gently. "Speak very plain, so that all these good friends of yours may make no mistake."

"My name," replied the lady, "is Agnes Zane. I am the wife of Mr. Andrew Zane."

"Very good," said Duff Salter soothingly. "You are the wife of Andrew Zane; wedded how long ago, madam?"

"Eight months."

"Do you see any person in this court-room, Mrs. Zane, that you wish to identify? Let all be seated."

Poor Agnes looked timidly around the place, and saw a person, at whom all were gazing, rise and reach his arms toward her.

"Gracious God!" she whispered, "is it he?"

"It is, dear wife," cried Andrew Zane. "Come to my heart."

CHAPTER X.

THE SECRET MARRIAGE.

Reverend Silas Van de Lear was drawing his latest breaths in the house of one of his elder sons, and only his lips were seen to move in silent prayer, when a younger fellow-clergyman entering, to a cluster of his cloth attending there, said audibly:

"This is a strange *denouement* to the great Kensington scandal, which has happened this afternoon."

The large, voluptuous lady with the slowly declining eyelids raised them quietly as in languid surprise.

"You mean the Zane murder? What is it?" asked a minister, while others gathered around, showing the ministry to have human curiosity even in the hour and article of death.

"Miss Agnes Wilt, the especial favorite of our dying patriarch here, was married to young Andrew Zane some time before his father died. There was no murder in the case. Zane the elder, in one of his frequent fits of wild and arrogant rage, which were little less than insanity, killed his partner, Rainey, and in as sudden remorse took his own life."

"What was the occasion of Zane's rage?"

"That is not quite clear, but the local population here is in a violent reaction against the accusers of young Zane and his wife. The church recovers a valuable woman in Agnes Zane."

Mrs. Knox Van de Lear had a vial of smelling salts in her hand, and this vial dropping suddenly on the floor called attention to the fact that the lady had a little swooning turn. She was herself again in a minute, and her eyes slowly unclosed and lifted their tender curtains prettily.

"I am so glad for dear Agnes," she said with a natural loudness in that hushed room. "It even made me forget papa to find Agnes innocent."

The dying minister seemed to catch the words. A ministerial colleague bent down to hear his low articulation:

"Agnes innocent!" said Silas Van de Lear, and strove to clasp his hands. "The praying of the righteous availeth much!"

The physician said the good man's pulse ceased to beat at that minute, and they raised around his scarcely cold remains a hymn to heaven.

Mean time, at the alderman's court, a surprising scene was witnessed. For a few minutes everybody was in a frenzy of delight, and Duff Salter was the hero of the hour. The alderman made no effort to discipline any person; people hugged and laughed, and entreated to shake hands with Andrew Zane, and in the pleasing confusion Calvin Van de Lear slunk out, white as one condemned to be whipped.

"Now! now! We will! Yes!" said the sententious old alderman. "Come to order. Andrew Zane must be sworn!"

At this moment the Kensington volunteer fire apparatus stopped opposite the alderman's office and began to peal its bells merrily. The young husband's obstinacy slowly giving way, seemed to be gone entirely when, searching the room with his eye, he detected the flight of Calvin Van de Lear. He kissed the little book as if it were a box of divine balm, and raised his voice, looking still tenderly at Agnes, and addressing Duff Salter:

"Will you examine me, my father's friend?"

"Yes, now! You will!" exploded the alderman.

"No, take your own method, thou alternate of the late Mike Donovan," exclaimed Duff Salter with a smile.

"I never thought there could be an excuse for my behavior," said Andrew Zane, "until this unexpected kind treatment had encouraged me. Indeed, my friends, I am in every alternative unfortunate. To defend myself I must reflect upon the dead. I will not make a defence, but tell my story plainly.

"My father was a man of deeds—a kind, rude business man. He loved me and I worshipped him, though our apposite tempers frequently brought us in conflict. Neither of us knew how to curb the other or be curbed in turn. Above all things I learned to fear my father's will; it was invincible.

"My wife and I grew up in my widower father's family, and fell in love, and had an understanding that at a proper season we would marry. That season could not be long postponed when Agnes's increasing beauty and my ardor kept pace together. I sought an occasion to break the secret to my father, and his reception of it filled me with terror. 'Marry Agnes!' he replied. 'You have no right to her. Your mother left her to me. I may marry her myself.'

"If he had never formed this design before it was now pursued with his well-known tireless energy. The suggestion needed no other encouragement than her beauty, ever present to inflame us both. Her household habits and society were to his liking; he offered me everything but that which embraced all to me. 'Go to Europe!' he said. 'Take a wife where you will; but Agnes you shall not have. I will give you money, pleasure, and independence, but I love where you have looked. Agnes will be your mother, not your wife!'

"Alas! gentlemen, this purpose of my father was not mere tyranny; he loved her, indeed, and that was the insurmountable fact. My betrothed had too much reason to know it. We mingled our tears together and acknowledged our dependence and duty, but we loved with that youthful fulness which cannot be mistaken nor dissuaded. In our distress we went to that kind partner whom my father had raised from an apprentice to be his equal, and asked him what to do. He told us to marry while we could. Agnes preferred an open marriage as least in consequences, and involving every trouble in the brave outset. I hoped to wean my father from his wilfulness, and yet protect my affection by a secret marriage, to which with difficulty I prevailed on my betrothed

to consent. After our marriage I found my husband's domain no less invaded by my father's suit, until life became intolerable and it was necessary to speak. Poor, brave Rainey, feeling keenly for us, fixed the time and place. He had seldom crossed my father, and I trembled for his safety, but never could have anticipated what came to pass.

"Mr. Rainey said to us, 'I will tell your father, while we are crossing the river some evening in a batteau, that you and Agnes are married, and his suit is fruitless. He will be unable to do worse than sit still and bear it in the small limits of the boat, and before we touch the other shore will get philosophy from time and consideration.'

"That plan was carried out. Shall I recount the dreadful circumstances again? Spare me, I entreat you!"

"No, I won't! The whole truth!" exclaimed the stern magistrate. "Tell it!"

"You are making no mistake, my young friend," said Duff Salter. "It will all be told very soon."

"As we started from Treaty Island, on that dark winter night," continued Andrew Zane, growing pale while he spoke, "Mr. Rainey said to me, 'Go in the bow. You are not to speak one word. I will face your father astern.' The oarsman, Donovan, had a hard pull. The first word I heard my father say was, 'That is none of your affair.' 'It is everybody's affair,' answered Mr. Rainey, 'because you make it so. Behave like a gentleman and a parent. The young people love each other.' 'I have the young lady's affections,' said my father. 'You are making her miserable,' said Mr. Rainey, 'and are deceiving yourself. She begins to hate you.' 'You are an insolent liar!' exclaimed my father. 'If you mix in this business I will throw you out of the firm.' 'That is no intimidation to me,' answered his partner. 'Prosperity can never attend the business of a cruel and unjust man. I shall be a brother to Andrew and a father to Agnes, since you would defraud them so. William Zane, I will see them married and supported!' With that my father threw himself in mere physical rage upon Mr. Rainey. They both arose, and Mr. Rainey shook himself loose and cried, 'You are outwitted, partner. I saw them married! They are man and wife!'

"With this my father's rage had no expression short of recklessness. He always carried arms, and was unconquerable. His ready hand had sought his weapon, I think, hardly consciously. His dismay and indignation for an instant destroyed his reason at Mr. Rainey's sudden statement of fact.

"My God! can I further particularize on such a scene? In a moment of time I saw before my eyes a homicide of insanity, a suicide of remorse; and to end all, the sailor in the boat, as if set crazy by these occurrences, leaped overboard also."

This narrative, given with rising energy of feeling by Andrew Zane, was heard with breathless attention. Andrew paused and glanced at his wife, whose face was bathed with the inner light of perfect relief. The greater babe of secrecy had ceased to travail with her.

"Mr. Magistrate," said the young husband, "as I am under my oath, I can only relate the acts which followed from the inference of my feelings. My first sense was that of astonishment too intense not to appear unreal and even amusing. It seemed to me that if I would laugh out loud all would come back, as delusions yield to scepticism and mockery. But it was too cold not to be real, the scene and persons were too familiar to be erroneous. I had to realize that I was in one of the great and terrible occasional convulsions of human nature. Do you know how it next affected me? With an instant's sense of sublimity! I said to myself, 'How dared I marry so much beauty and womanly majesty? Doing so, I have tempted the old gods and their fates and furies. This is poetical punishment for my temerity.' Still all the while I was laboring at the one scull left in the boat while my brain was fuming so, and listening for sounds on the water. I heard the sailor cry twice, and then his voice fainted away. I began to weep at the oar while I strained upon it, and called 'Help!' and implored God's intervention. At last I sat down in the boat, worn out and in despair, and let it drift down all the city's front, past lights and glooms and floating ice, and wished that I were dead. My father's kindness and all our disagreements rose to mind, and it seemed God's punishment that I had married where his intentions were. Yet to know the truth of this, I said a prayer upon my knees in the wet boat while my teeth chattered, and before the end of my prayer had come I was thinking of my wife's pure name, and how this would spot her as with stains of blood unless I could explain it.

"When I reached this stage of my exalted sensibilities I was nearly crazed. There had been no witness of our marriage except the minister, and he was already dead. We had been married at the country parsonage of an old retired minister beyond Oxford church, on the road from Frankford town, as we drove out one afternoon, and I prevailed with my conscientious wife to yield her scruples to our heart's necessity. 'Great God!' I thought aloud—for none could hear me there—'how dreadfully that secret marriage will compromise my wife! Who will believe us without a witness of what I must assert—a story so improbable that I would not believe it myself? I must say that I married my wife secretly from my father's house, confessing deceit for both of us, and with Agnes's religious professions, a sin in the church's estimation. If there could be an excuse for me, the strict people of Kensington will accord none to her. They will charge on her maturer mind the whole responsibility, paint her in the colors of ingratitude, and find in her greatest poverty the principal motive. Yes, they may be wicked enough to say she compassed the death of my father by my hands, to get his property.'

"I had proceeded thus far when the terror of our position became luminous like the coming fire on a prairie, which shows everything but a way of escape. 'Where is your father?' they would ask

of me in Kensington. 'He is drowned.' 'How drowned?' 'He shot himself.' 'Why did he shoot himself?' 'Because I had married his ward.' 'But his partner is gone too.' 'He is murdered.' 'Why murdered?' 'Because he interceded for me.' 'Where is your witness?' 'He has disappeared.' I saw the wild improbability of this tale, and thought of past notorious quarrels with my father ended by my voluntary absence. There were but two points that seemed to stick in my nervous mind: 'It never would do to tell our marriage at that moment, and I must find that sailor, who might still be living.'"

"He found me, sure enough, begorra!" exclaimed Mike Donovan, giving the relief of laughter to that intense narrative.

"Cowardly as you may call my resolution, gentlemen, it was all the resolution I had left. To partake of the inheritance left me by both partners in our house I feared to do. 'Let us do the penance of suspicious separation,' I said to Agnes; 'as your husband I command you to let me go!' She yielded like a wife, and stood my hostage in Kensington for all those melancholy months. I had just learned the place for which the bark which passed us on that eventful night had cleared, when the two bullet-pierced bodies were discovered in the ice. That night I sailed for Wilmington, North Carolina. When I arrived there the bark was gone for the Mediterranean, but I heard of my sailor, wounded, in her hospital. I sailed from Charleston for Cuba, and from Cuba to Cadiz, and thence I embarked for Trieste. At Trieste I found the ship, but Donovan had sailed for Liverpool. From Liverpool I tracked him to the River Plate, and thence to Panama. You will ask how I lived all those months? Ask him."

He turned to Duff Salter.

"Mr. Magistrate," spoke Duff Salter, a little confused. "I sent him drafts at his request. He knew me to be the resident executor, and wrote to me. I did it because of the pity I had for Agnes, and my faith in her assurance that he was innocent."

"Good! Yes!" exclaimed the magistrate. "I would have done the same myself."

"I returned with my man," concluded Andrew Zane. "I was now so confident that I did not fear; but a hard obstinacy, coming on me at times, I know not how, impelled me to postpone my vindication and make a test of everybody. I was full of suspicion and bitterness—the reaction from so much undeserved anxiety. I was the ghost of Kensington, and the spy upon my guardian, but the unknown sentry upon my wife's honor all the while."

"Magistrate!"—the young man turned to the alderman, and his face flushed—"is there no punishment at law for men, and women too, who have cruelly persecuted my wife with anonymous letters, intended to wound her brave spirit to the quick?"

"Plenty of it," said the magistrate. "Yes, I will. I will warrant them all."

"I will not forget it," said Andrew Zane darkly.

"My husband, forget everything!" exclaimed Agnes. "Except that we are happy. God has forgiven us our only deceit, which has been the temptation of many in dear old Kensington."

The old magistrate arose. "Case dismissed," he said: "Dinner is ready in the next room for Mr. and Mrs. Zane, and Judge Salter. I fine you all a dinner. Yes, yes! I will!"

CHAPTER XI.

TREATY ELM.

Andrew Zane was leaning on his elbow, in bed, listening to the tolling bell for the old pastor of Kensington. He had not attended the funeral, fearing to trust his eyes and heart near Calvin Van de Lear, for the unruly element in his blood was not wholly stilled. Good and evil, gratitude and recollection, contended within him, and Agnes just escaped from the long shadow of his father's rage—had forebodings of some violence when the two young men should meet in the little thoroughfare of Kensington—the one with the accumulated indignities he had suffered liable to be aroused by the other's shallow superciliousness. Agnes had but one friend to carry her fears to—Him "who never forsaketh." She had not persisted that her husband should attend the old pastor's funeral, whither Duff Salter escorted her, and going there, relieved from all imputation, her evidently wedded state was seen with general respect. People spoke to her as of old, congratulated her even at the grave, and sought to repair their own misapprehensions, suspicions, and severities, which Agnes accepted without duplicity.

Andrew Zane was leaning up in bed hearing the tolling bell when Agnes reappeared.

"Husband," she said, "only Knox Van de Lear was at the grave, of the pastor's sons."

"Ha!" exclaimed Andrew.

"He looked worse than grief could make him. A terrible tale is afloat in Kensington."

Husband and wife looked at each other a moment in silence.

"They say," continued Agnes, "that Calvin Van de Lear has fled with his brother's wife. That is the talk of the town. Professing to desire some clothing for the funeral, they took a carriage together, and were driven to Tacony yesterday, where the afternoon train, meeting the steamboat from Philadelphia, took them on board for New York."

Andrew fell back on his pillow.

"God has hedged me all around," he answered. "While Calvin Van de Lear lived in Kensington I was in revengeful temptation all the time. He has escaped, and my soul is oppressed no more. Do you know, Agnes, that the guilty accomplice of Calvin, his brother's wife, wrote all the worst letters which anonymously came through the post?"

Agnes replied:

"I never suspected it. My heart was too full of you. But Mr. Salter told me to-day that he unravelled it some time ago. Calvin Van de Lear showed him, in a moment of egotism, the conquest he had made over an unknown lady's affections, and passages of the correspondence. The keen old man immediately identified in the handwriting the person who addressed him a letter against us soon after his arrival in the East. But he did not tell me until to-day. How did you know she was the person?"

Andrew Zane blushed a little, and confessed:

"Agnes, she used to write to me. Seeing the anonymous letters you received, I knew the culprit instantly. It was that which precipitated the flight. She feared that her anonymous letters would result in her arrest and public trial for slander, as they would have done. The magistrate promised me that he would issue his warrant for every person who had employed the public mails to harass my wife, and when you entered this room my darker passions were again working to punish that woman and her paramour."

"Dearest, let them be forgotten. Yes, forgiven too. But poor Mr. Knox Van de Lear! They have stolen his savings and mortgaged his household furniture, which he was confiding enough to have put in his wife's name. That is also a part of the story related around the good pastor's grave."

"Calvin has not escaped," exclaimed Andrew Zane. "As long as that tigress accompanies him he has expiation to make. Voluptuous, jealous, restless, and, like a snake in the tightness of her folds and her noiseless approach, she will smother him with kisses and sell him to his enemies."

"Do you know her so well?" asked Agnes placidly.

"Very well. She was corrupt from childhood, but only a few of us knew it. She grew to be beautiful, and had the quickened intelligence which, for a while, accompanies ruined women: the unnatural sharpening of the duplicity, the firmer grasp on man as the animal, the study of the proprieties of life, and apparent impatience with all misbehavior. Her timid voice assisted her cunning as if with a natural gentleness, and invited onward the man who expected in her ample charms a bolder spirit. She betook herself to the church for penance, perhaps, but remained there for a character. My wife, if I have suffered, it was, perhaps, in part because for every sin is some punishment; that woman was *my* temptress also!"

His face was pale as he spoke these words, but he did not drop his eyes. The wife looked at him with a face also paled and startled.

"Remember," said Andrew Zane, "that I was a man."

She walked to him in a moment and kissed his forehead.

"I will have no more deceit," said Andrew. "That is why I give you this pain. It was long, my darling, before we loved."

"That was the source, perhaps, of Lottie's anger with me," spoke Agnes.

"I think not. There was not a sentiment between us. It is the way, occasionally, that a very bad woman is made, by marriage or wealth, respectable, and she declares war on her own past and its imitators. You were pursued because you had exchanged deserts with her. You were pure and abused; she was approved but tainted. Not your misfortunes but your goodness rebuked her, and she lashed you behind her *alias*, as every demon would riot in lashing the angels."

"My husband," exclaimed Agnes, "where did you draw such secrets from woman's nature? God has blessed you with wisdom. I felt, myself, by some intuition of our sex, that it was sin, not virtue, that took such pains to upbraid me."

"I drew them from the old, old plant," answered Andrew Zane; "the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Yonder, where I skimmed the surface of a bad woman; here, where I am forgiven."

"If you felt remorse," said Agnes, "you were not given up."

"After *we* were engaged that woman cast her eyes on my widowed father and notified me that I must not stand in her way. 'If you embarrass me by one word,' she said to me in her pretty, timid way, but with the look of a lion out of her florid fringes, 'I will shatter your future hearthstone. You are not fit to marry a Christian woman like Agnes Wilt. I am good enough for your father—yes,' she finished, with terrible irony, 'and to be your mother!' Those words went with me around

the world. Agnes, was I not punished?"

"To think that the son of so good a man should be bound to such a tyrant."

"Yes, she will make him steal for her, or worse. He will end by being her most degraded creature, leading and misleading to her. Theirs is an unreturning path. God keep us all faithful!"

Duff Salter became again mysterious. He sent for his trunks, and gave his address as the "Treaty House," on Beach Street, nearly opposite the monument, only a square back from the Zane house.

"Andrew," said Salter, when the young husband sought him there, "I concluded to move because there will be a nurse in that house before midsummer. If I was deaf as I once was, it would make no difference. But a very slight cry would certainly pierce my restored sensibilities now."

The Treaty House was a fine, old-fashioned brick, with a long saloon or double parlor containing many curiosities, such as pieces of old ships of war, weapons used in Polynesia and brought home by old sea captains, the jaws of whales and narwhals, figure-heads from perished vessels, harpoons, and points of various naval actions. In those days, before manufactures had extended up all the water streets, and when domestic war had not been known for a whole generation, the little low marble monument on the site of William Penn's treaty with the Indians attracted hundreds of strangers, who moistened their throats and cooled their foreheads in the great bar parlor of the Treaty House. It was still a secluded spot, shady and dewy with venerable trees, and the moisture they gave the old brown and black bricks in the contiguous houses, some of them still stylish, and all their windows topped with marble or sandstone, gray with the superincumbent weight of time or neglect. Large rear additions and sunless sideyards carried out the idea of a former gentry. Some buttonwood trees, now thinning out with annual age, conveyed by their speckled trunks the notion of a changing social standard, white and brown, native and foreign, while the lines of maples stood on blackened boles like old retired seamen, bronzed in many voyages and planted home forever. But despite the narrow, neglected, shady street, the slope of Shackamaxon went gently shelving to the edges of long sunny wharves, nearly as in the day when Penn selected this greensward to meet his Indian friends, and barter tools and promises for forest levels and long rich valleys, now open to the sky and murmurous with wheat and green potato vines.

Sitting before the inn door, on drowsy June afternoons, Duff Salter heard the adzes ring and hammers smite the thousand bolt-heads on lofty vessels, raised on mast-like scaffolds as if they meant to be launched into the air and go cleared for yonder faintly tinted spectral moon, which lingered so long by day, like the symbol of the Indian race, departed but lambent in thoughtful memories. Duff had grown superstitious; he came out of the inn door sidewise, that he might always see that moon over his right shoulder for good luck.

One morning Andrew Zane appeared at the Treaty House before Duff Salter had taken his julep, after the fashion of malarious Arkansas.

"Mr. Salter, it is all over. There is a baby at our house."

"Girl?"

"Just that!"

"I thought so," exclaimed Duff Salter. "It was truly mother's labor, and ought to have been like Agnes. We will give her a toast."

"In nothing but water," spoke Andrew soberly. "I hope I have sown my wild oats."

"I will imitate you," heartily responded Duff Salter; "for it occurred to me in Arkansas that people shot and butchered each other so often because they threw into empty stomachs a long tumbler of liquor and leaves. You are well started, Andrew. Your father's and his partner's estate will give you an income of \$10,000. What will you do?"

"I have no idea whatever. My mind is not ready for business. My serious experience has been followed by a sort of stupor—an inquiry, a detached relation to everything."

"Let it be so awhile," answered the strong, gray-eyed man. "Such rests are often medicine, as sleep is. The mind will find its true channel some day."

"Can I be of service to you, Mr. Salter? Money would be a small return of our obligations to you."

"No, I am independent. Too independent! I wish I had a wife."

"Ah! Agnes told me that besides seeing the baby when you came to the house, little Mary Byerly would be there. She is well enough to be out, and has lost her invalid brother."

"If you see me blush, Andrew," said Duff Salter, "you needn't tell of it. I am in love with little Podge, but it's all over. With no understanding of woman's sensibilities, I shook that fragile child in my rude grasp, and frightened her forever. What will you call your baby?"

"Agnes says it shall be *Euphemia*, meaning 'of good report.' You know it came near being a young lady of bad report."

"As for me, Andrew, I shall make the contract for the steeple and completion of the new church,

and then take a foreign journey. Since I stopped sneezing I have no way to disguise my sensibilities, and am more an object of suspicion than ever."

Duff Salter peeped at the beautiful mother and hung a chain of gold around the baby's neck, and was about slipping out when Podge Byerly appeared. She made a low bow and shrank away.

"Follow her," whispered Andrew Zane. "If she is cool now she will be cold hereafter, unless you nurse her confidence."

With a sense of great youthfulness and demerit, Duff Salter entered the parlors and found Podge sitting in the shadows of that thrice notable room where death and grief had been so often carried and laid down. The little teacher was pale and thin, and her eyes wore a saddened light.

"I am very glad to see you again," said Duff Salter. "I wanted your forgiveness."

Striking the centre of sympathy by these few words, the late deaf man saw Podge's throat agitated.

"If you knew," he continued, "how often I accused myself since your illness, you would try to excuse me."

After a little silence Podge said,

"I don't remember just what happened, Mr. Salter. Was it you who sent me many beautiful and dainty things while I was sick? I thought it might be."

"You guessed me, then? At least I was not forgotten."

"I never forgot you, sir; but ever since my illness you seem to have been a part of the dread river and its dead. I have often tried to restore you as I once thought of you, but other things rise up and I cannot see you. My head was gone, I suppose."

"Alas, no! I drove away your heart. If that would come back, the wandering head would follow, little friend. Are you afraid of me?"

"Sometimes. One thing, I think, is your deafness. While you were deaf you seemed so natural that we talked freely before you, prattling out our fancies undisguised. We wouldn't have done it if we knew that you heard as well as we. That makes me afraid too. Oh! why did you deceive us so?"

"I only deceived myself. A foolish habit, formed in pique, of affecting not to hear, adhered to me long before we were acquainted. If you will let me drive you out into the country to-morrow I will tell you the whole of my silly story. The country roads are what you need, and I need your consideration as much."

The next day a buggy stopped at the door, and Podge, sitting at the window with her bonnet on, saw Duff Salter, hale and strong, holding the reins. She was helped into the buggy by Andrew Zane, and in a few minutes the two were in the open country pointing toward old Frankford. They rode up the long stony street of that old village, whose stone or rough-cast houses suggested the Swiss city of Basle whence the early settlers of Frankford came. Then turning through the factory dale called Little Britain, they sped out the lane, taking the general direction of Tacony Creek, and followed that creek up through different little villages and mill-seats until they came to nearly the highest mill-pond, in the stony region about the Old York road. A house of gray and reddish stones, in irregular forms, mortised in white plaster, sat broadside to the lawn before it, which was covered with venerable trees, and bordered at the roadside by a stone rampart, so that it looked like a hanging lawn. A gate at the lawn-side gave admission to a lane, behind which was the ancient mill-pond suspended in a dewy landscape, with a path in the grass leading up the mill-race, and on the pond a little scow floated in pond-lilies. All around were chestnut trees, their burrs full of fruit. Across the lane, only a few feet from the house, the ancient mill gave forth a snoring and drumming together as if the spirit of solitude was having a dance all to itself and only breathing hard. Then the crystal water, shooting the old black mill-wheel, fell off it like the beard from Duff Salter's face, and went away in pools and flakes across a meadow, under spontaneous willow trees which liked to stand in moisture and cover with their roots the harmless water-snakes. A few cottages peeped over the adjacent ridges upon the hidden dale.

"What a restful place!" exclaimed Podge Byerly. "I almost wish I might be spirit of a mill, or better still, that old boat yonder basking in the pond-lilies and holding up its shadow!"

"I am glad you like it," said Duff Salter. "Let us go in and see if the house is hospitable."

As Podge Byerly walked up the worn stone walk of the lawn she saw a familiar image at the door—her mother.

"You here, mother?" said Podge. "What is the meaning of it?"

"This is my house, my darling. There is our friend who gave it to us. You will need to teach no more. The mill and a little farm surrounding us will make us independent."

Podge turned to Duff Salter.

"How kind of you!" she said. "Yet it frightens me the more. These surprises, tender as they are, excite me. Everything about you is mysterious. You are not even deaf as you were. What silly things you may have heard us say."

"Dear girl," exclaimed Duff Salter, "nothing which I heard from your lips ever affected me except to love you. You cured me of years of suspicion, and I consented to hear again. The world grew candid to me; its sounds were melodious, its silence was sincere. It is you who are deaf. You cannot hear my heart."

"I hear no other's, at least," said Podge. "Tell me the story of your strange deceit."

They drew chairs upon the lawn. Podge took off her bonnet and looked very delicate as her color rose and faded alternately in the emotions of one wooed in earnest and uncertain of her fate.

"I have not come by money without hard labor," said the hale and handsome man. "This gray beard is not the creation of many years. It is the fruit of anxiety, toil, and danger. My years are not double yours."

"You have recovered at least one of your faculties since I knew you," said Podge slyly.

"You mean hearing. The sense of feeling too, perhaps—which you have lost. But this is my tale: After I went to Mexico, and became the superintendent of a mine, I found my nature growing hard and my manner imperious, not unlike those of my dead friend, William Zane. The hot climate of Mexico and confinement in the mines, hundreds of feet below the surface and in the salivating fumes of the cinnabar retorts, assisted to make me impetuous. I fought more than one duel, and, like all men who do desperate things, grew more desperate by experience until, upon one occasion, I was made deaf by an explosion in the bowels of the ground. For one year I could hear but little. In that year I was comparatively humble, and one day I heard a workman say, 'If the boss gets his hearing back there will be no peace about the mine.' This set me to thinking. 'How much of my suspicion and anger,' I said, 'is the result of my own speaking. I provoked the distemper of which I am afflicted. I start the inquiries which make me distrustful. I hear the echo of my own idle words, and impeach my fellow-man upon it. Until I find a strong reason for speech, I will remain deaf as I have been.' That strong reason never arrived, my little girl, until all reason ceased to be and love supplanted it."

"There is no reason, then, in your present passion," said Podge dryly.

"No. I am so absolutely in love that there is no resisting it. It is boyishness wholly."

"I think I should be afraid of a man," said Podge, "who could have so much will as to hold his tongue for seven years. Suppose you had a second attack, it might never come to an end. What were you thinking about all that time?"

"I thought how deaf, blind, and dumb was any one without love. I found the world far better than it had seemed when I was one of its chatterers. By my voluntary silence I had banished the disturbing element in Nature; for our enemy is always within us, not without. In that seven years, for most of which I heard everything and answered none, except by my pencil, I was prosperous, observant, sober, and considerate. The deceit of affecting not to hear has brought its penalty, however. You are afraid of me."

"Were you ever in love before?"

"I fear I will surprise you again by my answer," said Duff Salter. "I once proposed marriage to a young girl on this very lawn. It was in the springtime of my life. We met at a picnic in a grove not far distant. She was a coquette, and forgot me."

Podge said she must have time to know her heart. Every day they made a new excursion, now into the country of the Neshaminy, and beyond it to the vales of the Tohicken and Perkiomen. They descended the lanes along the Pennypack and Pogessing, and followed the Wissahickon to its sources. Podge rapidly grew in form and spirits, and Agnes and Andrew Zane came out to spend a Saturday with them.

Mean time Andrew Zane was in a mystic condition—uncertain of purpose, serious, and studious, and he called one night at the Treaty tavern to see Duff Salter. Duff had gone, however, up the Tacony, and in a listless way Andrew sauntered over to the little monument erected on the alleged site of the Indian treaty. He read the inscription aloud:

"Treaty Ground of William Penn and the Indian Nations, 1682. Unbroken Faith! Pennsylvania, founded by deeds of Peace!"

As Andrew ceased he looked up and beheld a man of rather portly figure, with the plain clothes of a Quaker, a broad-brimmed hat, knee-breeches, and buckled shoes. Something in his countenance was familiar. Andrew looked again, and wondered where he had seen that face. It then occurred to him that it was the exact likeness of William Penn. The man looked at Andrew and said,

"Thee is called to preach!"

"Sir?" exclaimed Andrew.

In the same tone of voice the man exclaimed,

"Thee is called to preach!"

Andrew looked with some slight superstition at the peculiar man, with such a tone of authority, and said again, but respectfully:

"Do I understand you as speaking to me, sir?"

"Thee is called to preach!" said the object, in precisely the same tone of voice, and vanished.

Andrew Zane walked across to the hotel and saw Duff Salter, freshly arrived, looking at him intently.

"Did you see a person in Quaker dress standing by the monument an instant past?"

"I saw nobody but yourself," said Duff heartily. "I have been looking at you some moments."

"As truly as I live, a man in Quaker dress spoke to me at the monument's side."

"What did he say?"

"He said three times, deliberately, 'Thee is called to preach!'"

"That's queer," said Duff, looking curiously at Andrew. "My friend, that man spoke from within you. Do you know that it is the earnest desire of your wife, and a subject of her prayers, that you may become a minister?"

"I didn't know it," said Andrew. "But there is something startling in this apparition. I shall never be able to forget it."

To the joy of Agnes, now a happy wife and mother, her husband went seriously into the church, and the moment his intention was announced of entering the ministry, there arose a spontaneous and united wish that he would take the pulpit in his native suburb.

"Agnes," said the young man, "the dangers I have passed, the tragedy of my family, your piety and my feelings, all concur in this step. I feel a new life within me, now that I have settled upon this design."

"I would rather see you a good minister than President," exclaimed Agnes. "The desires of my heart are fully answered now. When you saw the image standing by the Treaty tree at that instant I was upon my knees asking God to turn your heart toward the ministry."

"Here in Kensington," spoke Andrew, "we will live down all imputation and renew our family name. Here, where we made our one mistake, we will labor for others who err and suffer. Such an escape as ours can be celebrated by nothing less than religion."

Duff Salter went to Tacony for the last time on the Sunday Andrew Zane entered the church. He did not speak a word, but at the appearance of Podge Byerly drew out the ancient ivory tablets and wrote:

"I'll never speak again until you accept or refuse me."

She answered, "What are you going to do if I say *no*?"

"I have bought two tickets for Europe," wrote Duff Salter. "One is for you, if you will accept it. If not I shall go alone and be deaf for the remainder of my days."

Podge answered by reaching out her lips and kissing Duff Salter plumply.

"There," she said, "I've done it!"

Duff Salter threw the tablets away, and standing up in a glow of excitement, gave with great unction his last articulate sneeze:

"Jericho! Jericho!"

THE DEAD BOHEMIAN.

My hope to take his hand,
His world my promised land,
I thought no face so beautiful and high.
When he had called me "Friend,"
I reached ambition's end,
And Art's protection in his kindly eye.

My dream was quickly run—
I knew Endymion;
His wing was fancy and his soarings play;
No great thirsts in him pent,
His hates were indolent,
His graces calm and eloquent away.

Not love's converse now seems

So tender to my dreams
As he, discursive at our mutual desk,
Most fervid and most ripe,
When dreaming at his pipe,
He made the opiate nights grow Arabesque.

His crayon never sharp,
No discord in his harp,
He made such sweetness I was discontent;
He knew not the desire
To rise from warmth to fire,
And with his magic rend the firmament.

Perhaps some want of faith,
Perhaps some past heart-scath,
Took from his life the zest of reaching far—
And so grew my regret,
To see my pride forget
That many watched him like a risen star.

Some moralist in man—
Even Bohemian—
Feathers the pen and nerves the archer too.
Not dear decoying art,
But the crushed, loving heart,
Makes the young life to its resolves untrue.

Therefore his haunts were sad;
Therefore his rhymes were glad;
Therefore he laughed at my reproach and goad—
With listless dreams and vague,
Passed not the walls of Prague,
To hew some fresh and individual road.

Still like an epic round,
With beautifulness crowned,
I read his memory, tenderer every year,
Complete with graciousness,
Gifted and purposeless,
But to my heart as some grand Master dear.

THE END

[Transcriber's Note: Inconsistencies of spelling, punctuation and accents in the original have been retained in this etext.]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BOHEMIAN DAYS: THREE AMERICAN TALES ***

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