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**REVELATIONS OF A CATHOLIC
PRIEST.**

REVELATIONS
OF A
CATHOLIC PRIEST.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE title of this Work may render it necessary to state that in "The Revelations of a Catholic Priest," there is not one line of dogmatic theology ; nor one, it is believed, which would disincline the most scrupulous Protestant or Catholic to place the book in the hands of his son or daughter.

C. H. C.

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Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

No. 1.—THE SCARSDALE FAMILY.

I do not think any candid person will consider me obnoxious to even ecclesiastical censure for transcribing from my mental diary a few curious—and, I think, instructive as curious—chapters of family history, the chief incidents of which could, of course, only have become known to me by means of the peculiarly confidential relations which subsist between a priest of the Catholic church and his penitents.

I have this conviction because no confidence will have been really betrayed, no injury inflicted, no scandal caused. Who, for example, except those who are already fully cognizant of the whole matter, will recognize in the ScarSDales of this narrative a family known for centuries by a very different name? I

may add that every corrupt, or otherwise sinful actor in the domestic dramas I propose to sketch, has passed, long since, beyond hearing of the babbling echoes of earth, beyond reach of its censure or its justice.

I left Stonyhurst on a few weeks' visit to Liverpool in the beginning of July, 1815, and, having taken priestly orders a short time before, I was invited to preach at one of the churches there. I had a gift, if gift it could be called, of florid flashing declamation, which took wonderfully with the Liverpool people at that period, but which would be as much out of place in our modern pulpits as sentimental, "My name is Norval," rhetoric in the House of Commons of the present day. Still there must, I suppose, have been some gleams of genuine fervour in the wordy firework I thought so brilliant, or it would hardly have gained the attention it did, at a time when England was shouting "Waterloo!" from one end of the country to the other.

Amongst the auditory which crowded to hear the young priest's sounding sermons was Captain Scarsdale, a cavalry officer, who had served with distinction on the great Duke's staff upon the bloody day when the star of the first Napoleon set for ever.

By sight I knew him well; by personal acquaintance slightly. His family place was not a hundred miles from Stonyhurst, and I had several times shown him and friends over that establishment, he being,

nominally at least, a Catholic. He evidently recognized me, and seemed, on the whole, pleased with my pulpit performances; though the infidel smile which curled his lips and danced in his eyes when I was *very* fine annoyed one terribly. He was not looking so well as when I had last seen him, and as his name was in the list of "wounded" in the great fight, I concluded that loss of blood had blanched his cheek and thinned his form.

He was staying for a short time at the Clarendon, and one day I received a very gracious note, inviting me to dine with him if I had nothing better, or more agreeable, to do. Nothing, certainly, more agreeable was in my programme for that day, and, much fluttered as well as flattered by the invitation, I at once accepted it. I passed a delightful evening, and we parted mutually pleased with each other.

Edward Scarsdale was a fine soldierly-looking man, not more than twenty-four years of age, and sole representative of his ancient house, which dated from the Confessor. Exceedingly well-informed, and full of anecdote—especially military anecdote—his conversation had a singular charm, not the less so that its frank gaiety was chequered by involuntary pauses of sadness, suggesting, with the fixed introspective expression of his eye, that some painful reminiscence had suddenly surged up from the troubled depths of memory.

I had long before gathered from the vague, misty

gossip of the venerable seniors at Stonyhurst that the Scarsdale family had encountered strange vicissitudes during the last two or three centuries. The evil days upon which they had for a time fallen, had, however, completely passed away, and it was generally understood that at the present time the lord of Scarsdale Castle was one of the richest landed proprietors of the county in which it stood, and would, it was thought, whenever—if ever—Catholics should be permitted to sit in Parliament, be returned for a populous borough, some six or seven miles distant from the Castle, in which he possessed large house-property.

I further recalled to mind—my memory being quickened by the condescending notice of a Scarsdale—having heard that for three or more generations only one son had been born to the lords of Scarsdale Castle, and that the mothers all died during the boys' infancy. A superstitious feeling, or belief, would, of course, be excited in the popular mind by so remarkable a fatality. The north has always been rife with similar fancies, one notable illustration being the strangely-fulfilled prediction that for seven generations no first-born son of the Lambtons—now Earls of Durham—would live to enter into his inheritance.

More than once, emboldened by Captain Scarsdale's frank cordiality, I was about to question him as to the truth of the popular rumour; but the half-formed words always died upon my tongue. With all his suave amenity of speech and manner, a certain

expression of hauteur, which effectually repelled uninvited familiarity, was never absent from his fine, aristocratic face.

The nearest approach I made to the subject was in a diagonal direction, as engineers draw near to a fortress, commencing a good way off. He had made some remark upon my last sermon, savouring strongly of heresy.

"Surely!" I exclaimed, "a Scarsdale cannot have abandoned the faith of his illustrious ancestors?"

"Don't alarm yourself," replied Captain Scarsdale, in a light, jesting tone. "No such scandal as the public renunciation of the faith of his illustrious ancestors by a Scarsdale will ever wound the sensitive bosom of holy Mother Church. We are hereditary Catholics in the popular apprehension, and shall remain so. It is a principle of honour with us. I may, however, confess to you—feeling, as I do, quite sure you will strictly keep the secret—that I have long since ceased to believe in the dogmas of your church. You look pained—shocked; but surely even you will not assert that a reasoning being's belief, or disbelief, is voluntary? Would it were!" he added, with passionate bitterness; "Would that I might by an effort of will rid myself of the torturing conviction which I hold as firmly—instinctively as did—as does Napoleon Bonaparte, that a blind, deaf, immutable destiny shapes the life, and decrees the doom of all created things."

"A most melancholy, but in your case, I trust, a

passing phase," I replied, "of a rash, undisciplined intellect. You will, of course, marry, and if rumour reports the lady's name aright, I entertain a strong hope that the believing wife will ——"

"How dare you?" he haughtily interrupted, drawing himself up, and looking down upon me from the pyramidal bones of twenty Scarsdale generations—"How dare you presume to——Pshaw! I am a passionate fool! Of course you have heard—how could you help hearing—the name of the Lady Clara Pierpoint coupled with mine?"

"I have taken," he resumed, after a reflective pause, "I have taken a liking to you, and feel sure you can be trusted. You are versed, too, young as you are, in the subtleties of the schools, and may possibly succeed in persuading me that I have mistaken certain remarkable accidents for the decrees of a relentless Fate. At all events,"—he added, after another and longer pause,—“at all events, come and see me at Scarsdale Castle. It is not so very long a journey from Stonyhurst. We can there take counsel together."

I willingly accepted the invitation, and it was settled that the visit should come off during the next week but one. His flighty, vehement speech and manner upon this occasion, set me, I remember, when I left him, upon questioning myself as to whether I had been told that insanity was hereditary in the Scarsdale family. I could not, however, recollect that I had ever heard such a thing hinted at.

A massive, battlemented, altogether baronial pile is Scarsdale Castle. It is said to have been commenced and mainly built during the wars of Maud and Stephen; whilst the modern additions, which exteriorly harmonize with the original design and character of the structure, contain splendid suites of apartments, better adapted to the tastes and requirements of the present age, than when the capability of its defence by a certain number of retainers was a castle's chief desideratum. The outview, over and beyond the magnificent deer-dotted park, is glorious in its rich, varied, highly-cultivated beauty; especially when, as at the time I first beheld it from the window of a lofty turret, the golden corn-fields, green cow-cropped pastures,—the winding silver river, famed for delicious trout, and which loses itself in the Scarsdale woods, wave, gleam, and sparkle beneath the warm kisses of a cloudless August sun. If to me the scene was magical, entrancing, how immeasurably more so must it be to him who could say, "All these are mine—mine as far as the eye can reach!"

There was a pressure on my arm, and as I turned, Scarsdale, echoing my thoughts, said, "A proud thing, is it not, to be the owner of this castle, and the rich lands which it overlooks? To possess besides, youth, health, a clear conscience, and above, before all, the precious, priceless love of the Lady Clara Pierpoint? Blessed as the immortal gods is he, Sappho would say or sing. And yet, d—— it, it is true as death and

hate, that the owner of this castle, and those rich lands,—the possessor besides of youth, health, a clear conscience, and the precious, priceless love of the Lady Clara Pierpoint, would willingly, at this moment, exchange natures with the silly deer gambolling yonder on the grass! Curse the world! Given the power, I could create a million times better, happier one! I sometimes fancy the Old Serpent made it; certainly his trail beslimes it all."

"You are surely ill, Captain Scarsdale," said I, hardly knowing what to say; "your face is deathly white, and your eyes flame as with fever. You should seek advice without delay."

"I will,—*your* advice, before I sleep. It will not, I fear, avail me much," he added, with a kind of jocular bitterness; "since you spiritual doctors cannot discern the symptoms of mind-disease, with even such slight skill as body-curers and killers usually display in ascertaining the ailments of their patients. This is not the first time it has struck me, that, as a body, you are a set of impostors. My disease is moral, I tell you, not physical."

"And you boast of a clear conscience?"

"Why, yes, as the world goes. Let us try it, as the second dinner bell has not yet rung, by the Decalogue:—

"First, I have never worshipped strange gods; nor, to be quite candid, any God at all, for the last two or three years. 'Taken his name in vain?'—

Rarely, very rarely, I think; swearing being a vulgar, plebeian habit. 'Kept holy the Sabbath-day?'—Well, so-so. I *have* honoured my father, and the memory of her whose eyes, if your doctrines are not false, opened upon another world when mine did on this. I have never killed any one, except Frenchmen,—and them legitimately. The sixth commandment I have never, to my knowledge, broken; and as to the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth,—I have no recollection of having picked a pocket, perjured myself, coveted any man's wife, his ox, his ass, or anything that was his. A tolerably clear bill of health, you will admit, sir Priest. And yet," added Captain Scarsdale, in a tone, and with a look of profound dejection,—“and yet it were better, infinitely better, in a double sense, that my mother had never borne me. Ah! there goes the second bell. Let's to dinner. The company," continued he, as we went down stairs, “the company will be few. The Lady Clara and her aunt; the Honourable Mrs. Travers, an aged relative of mine, and her grandson, Lionel Travers. It is now precisely four o'clock;—we have always dined absurdly early at the Castle:—in two hours they will all have left; so that we shall have leisure for a long confab before bed-time.”

I was received by the guests with the quiet deferential kindness which marks the intercourse of Catholic ladies with the priests of their Church; but the dinner itself was, at the same time, one of the

most superb, and the very dullest, most depressing, I have ever been present at. Superb in viands and wines, and the accessories of plate, flowers,—a noble apartment glowing with gold, servants in gorgeous liveries, *et cetera*. Dull, depressing, from the demeanour of the company. Hardly a word was spoken; Scarsdale himself was suddenly stricken dumb; and after two or three feeble efforts on my part, which only elicited a pale, faint smile from my *vis-à-vis*, the Lady Clara Pierpoint, I, too, succumbed, and sank into silence. As far as eating was concerned, the dinner was a mere sham; nobody ate anything to signify, except myself; and I, though my appetite was excellent, keen in fact, was so confused by the solitary sound of my spoon, fork, and so on, that I gave up the attempt to seriously dine; and, when the last course disappeared, was almost, if not quite, as hungry as when I sat down to table. It was really dreadful; and I could almost have fancied myself in a novel kind of purgatory, where the Dives of earth were condemned to be surrounded by the luxuries and splendours of their former state, but without power to partake of and enjoy them.

Of the guests themselves, two only require a particular description; the Lady Clara Pierpoint, and the Honourable Mrs. Travers. The others, Mrs. Moreton, Lady Clara's aunt, and Lionel, Mrs. Travers' grandson, were very common-place people. The first, a tall, pale, sad, yet kindly-looking old lady;

the youth, a quiet, handsome lad, who might, in the time to come, turn out to be a capital fox-hunter, but would certainly never set the Thames on fire.

A very, very lovely girl was the Lady Clara Pierpoint. In figure, of a medium height, and delicately moulded; complexion exquisitely fair; sweet dove-eyes, of a tremulous changeful colour, whether brown or hazel I could not quite determine; hair, a bright dark brown, shot with gold. To look at her was like looking in the face of an angel,—of an angel saddened by a Divine compassion, by an infinite tenderness and regret.

Did that compassion, tenderness, regret, have reference to Captain Scarsdale? Yes; no question of it; and in a masculine, and comparatively earthly sense, were fully reciprocated by him. To observe them quietly, from under the concealing pent-house of one's brows, and note their mutual, furtive glances, was proof unquestionable that they loved each other with an intensity of passion which less ardent natures could form no conception of.

This being so, what power of earth or heaven should bar their union? the ardent wealthy lover being his own master; the lady, and the lady's relatives, as shown by the presence of her aunt, who, she being an orphan, is the only person possessing control over her—joyfully-consenting parties. What, I ask myself again and again, can be the mysterious

influence which is evidently blighting their young lives, consigning them to remediless misery, despair?

A dark riddle, of which I cannot help suspecting that grim old ogress, the Honourable Mrs. Travers, knows the secret. Frightful old woman! though not absolutely so in features, and one can imagine that some seventy or eighty years ago she might even have been handsome. Ay, but note her moral lineaments, as with palsied hand she strokes the smooth hair of her grandson, and her age-glazed eyes scan doubtfully all present, resting for a few moments only upon Scarsdale and the Lady Clara; a slight, and as I interpret it, malignant, triumphant smile curling the while her shrivelled lips! If her sight is dull, her ear is sharp, and she, I feel sure, enjoys, and inwardly chuckles over the drear silence which reigns around. She knows what that silence signifies, rejoices in that knowledge, and either my suspicions greatly wrong her, or it is fire from the bottomless pit that kindles with momentary glare her dark deep-sunken eyes. Yet, as I afterwards knew, the Honourable Mrs. Travers is famed for piety, rigidly-ascetic piety, which I ultimately find to be nothing more than a superstitious reliance upon the rites and observances of the church, considered as so many charms or spells that will assure her heaven, though she die in unrepented of, mortal sin! There is a vast amount—I may observe, *inter alia*—of that kind of religion in the world.

None present except myself seemed to regard the

aged dame with dislike or suspicion, which I could only account for by remembering that she must have grown slowly, gradually under their eyes, and therefore unobservedly into her actual physical and moral aspects, whilst to me she was a sudden apparition.

It was an immense relief when the ladies retired, taking young Lionel Travers with them. As the door closed behind them, the spell which had sealed up Scarsdale's lips, was broken.

"Wine! wine!" he exclaimed, almost with a shout. "A bumper to the Lady Clara!" and he, himself, tossed off two in quick succession.

"You look terribly scared," he continued, "and no wonder. But tell me, is not the Lady Clara a divine piece of work?"

"There cannot be two opinions about that. But pray do you tell *me*, for I feel oppressed as with night-mare, the meaning of the dismal scene I have just witnessed! Surely there is no tie of blood between you and the Lady Clara?"

"None—none!"

"And you are deeply attached to each other; at liberty to wed any day you please! I cannot understand it for the life of me."

"You will before you sleep. Yes," he continued, "yes, we love, have for years loved each other with changeless devotion. That love it is which wraps me as with the poisoned shirt of Nessus, killing me slowly, and followed by my life-blood if

I attempt to tear it away. "Wed the Lady Clara, did you say?" he added with fierce outburst, and striking the table with closed fist. "No—no—no. Heaven forbid! It is that counsel which some fiend is ever whispering in my ear, well knowing that to do so were to damn myself beneath all depth in hell. Enough of this for the present. Let us rejoin the ladies."

The guests did not leave so soon as had been expected, so that twilight had come in, and the earlier summer stars were looking forth when I and Captain Scarsdale seated ourselves in a projecting niche of a high-up apartment, whimsically called his study. He had ordered wine, cigars, &c., to be conveyed there; but previous to placing ourselves at opposite sides of the table bearing those creature comforts, he called my attention to a full-length, most life-like portrait of his great grandmother, Margaret Scarsdale, daughter of Ralph de Brouckere, who I remembered to have heard or read had been out in the '45 rebellion, and only escaped from the catastrophe at Culloden, to be soon afterwards shot by order of the Duke of Cumberland.

The lady's exceedingly pale face was full of character, and, though not strictly handsome, fascinated one by the spiritual fire, wonderfully rendered, which flashed from her large gray eyes. She had been taken in a white dress, and partly from the extreme naturalness of the representation, partly that the unframed portrait stood up on the floor upright against

the wall, one might at a first glance have easily imagined one's self to be in the actual presence of a living woman of a tall commanding stature.

"The strange history I am about to relate," began Captain Scarsdale, "properly dates, as does the revival of the now prosperous fortunes of our house,—if wealth is prosperity,—from the marriage of the lady whom the artist has so admirably rendered in yonder portrait, with Edward Scarsdale, the twenty-third of that name in direct descent from Edward, godson of the Confessor, and one of that monarch's most valiant soldiers. A brief recital of some important events, that occurred before Margaret de Brouckere's entrance upon the scene will, nevertheless, be essential to a clear comprehension of her all-important part in the drama.

"Hereditary Catholics, holding the more stubbornly to their faith in evil times, from the same sentiment of pride and honour which would prompt them to rally with sterner devotion round their country's flag when it was exposed to the storm of adverse battle, the Scarsdales, during the reigns of the eighth Harry, Elizabeth, and James, were more or less mixed up with all the abortive plots and conspiracies of those plotting, conspiring times. The consequence to one was the loss of his head, for treasonous complicity, so called, with Babington's plot to release Mary, Queen of Scots, from her imprisonment in Fotheringay Castle. Another was accused of being privy to the

Guido Vaux gunpowder business ; falsely so, I believe, notwithstanding that he and Catesby were intimate friends. That particular Scarsdale escaped to France, thereby saving his head, though he lost his estate,—a bad exchange ! This Castle, however, which is held by a peculiar tenure, never passed into the possession of the Protestant Philistines ; albeit that, when, by favour of Charles the First, our family was openly reinstated therein, the contrast between the massive grandeur of their abode, and the meanness of their personal condition, must have been intensely irritating. They occupied but a few rooms, and were attended by two or three old servitors, who, in the true feudal spirit, accepted the evil destinies of our house with the same unhesitating alacrity as they would have shown in claiming to share, according to their degree, in its splendours.

“Time swept on, tumbling down in its course a King, setting up a Protector in his stead ; restoring Charles the Second, and driving his brother James into exile ; all without much betterment to the Scarsdales. So little, indeed, that our twenty-second Edward,—excuse this sounding magniloquence, it is a family failing which has descended to us with the Castle,—that our twenty-second Edward, I was saying, accepted a commission in Marlborough’s army, and served with distinction in most of the great battles that in those days took the conceit out of the ever-boastful French.

"Such condescension on the part of the twenty-second link in our ancestral chain, to attach itself to the new order of things, was sensible enough in purpose, but in immediate result failed miserably. The twenty-second returned from the wars no richer than he went, and shorn, moreover, of his left arm. By way of consolation, I suppose, though the recipe is discredited in these matter-of-fact days, he soon after his return,—Edward the twenty-first having died in the interim,—married. Yes, and with Dorothea Langton, a damsel poor in purse and rich in blood as himself! Her brother was the grandfather of the Honourable Mrs. Travers, whom you met at dinner.

"This lady bore her husband several children, one of whom only survived—a son. I don't mind admitting to you, that the classic creed, 'Whom the gods love, die young,' was verified in that instance; or, at all events, the gods took the best—if best there were—to themselves; leaving the survivor, as of right, to the devil. Prythee now, don't get up that sanctimonious, Stonyhurst phiz; I merely hinted my own private opinion upon the subject; nothing of more worth or weight.

"Ay, and excuses might be suggested for him," continued Captain Scarsdale, with acrid banter; "something after the fashion of the Scottish peasant-poet, whose book I have lately read, when he puts in a good word for 'Auld Nickie Ben' himself. He was—Edward the twenty-third—not Auld Nickie;

reared in an atmosphere of cankering discontent, envenomed by bitter regrets for the vanished splendour of his house, which the last words of his father enjoined him to spare no effort, no sacrifice, to restore. Add to this, that he was naturally of a sullen, dogged, envious disposition; valued nothing 'neath the sun, save birth and wealth—wealth and birth; and you will not be surprised to hear that, tempted by opportunity, he, in an evil hour, bartered away the immediate jewel of his soul, the honour of his name and race; and consigned, though in this unknowingly, his descendants to misery, despair, perdition.

“You will have understood, that the service rendered by my ancestor in Queen Anne's wars had, in a great degree, effaced the stigma of disloyalty which so long attached to our name. No tangible advantage, as I have before remarked, came with that recovered reputation; and my great-grandfather was as straitened in means as any of his predecessors when, being then about two-and-twenty years of age, he met with Ralph de Brouckere and his daughter Margaret. The de Brouckeres were zealous Jacobites, and they, judging by the centuries-old reputation of the Scarsdales, took it for granted that their new acquaintance held the Elector of Hanover and the Protestant succession in as great abhorrence as they themselves did. Moreover, I have no doubt that my great grandpapa carefully kept his latitudinarian political principles to himself; forasmuch that, finding he had made a

favourable impression upon both father and daughter, he at once resolved to mend his ragged fortunes by wedding Margaret de Brouckere. The young lady would be a wealthy heiress in landed estate; and, for various reasons, needless to be gone into, the family property, in rare jewels and costly plate, was something enormous.

"My clever, time-serving ancestor's suit was favourably entertained, and, after a few months' courtship, he and Margaret de Brouckere were united in wedlock. Ralph de Brouckere, I must tell you, had himself married very early in life, and at the time of Margaret's marriage was under forty, and vigorous in body—enthusiastic in spirit as in the morning of life. His daughter's portion was large, but he refused to make an irrevocable settlement in her favour; though he consented to make, and did actually execute a will, by which all he possessed was devised to her, with remainder to her husband and children.

"The marriage took place in 1744, and in the following year, as you well know, the rebellion in favour of the Pretender to the English throne burst forth in Scotland. Ralph de Brouckere was one of the few English gentlemen who, when the Highland army reached Derby, joined the rebels. His son-in-law earnestly dissuaded him from taking so perilous a step, but nothing could shake his determination. He, moreover, warmly resented, and showed that he warmly resented, his son-in-law's refusal himself to join the

insurgent forces. As a matter of precaution, the jewels and plate, which I have spoken of, were sent for safe keeping to Scarsdale Castle; and in the event of Ralph de Brouckere's death, his will, which was also brought here, would, it was hoped, even if the rebellion should fail, secure the landed estates to his daughter.

"The cannon of Culloden awoke the for a time successful Stuart from his dream of empire. From that fatal field Ralph de Brouckere narrowly escaped with life. Wounded, but not, as it proved, mortally, he found temporary refuge and succour with friends of the defeated cause, and ultimately reached this Castle, so well disguised, that his daughter did not at first recognize him. She was then near her first confinement.

"De Brouckere's own place, a hundred miles from this, had been taken possession of by the victors, and a more secure refuge for the hunted fugitive could not, at that terrible crisis, be hoped for than Scarsdale Castle; the owner of which had, from the first, ostentatiously declared on the side of the Brunswick dynasty, and whose father, it was remembered, had fought gallantly at Ramilies, Malplaquet, and Blenheim. Precautions were, however, taken for which the Castle offered peculiar facilities. During the Elizabethan persecutions, when it was death for a Romish priest to be found in England, a priest's "hiding hole" had been contrived so skilfully, as to thoroughly defy discovery. In that receptacle Ralph

de Brouckere was concealed, except during the few hours in the day which he passed in a private apartment with his daughter and her husband. Bitter, angry words, spite of the young wife's moderating influence, passed between the father and son-in-law; the temper of the former being, one readily imagines, exasperated by failure, defeat; of the latter, by fear lest he might be involved in the capitally-penal consequences of harbouring a rebel: for the pursuit was hot after De Brouckere.

"I am now about to turn over a shameful leaf of our family history," continued Captain Scarsdale, his pale cheek flushing with red heat, "and I must be brief with it. An anxious fortnight had passed, when soldiers suddenly presented themselves, the officer in command of whom bluntly announced that he had reason to believe the proclaimed rebel, Ralph de Brouckere, was concealed here.

"Now I do not believe"—Captain Scarsdale went on to say, the red heat of his face deepening in hue—"I do not believe—I have always refused to believe—that—that—curse it, an honest man's tongue refuses to hint such infamy! That which I do believe is, that finding himself unexpectedly, undesiredly—of course undesiredly;—the deep damnation involved in a contrary supposition could not, by possibility, have been incurred by a Scarsdale! The deed was bad, horrible enough at the best, I was saying," resumed Captain Scarsdale, after wiping the hot perspiration from his

forehead—"I was saying, or about to say, that finding himself an object of suspicion to a triumphant, vindictive government, as the harbourer of a capital rebel; knowing besides—the stifling truth may as well out—that the De Brouckere jewels and plate were concealed here; that the will, which devised the estates to his wife and himself, would, at a fitting opportunity, as the imprudent fugitive, in one of his rages had intimated, be revoked—he, my ancestor—a Scarsdale did ——

"It well-nigh chokes me—but this was the manner of it. The soldiers had been twenty-four hours in the Castle, during which indefatigable search had been vainly made for the proscribed rebel, and they were about leaving, when some communication reached the officer in command.

"The lady whose portrait I have called your attention to could not, it appears, have placed reliance in her husband's honour or good faith. She is said to have watched him narrowly all the time Cumberland's soldiers were here; and only left him to lie down, for a few minutes, after an anxious, wearisome dinner, at which she had forced herself to play courteous hostess to the Hanoverian Captain. Darkness was falling, and in the growing *hush* of the Castle, her sensitive ear caught the softly-falling, measured steps of trained men, marching stealthily—*she guessed whither*.

"A minute or two passed before she could arrange

her dress so as to appear in the presence of men. That done, she followed swiftly in the direction of the fading footsteps, so to speak, reaching *the* chamber in time, and only in time, to see her husband, with shaking finger, shaking with shame, as every member of his body must have done, to the place where her father was concealed. The next moment, before her checked pulse could beat again, her palsied tongue give forth a cry, the priest's 'hiding hole' was disclosed, and Ralph de Brouckere dragged forth by the exulting soldiers!

"We will pass swiftly over the incidents crowded into the next few hours. Identification of the rebel was the only formality preliminary to the carrying out of the commander-in-chief's sentence upon Ralph de Brouckere. That ceremony gone through, the unfortunate gentleman was led into the yard at the back of the Castle, the ruthless decree was forthwith executed, and the sharp rattle of the death shots, echoing through the daughter's chamber, mingled with the mother's cry of travail, with the wail of a man-child born into this incomprehensible world of sin and doom! The child lived; its mother died *mad* whilst the night was still young. Maud Garston, now the Honourable Mrs. Travers, was with her in the last agony: the husband could not, *durst* not look upon his murdered wife.

"The furies of Remorse and Shame pursued that husband to his dying day, which occurred when his son was in his fifteenth year.

"The last rites of the church had been administered, and feeling that what remained for him to do in life must be done quickly, if at all, he sent for his son, and in the presence of the Honourable Mrs. Travers, then a wife and mother, informed him with much solemnity, and appealing to Mrs. Travers as a witness to the truth of the statement, that his, the moribund's, murdered wife, prophesying at that supreme moment when it might be that the, to gross, fleshly eyes invisible world, reveals itself with its unspeakable splendours and mysteries—to those from which the film of mortality is falling off—declared, or predicted, that, for two succeeding generations, the wife of the lord of Scarsdale Castle would perish, as she herself did, in giving birth to a first-born child, and that in the third generation both child and mother would die, and the race in a direct line become extinct.—What say you to that?"

"That the pretended prophecy, if really uttered by the dying lady, was the mere raving of insanity. But that the Honourable Mrs. Travers must have heard it, if any one did, I should have been inclined to set it down as a maniacal delusion of De Brouckere's betrayer, engendered by the broodings of a tortured conscience."

"You will not hold to that opinion after hearing that the prediction has hitherto been literally fulfilled. My grandmother and mother both died in first child-birth, each leaving a son."

"That is, no doubt, very strange. The prophecy

may, however, as prophecies often do, have helped to fulfil itself. Were the two mothers, or either of them, informed of the prediction ?”

“I cannot say. Mrs. Travers, for many years, felt an invincible repugnance to speak upon the subject, and my two immediate predecessors always treated the alleged prophecy with unmitigated contempt. I cannot ; though I too for a long time refused to believe there was any real connection between the prediction and its apparent fulfilment. The intensity of affection I bear the Lady Clara Pierpoint has kindled a vivid, consuming dread in my mind ; and the Honourable Mrs. Travers need no longer croak her doleful warnings in my ear : I shall die wifeless, childless, and with me will terminate the direct line of the Scarsdales.”

“Does the Lady Clara Pierpoint share your superstitious fears ?”

“In a slight degree only, and for my sake she would, I know, dare the fearful venture.”

“May I ask to whom this Castle and the Scarsdale estates go, if you should die childless. To the Honourable Mrs. Travers’ grandson ?”

“Yes ! Why that question ?”

“The immense advantage to her family that you should act upon the suggestion of the so-called preternatural prediction (thereby, by the way, falsifying it—another absurdity growing out of the first) would make her zealous to croak her doleful warnings,

not in your man's ears only, but formerly in those of delicate nervous women at an always perilous crisis in their lives. This, of course, is but a random guess, and may wrong the Honourable Mrs. Travers."

"It does; be assured it does!"

"Who was with your grandmother and mother when they were seized with the pains of childbirth,—the Honourable Mrs. Travers?"

"Again that monstrous insinuation!" exclaimed Captain Scarsdale, almost fiercely. "How should I be able to answer such a question? I only remember to have heard that my grandmother expired in a frenzy of delirium; that my mother sank exhausted by a succession of hysterical fainting fits. What hideous suspicion has crossed your mind?" he added, with gathering vehemence. "You must be crazed to hint—to imagine that—that——. Besides, good heaven! it was the child, not the mother, who barred the succession to the Travers' branch of the family."

"It is not always, nor very often, I believe, that a child whose mother dies in giving it birth attains to healthy man or womanhood. Be calm, sir; be calm," I added. "You have honoured me with your confidence, and asked for my counsel. I must therefore speak all my mind; you are, however, too much excited for further discourse to-night. Another time we can speak again upon the matter."

Captain Scarsdale silently acquiesced, rang the bell for a servant, and I was conducted to my bed-

chamber. My sleep was disturbed, unrefreshing. On the following day I seized an opportunity of renewing the subject, but to my surprise Captain Scarsdale fought nervously shy of it; remarked, with some acerbity, that I had excited a horrible doubt, impossible of solution, in his mind, and that he was heartily sorry he had conferred with me upon so distressing a family matter.

With singular inconsistency he, nevertheless, pressed me to prolong my stay at the Castle, and, finding he was earnestly desirous that I should do so, I consented. The subject-matter of our former conversation was not again touched upon, but I could not fail to perceive that Captain Scarsdale's mind was becoming daily more and more gloomily morbid, and that a feeling of dislike and suspicion was growing upon him towards the Honourable Mrs. Travers, and of positive hatred for her grandson Lionel Travers.

Upon one occasion he incidentally remarked, that had he not lost his faith he would turn monk, and that his present intention was to take service, no matter on what side, in the first war that might spring up in Europe or America. He added that, in common justice to the Lady Clara Pierpoint, and with a faint hope that his own peace of mind might be, in some slight degree, restored thereby, he had determined to see her no more, till upon the point of leaving England for ever. I also understood him to say

that he had made a will by which she was bequeathed all the personals at his disposal.

Such was the aspect of affairs at Scarsdale Castle, when an accident, as men call such visitations, befell the Honourable Mrs. Travers. She was out in a carriage for an evening drive, when something startled the horses, which ran away at a fearful pace, the carriage was overturned, the Honourable Mrs. Travers thrown out with great violence, and so injured that she died about three hours afterwards.

The accident took place at no great distance from the Scarsdale Arms, a large road-side inn, whither she was immediately conveyed.

For a considerable time the Honourable Mrs. Travers refused to believe that the last hour of her long life—she was approaching ninety—could be close at hand. At length, however, the calm insistence of the medical gentlemen in attendance, enforced, no doubt, by internal monitions, convinced her that the fell serjeant Death would be swift as strict in his arrest; and, after some minutes of gloomy, savage silence, she began screaming for a priest, demanding, with frantic eagerness, that one should be brought to her without a moment's delay.

The reverend gentleman who would in usual course have been summoned happened to be many miles away, and I was consequently sent for. When the mounted messenger reached the Castle, I and

Captain Scarsdale had just returned from a ride in the park, and the message was delivered before either had dismounted. We were naturally much startled, not having before heard of the accident, and I bade the servant hasten back to the Scarsdale Arms and say I would be there with all possible speed. I had to provide myself with a stole, and various matters necessary to the administration of the last rites of the church.

"You will hear her general confession," said Captain Scarsdale, with extreme agitation. "And—if—if—. But your lips will be sealed?"

"No question of that."

"To be sure—to be sure! Well, I shall see you on your return, meanwhile I will take another gallop," and he rode off.

It was nearly dark without when I reached the Scarsdale Arms, quite so in the death-chamber to which I was softly ushered—darkness rendered more palpable by the glimmering light of three candles, which, with a crucifix, had, according to usage in such cases, been ranged upon a table at the foot of the heavily-curtained bedstead on which lay the Honourable Maud Travers. The candles threw a ghastly lustre upon the white, withered face and darkening, restless eyes which searched mine with troubled inquisition.

"Not him—not him!" she murmured. "Ah, I know, the other is away; well, well, he is a priest,

that is sure ; put on your stole, reverend sir," she continued, with an effort to speak louder, "The sands in the hour-glass are nearly run out. I thought a while ago you were come, and could have sworn it was a man's step, but my ear must have been at fault, for the woman says no one came in but herself. Be gone, hussey, we must be alone—quite alone ! A priest dare not tell," she added, muttering in an undertone to herself. "At peril of eternal damnation, he dare not. The secret will be safe still,—and I—shall be absolved !"

The dying sinner mechanically repeated the Confiteor, and the terrible confession began—continued—my hair—I was a very young priest remember,—fairly rising up at parts of it with surprise, horror, ay, and with profound compassion for a soul so sin-spotted about to appear, at such brief summons, before its Creator and Judge.

It was finished at last, and I was about to exercise my duty and right of rebuke, expostulation, of warning, to repent whilst there was yet time of her deadly, mortal sins, when a heavy window-curtain was drawn back, and a man started out of the encircling gloom into the revealing candlelight.

"Accursed wretch !" shouted Scarsdale, for it was he. "Accursed wretch, murderess, devil——"

He was interrupted by a broken, spasmodic scream. The dying woman had instantly recognized the intruder, and, starting half-up in bed, glared at him

with distended, flaming eyes; the last fitful flash of the burnt-out lamp of life about to sink in the socket.

"Betrayed! betrayed!" she faintly shrieked. "Undone!—ruined!—lost!—lost eternally! No—no—no!" she continued, rapidly, and turning towards me, "You—you are a real priest. Quick, quick with the absolution! The viaticum—the holy oil. Quick!—quick, I say, or—or ——"

The feeble breath rattled in her throat; the flickering fire in her eyes went out. She was dead!

Late in the evening of the day upon which the body of the Honourable Mrs. Travers was deposited in its last resting-place, Captain Scarsdale and I were again seated in the high-up apartment called his study, and I had again perused, with much deeper interest than before, the finely-rendered, striking lineaments of Ralph de Brouckere's daughter. The demeanour of Captain Scarsdale upon this occasion was subdued, even solemn; yet was there a lustre in his eye, a glow upon his cheek, which were never in my remembrance there before.

"The device"—said he, resuming a conversation which the entrance of a servant had interrupted—"the device was quite justifiable. It was precisely a case in which the end justifies the means. The idea of being secretly present at the Honourable Mrs. Travers' confession flashed upon me the instant I heard she was dying at the Scarsdale Arms, the land-

lord of which would, I knew, facilitate my design. I was well placed for hearing," added Captain Scarsdale, "but the unhappy, guilty woman sometimes spoke in so low a tone that there were many sentences I did not catch."

"I can well believe that you heard little or nothing distinctly."

"You are mistaken. I heard her distinctly admit that she—herself—had invented the prediction, and found no difficulty in persuading De Brouckere's betrayer that it had been uttered by his dying wife. Her brain was but a girl's then, she said, though a scheming one, and she bitterly regretted in after years not having invented one better adapted to accomplish its purpose—that of deterring my grandfather from entering into the state of marriage. Finding that her scheme did not answer her hopes, she, with inexorable persistence, secretly and in strictest confidence worked upon the superstitious terrors of his wife, a highly sensitive woman, in delicate health. As the time of her confinement drew on, the Honourable Mrs. Travers, after much cogitation as to the best means of effecting her purpose, hit upon an expedient for giving her already terror-stricken victim the *coup-de-grace*, which, she thought, could hardly fail, and eagerly, unpausingly watched for an opportunity of carrying it into effect.

"The portrait, yonder portrait of Margaret de Brouckere, my grandmother had never seen; but the

Honourable Mrs. Travers had taken especial pains to render her, by means of other likenesses—all miniatures, I believe—thoroughly familiar with the deceased lady's very peculiar features; a circumstance which proves to me that the scheme was not so sudden an inspiration of the devil as she pretended to you."

"Go on, Captain Scarsdale—go on. Indulge your fancy without restraint."

"Fudge, about fancy! According to her the devil suddenly prompted her to secretly convey yon portrait, then unframed, as now, to an unused closet adjoining the ailing young wife's chamber, the key of which the Honourable Mrs. Travers took care to possess herself of, and watch for an opportunity of using said portrait with effect. That opportunity came. Mrs. Scarsdale, feeling ill towards evening, was persuaded by her sedulously-anxious friend to lie down, and strive to sleep, and she—the sedulously-anxious friend—would take care meanwhile to have the surgeon-accoucheur in attendance. The young wife fell off into a doze, and was suddenly awakened to behold the apparition of Margaret, the prophetess, gazing at her from the foot of the bed, and to hear herself summoned in unearthly tones to appear before the tribunal of God before the sun rose again. The vanishment of the portrait behind the thick bed-curtains was, of course, easily managed, and one cannot feel surprised that the unhappy lady, in her then mental and physical condition, was utterly crazed by the

seemingly supernatural visitation, and, as I have before told you, she died raving mad. The diabolical assassin felt satisfied; she told you that my grandfather would never marry again, under any circumstances, or to gain any object, and she would have found means, I heard her mutter, to make away with the child, only that it was a Scarsdale. A strange chaos of contradictions is the human heart ! ”

“ Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

“ I thought she hinted, too, that the boy’s father seemed to watch her doings closely. However, to make an end of this eventful history, it is only necessary to add that her second victim was disposed of by comparatively simple, natural means. My mother, like her predecessor, was a woman of highly excitable temperament, affected, indeed, the physician feared, with disease of the heart. I was born in 1792, during my father’s absence in France, whither he had gone on business of pressing importance; but to quiet my mother’s alarms, he had assured her that he was only going to Brussels. Every day’s post brought tidings of the murderous hurly-burly going on in Paris; and, though I could not catch her words distinctly, I think the Honourable Mrs. Travers admitted that she had, as if incautiously, expressed fears that my father might have proceeded to that city. Be that as it may, the fiend certainly helped his own at that particular pinch. My mother was safely delivered of a man-child, myself, and was thought to be doing well,

when a letter arrived from Paris, directed to the Honourable Mrs. Travers, informing her that my father had perished in the Septembrist massacre. The letter was from the uncle of the Lady Clara Pierpoint, and suggested that the terrible news should be as long as possible withheld from my mother, and when communicated to her to be so as carefully, gently as possible. That letter was delivered at the Honourable Mrs. Travers' residence. She ran it over, perceived at once the infernal purpose it might be made to serve, put it in her reticule, hastened over here, and, taking it out in my mother's chamber, affected to there break the seal and read it. The sudden shock overpowered her, she emitted a piercing scream, pretended to faint, and the fatal missive dropped on the floor. It was handed to my mother. You know the rest. Heartless—remorseless—infamous wretch!" exclaimed Captain Scarsdale, with a burst of emotion. "Who, but for her own avowal, would believe that a woman's form could have clothed and concealed so fiendish a spirit?"

"My excellent health again baffled her devilish purpose. She feared to take the nearest way to its accomplishment, and I grew up only to have assuredly crowned her hopes, but for the happily-overheard confession the other evening."

"A singular story, Captain Scarsdale; and, as you evidently believe you heard all that, I foresee a happy *dénouement*. Just now we will, however, if

you please, drop the subject, and amuse ourselves with a game of chess."

* * * * *

Not many months after the death of the Honourable Mrs. Travers, there were grand doings at Scarsdale Castle, in honour of its owner's marriage with the Lady Clara Pierpoint.

Some very remarkable fatality, I may observe in conclusion, must befall the Scarsdale family if it is to become extinct in the direct line, forasmuch that the heirs male (sons and grandsons) cannot be less than two score at the present time. As to the daughters and grand-daughters, their name is legion.

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

No. 2.—THE FISHERS OF THE NORTH SEA.

A LONG holiday in the autumn months of the year — on the eastern coast of England, not far distant from the principal port, caused me to become, not only a close spectator, but, to a certain extent, an actor in the first or introductory act of the drama, which, with more or less appropriateness, I have entitled "The Fishers of the North Sea." Most of the subsequent scenes I obtained partial glimpses of through the narrow aperture of the confessional, till the *éclaircissement* just before the fall of the curtain cleared up all doubts, and placed the *dramatis personæ* in their proper places. I propose, however, for the sake of perspicuity, and to avoid doubling back, as it were, upon the current of circumstance, to, as

nearly as I can, tell the story, as, in the end, I knew it to have fallen out, thus sparing the reader much of the perplexity which I myself suffered whilst the scenes were being acted.

Two respectable families, the Mowbrays and Dentons, occupied two substantially-built roomy cottages on the coast, two or three hundred yards inland from high-water mark. Their dwellings were within a stone's cast of each other; they were Catholics; obtained their subsistence by fishing in the North Sea, and to render the connection yet more intimate were partners in the *Wave*, a tight cutter of some forty tons burthen, with which they carried on with fair success deep sea fishing.

I lodged with the Mowbrays, but, as a necessary consequence of my special functions, was equally at home with the Dentons. It will be necessary to depict the individuals of both families with some minuteness.

William Mowbray, a native of the bonnie north, was over fifty, perhaps nearer sixty years of age, but hale, wiry, and his iron-gray hair thick as it could have been in youth. A stern, silent man, sparing of even necessary speech. The scant, sharp words, except when speaking to his daughter, rumbling through his cold firm lips, together with the square massive jaw, at once convincing you that he was a man of iron will and cankered disposition. He came of a good stock, as indeed most English Catholics do ('I do not

mean converts) their religion, not always based upon faith, being often a sort of heir-loom, stowed carelessly away in the dusty lumber rooms of memory, but to repudiate or part with which, in evil times, would be cowardice, dishonour!

I knew little, almost nothing, of his antecedents, the dim guesses thereat, which I was able to make, being founded upon no more reliable basis than certain expressions, which during fits of introspective musing sometimes escaped him. Echoes they seemed to be of a gloomy episode in his life, with which his daughter Clara appeared to be, in some indirect way, involved. A sweet girl was Clara Mowbray; not so remarkable for feature-beauty as indescribably engaging with her soft, timid eyes, changeful complexion, gentle patient voice, and altogether reliant, beseeching, graceful ways. She was about seventeen, and the apple of her father's eye, though the brimming tenderness which often at the sound of her voice, of her step, I have seen overflow and course down his rugged, weather-beaten cheeks, would be sometimes strangely manifested, as if the very graces of his child awoke memories which maddened him.

One instance I have a vivid remembrance of. Clara was assisting Margaret Davis, housekeeper, servant of all work, and brave, honest woman, in some household duty, and singing, warbling, snatches of old songs as she did so. Mr. Mowbray was gone to the

not far off town, and was not expected to be back for several hours. It chanced, however, that he had forgotten something, and returned to procure it. Clara did not hear his step, and after a brief pause in her singing or carolling, suddenly struck into the old ditty,—

“When William at eve met me down at the stile,
How sweet was the nightingale’s song”—

when her father, whose foot was on the threshold of the open door, her back being towards him, leapt forward as if a bullet struck him, seized poor Clara’s arm with one hand, and uplifted the other as if about to fell her to the ground, whilst a frightful malediction surged through his clenched teeth. The blow was arrested by the girl’s upturned charming face; and the strong, stern man, bursting into a passion of tears, caught her up and hugged her to him with frenzied love; then hurried off to his own room. “Don’t weep lass,” I heard Margaret Davis say. “The master meant thee no unkindness. It was thy mother’s song, and the sound of it sets him crazy. I thought he was a mile or more away.”

The Denton family were two brothers, John and James Denton, the eldest quite ten years his brother’s senior. John had been wild in his youth, and till within a short period of his father’s death had led an irregular, dissipated life. He was reformed, folks said, though not unfrequently with a sly sneer, sug-

gestive that the change was only on the surface. His reformation, such as it was, dated from the day of his acquittal of a criminal charge, which established, would have sent him across the herring-pond. He was indicted for night-poaching, and a murderous assault upon one Reid, a sailor, who for reasons of his own had tracked his steps in the hope of catching him *flagrante delicto*. There had been bad blood between him and Reid for a long time, arising from jealousy; he, Reid, having supplanted him in the good graces of a damsel, whom Reid afterwards married. The encounter between the two has therefore something of the character of a duel, a consideration which was said to have influenced the jury in giving John Denton the benefit of some discrepancy in the evidence adduced against him.

Be that as it may, he was completely sobered by the narrow escape he had made; forthwith returned to the paths of honest industry, and, after his father's decease, engaged steadily in the fishing business, in concert with his brother and William Mowbray.

Reid's marriage was not a happy one. The wife, so gossips hinted, had really preferred John Denton, though she jilted him in a fit of girlish caprice. Whether that was true or false, Reid went swiftly to the bad, indulged in vicious intemperance, and, from being first mate in a large ship, was ultimately fain to accept a birth in *The Wave*, under his old rival, John Denton. People used to say, under their breath, that

they hoped John Denton had no more malice in his heart against Reid than his smooth speech indicated, as otherwise an *accident* would be pretty sure to befall the husband of Mary Marny that was, during some dark night in the North Sea.

James Denton, the younger brother, was a mild, inoffensive man, fond of reading during his leisure hours; and, though a prime sailor and fisher, much preferring a land to a sea life,—particularly, as I easily saw, shy and diffident as he was, if the former life were shared by Clara Mowbray. That aspiration, I was equally sure, was, and would always be, a vain one.

The foregoing details I gleaned from common gossip or report. The three seamen-fishers though, as I have said, professing Catholics, were systematically neglectful of their religious duties; whilst Clara Mowbray, with Margaret Davis, attended at a Chapel in the neighbouring town.

The deep-sea fishing was not over for the year, and some needful repairs having been completed, *The Wave* sailed on a voyage which might last a month, more or less.

I was on the beach sometime before the cutter lifted anchor. The crew consisted of Mowbray, the two Dentons, Reid, and a boy. Mowbray had taken leave of his daughter at the cottage, but Reid's wife was on the beach holding a little boy by the hand. She was a young, comely woman, poorly but neatly

clad, and I watched her with some curiosity. Her husband shook hands with her, and she wished him, coldly enough I thought, a pleasant voyage. Two or three minutes afterwards, John Denton came up,—seemed about to offer her his hand, checked himself—a hot flush reddening his swarthy face—and, with a low-toned “Good by, God bless you,” passed on towards the boat. The young woman blushed scarlet, perceiving that my eye was fixed upon her, and stooped down to kiss her child, and conceal her face; at the same time making the sign of the cross; doubtless to shield herself from or exorcise some wicked thought or wish that had arisen in her mind. At least, I so interpreted an act which the more surprised me, that I did not know she was a Catholic. I now learned that she was the offspring of Irish parents, and that her maiden name was Mary Mahony, not Marny, as had I heard it pronounced.

The Wave soon disappeared round a high, rugged bluff, which at that part of the eastern coast stretches out to sea a long way beyond low-water mark, and I returned to the Mowbrays a good deal disturbed by the little incident I had witnessed.

The Wave had left for about a fortnight, when the equinoctial gales set in much earlier than usual, and with great and continuous violence. Clara Mowbray’s delicate cheek paled to the palest hue of the lily, and tearful orisons superseded pleasant song, as we listened of an evening to the howling wind, and the raging

sea, which at high tide flung its spray upon the cottage windows, as if, suggested fear-prompted fancy, announcing to the inmates that the resistless ocean had entombed *The Wave* and all on board, in its devouring, insatiable depths. It was vainly urged, by seafaring dwellers thereabout, that well-found fishing cutters almost always made fine weather of it, when ships of large tonnage were dashed like waifs upon shore and rock. Clara, who devotedly loved her father, could not be argued out of her terrors; and one evening, the fifth or sixth of the tempest, she was literally overborne by fear, and, lying embraced in Margaret Davis's claspings arms, sobbed forth her conviction that evil tidings would reach us before many hours had passed. That fear proved to be prophetic, though not in the sense apprehended by the prophetess. Of course it was a mere fancy, born of filial love and apprehension. I have but slight faith in the poetic conceit that coming events cast shadows before, unless be meant the ever-deepening shadows of yet unrevealed crime, which frown and darken round the conscious criminal's stumbling steps.

I rose early the next morning, and found that the violence of the hurricane had much abated. This seemed to in some degree reassure Clara Mowbray; and when at about ten o'clock, a sail, making evidently for the inlet, was announced, we all three hurried towards the beach in a state of feverish but hopeful excitement.

I could not, for a considerable time, discern any vessel amidst the yeast of waters, patiently as an old seaman brought what he declared was *The Wave*, or his name was not Tom Blako, within the field of the glass, with the use of which he obliged me. At last I *did* discern the tiny vessel careering towards us; and, so seeing, felt no doubt whatever of her safety, so victoriously did she seem to ride upon the seething, baffled billows.

Scarcely another hour had elapsed when *The Wave* was snugly anchored under the lea of the curving bluff, before spoken of. A boat brought crew and passengers on shore, the passengers, if I may so designate them, being seven persons, fortunately picked off by *The Wave*, from a dismasted sinking English yacht. Every other person belonging to the *Diamond* had been washed overboard or had otherwise perished. The seven rescued men were five seamen, the cook, and Mr. Archibald Kirkton, a young gentleman who had accompanied the titled owner of the yacht in a cruise up the Baltic, returning from whence the fatal catastrophe had occurred.

"Where is Reid?" I asked, not seeing him, of the younger Denton.

"He fell overboard one night, or, more correctly, early one morning before it was quite light, when we were closer than was pleasant to the Danish coast, and there was a tremendous sea on, that swept the cutter from stem to stern every five or six minutes.

It was nearly up with all of us, for my brother, who was at the helm, was flung at the same time into the lee scuppers, and *The Wave* broached too, burying herself in the sea."

A reply given with such voluble readiness suggested a suspicion that the fear which had fastened upon my brain had cast its shadow over his.

"Was your brother the only person upon deck, at the time?"

"Yes, sir: Mowbray, the lad, and I had gone below to shift our things, and get a caulker."

"There is no doubt that Reid perished?"

"Not the least. I was mortal sorry for the poor fellow, and the more so as the accident happened in our vessel. That it *was* an accident," added the brother with an earnest, thought-betraying look, as he came closer to me and spoke in a yet lower key, "That it *was* an accident I feel as sure as that I, myself, am alive, and Reid drowned."

Further questioning would I felt avail nothing, and I turned away, perforce content to wait for such revelation of the truth as God in his own good time might vouchsafe to give.

The seamen that had been rescued from the *Diamond* left on the following day, but Mr. Kirkton, who had suffered some slight hurt, determined to remain for a while, and engaged to lodge with the Dentons. He was a young man of prepossessing presence, and cultivated, though by no means vigorous mind. I was

soon aware that the only serious hurt which detained him in that rude locality was inflicted by Cupid's arrow tipped with the penetrative though lambent light of Clara Mowbray's eyes. This discovery excited no fear in my mind for the lowly-placed, but high-thoughted maiden. Clara's was, I felt sure, a stronger spirit than his; stronger by inherent force, though not scholastically trained, as had been his feebler, impulsive faculties. No, there was no fear for Clara Mowbray. Though genial and gentle to a degree, she was not less remarkable for a direct clearness of perception which I was quite satisfied no sophistic platitudes of Mr. Kirkton, however gilded, would, for a moment, pervert or dazzle.

This reasoning, experience taught me, was sound only to a certain extent. The probable peril to the maiden's peace of mind from such an intimacy did not suggest itself to me. Sin, she was indeed safe from, but not, I should have known, from suffering, poor girl!

The illness of a dear friend called me suddenly away from a place to which I had no thought of returning, and that I did so was owing to an accident. At that time there was no Roman Catholic hierarchy in England, such as now exists, and always has, in a modified degree, in Ireland. As a consequence missionary priests established in chapels (there were no Catholic *churches* then), built and supported by their own flocks, could not be dispossessed by a bishop, and

practically chose their own coadjutors and successors. The Reverend Mr. —, pastor of the scant congregation to which Clara Mowbray belonged, was struck with paralysis: he was over seventy years of age. Having partially recovered, the necessity of immediately obtaining the services of a priest, for his very poor mission, pressed painfully upon his mind. I had made his acquaintance, and knowing, as he did, that I was not altogether dependent upon the Church for subsistence, he wrote to me requesting, that, as a matter of Christian charity, I would undertake his duties till such time as it might please God to restore him to perfect health, or remove him from the scene of his labours. I so far complied with the good man's rather extravagant request, by consenting to officiate in his place for three months, or till such time as the aid of another priest could be had.

One determining motive on my part—subordinate, I may be permitted to say, to a conscientious desire to be useful in the vocation I had chosen for myself—was to personally ascertain how it fared with those Fishers of the North Sea. Whether my estimate of Clara Mowbray's character had been borne out by the result: if, through chinks made by time,—a brief time certainly—any ray of light had been thrown upon the tragedy which I was morally sure had been acted on board *The Wave*, on that dark stormy morning when John Denton and Reid were alone together on the sea-swept cutter's deck.

The answer, as far as concerned Clara Mowbray, was a reassuring one. I read it in her face on the first Sunday morning I celebrated Divine service, she and Margaret being present. Clara was a thought paler than when I last saw her, but the sweet pride of her look and bearing was more prideful than ever. Not prideful in the sense of a vulgar vanity, but with the modest consciousness of God-given graciousness of feature and form, such as the rose may, by a fanciful mind, be supposed to display when it flutters and blushes in the embrace of the sweet south,—in the kindling kisses of the sun.

Upon the site of that humble chapel a splendid temple has been since erected, where, as newspaper advertisements duly announce, Mozart's No. 12, or Haydn's No. 2, is performed with orchestral accompaniments. I may, however, be permitted to doubt that melodious, finely-harmonized prayers and praise can be more acceptable to Him, whose most grateful incense is a contrite heart, a humble thought, than the "unaccompanied" petitions of some fifty lowly worshippers—certainly not more—to whom I preached on that dull December morning, in that poor chapel.

This, by the way, is but a clumsily-introduced individual opinion that will not command much respect, there being, as I am quite aware, much to be said in glorification of the aids to religion which the "divine art," in master-hands, supplies. Be it so. Passing from the topic, I go on to state that the subdued,

tearful devotion of the scant congregation, on that particular occasion, is the more vividly impressed upon my memory, because associated with the misfortunes, the crimes, the remorse of a seaman whose bowed face I could not see. He was sitting in the darkest corner of the dingy chapel, and sobbed convulsively,—I mean as if he were choking,—more than once or twice during the sermon, the text of which was that holiest, because humblest prayer, “Lead us not into temptation.”

The “*Ite Missa Est*” pronounced, the congregation slowly withdrew, but that man kept his seat, not once uplifting his head. I watched him from the half-opened door of the closet which did duty for a vestry-room. At last all but he had left, and the woman pew-opener, nudging him on the elbow, intimated that he too must be gone. Starting up, he revealed the countenance of Mowbray, Clara’s father! He gave the importunate woman, money, and without a word came hurriedly towards the vestry-room.

“I did not expect to hear *you*, sir,” he said. “Nor indeed that I should have come into the chapel. Chapels have been out of my latitude for many a year. Never mind that. Some passages in your sermon have ripped up old wounds; shown me myself in a far from flattering glass. *I have* yielded to temptation; the tempter being the demon of vengeance! Of *just* vengeance, if which you deny, vengeance belongs to man: no more of that. I wish you to say masses for

the souls of a—a woman, and fourteen men who were drowned in the North Sea on the 7th of April, fifteen years ago. The labourer is worthy of his hire," he added, placing a leather purse upon the table.

"What are the names?"

"Surely the names cannot signify! The intention is all. God will know whom we mean!

"Nevertheless, it is usual to ——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Mowbray. "Well, the woman's name was—was Clara; that of one of the men, Saunders. I know nothing of the others. Good day, reverend sir. We shall soon, I hope, see you at our poor place. Not a word of this to my child," he added, stepping back; "Not a word to my child—to Margaret, to anybody. But of course not. Good day, reverend sir."

Clara! His daughter's mother, mayhap, whose favourite song had so excited him? I feared so—and that fear gave a shadowy distinctness to Saunders. I had no difficulty in partially filling up the outline of the drama indicated by Mowbray's words and offering. At a future time the awakening conscience of the man might afford me an opportunity of more clearly reading the dark leaves of the tablet of memory over which the catastrophe of the *Diamond* and my poor sermon, had, as it seemed, cast a lurid, startling light.

It did not strike me that the outer life of the

Mowbray and Denton families had considerably changed since I left. The men worked diligently as ever, at their along-shore fishing, and Clara Mowbray having done her household tasks,—much lightened by Margaret's industrial ardour,—listened of an evening with sparkling eye, and varying cheek, to Archibald Kirkton's pleasant reading of a pleasant book. He had been absent for about a fortnight, and had excused his return by stating that an eminent London physician assured him that sea-air was essential to the perfect recovery of his health.

The instinctive perception, in such cases, of femality, had, of course, enabled Clara and Margaret to put the true interpretation upon such an excuse; and Mowbray himself was, I saw, quite alive,—nervously so,—to what was going on. A man of his strong common-sense could not, I hoped, for a moment imagine that the confessed superiority of his daughter to girls in her station of life would bridge over, even in the fantastic estimate of a lover, the immense gulf which, in this country, divides such divergent classes as those to which William Mowbray and Archibald Kirkton respectively belonged.

At my second visit to his cottage, I was solicitous to speak with Mowbray upon the subject, the growing disquietude of his manner urging me to do so; and I was about to gently introduce the topic, when he abruptly turned the conversation upon the Dentons. John, the eldest, would, he said, be the young widow

Reid's husband before many days had passed. "A weak, if not wicked fool," he added, with splenetic emphasis, "to be snared by a pretty face. Yet that is a world-old story. His brother James has taken to drink, I am sorry to say. As to——"

He was interrupted by the quick turning of the door-handle, and *brusque* entrance of James Denton, whose face was a flame, whether or not with the excitement of liquor I could not immediately determine. He held in his hand a sheet of paper, partially written upon.

"Here is proof in black upon white!" he exclaimed. "The villain went out and forgot to lock his door. Read; convince yourself that—— Ha!"—perceiving me, and checking himself—"I thought Mowbray was alone."

"He shall be in a moment," said I; and forthwith left.

This occurred at two o'clock in the afternoon, and at about four I was again with William Mowbray, at his own strongly-urged request. He was deeply moved. The letter, which the younger Denton had purloined and brought him, was one written by Kirkton to an acquaintance in London. Unmistakable allusion was made therein to Clara Mowbray, in reply, it seemed to some quizzing query, anent "the enchanting fish-girl;" which reply was conclusive as to Mr Kirkton's intention towards the said fish-girl, who would, Mr. Archibald Kirkton appeared to think, require a long siege.

"The letter of a contemptible dastard," I remarked. "Still, it is not quite certain that it expresses the writer's true sentiments in regard of your daughter."

"Surely you do not, in saying that, express your true thoughts!" replied Mowbray, with flashing heat. "Excuse me, sir, I am not quite myself;—shall not be till I have talked with this Kirkton. He will be here presently. A new book has come out, which he is to read to Clara, d—n him! Right—right, reverend sir. Swearing is at best but a silly manifestation of a father's rage."

"I have not always been as I am now," continued Mowbray. "That equivocal boast does not surprise you. I did not suppose it would. Well, sir, the contrast between *now* and *then*, practically unknown, thank God, to my daughter, has been an eating cancer in my latter life; chiefly because Clara will, if aught befall me—and death is always busy with us North Sea fishers,—have to cast her in lot permanently with the honest but rude people amongst whom she now dwells, but in a moral, and I will add in a social, sense, apart."

"There can be no doubt of that. Permit me, nevertheless, to urge that——"

"Bear with me, sir," broke in Mowbray. "My heart is full, and the flood-gates being opened,—your sermon on the Sunday before last loosened the time and sin rusted bolts,—the torrent must have unchecked way. I was about to say that the chance which

seemed to present itself, that Clara would be lifted up to the social status—higher even, though not so very high, after all,—which once was mine, misled, blinded my judgment. I shut my eyes, and said it was dark. O fool! fool! fool!”

“You cannot doubt your daughter’s good sense,—her prudence?”

“No, I cannot, do not doubt that Clara is pure in thought and deed as an angel. *So was her mother once.* I will not expose Clara to temptation. Remember your own sermon, sir;—the sin, the mortal sin of doing so. The first created woman, fresh from the hand of God, fell before the glozing wiles of the tempter.”

“True. You intend, then, to forbid any further intercourse between Kirkton and your daughter?”

“No, no, no! Not directly to forbid that intercourse. I propose to tell Kirkton a story, an anecdote relating to myself and others; which story or anecdote he will, I am quite sure,—I have read him well,—take to heart. Why, you know as well as I do that the best of girls,—and Clara is, I verily believe, one of the best,—if *forbidden* to encourage the addresses of a suitor will invent a thousand devices for eluding the parental command. I shall play a better card than that, and I am anxious that you, sir, should be present when I play it,—some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour hence.

“There is another person I wish to be present,”

continued Mowbray, in a subdued, solemn tone, "and that person is John Denton. Strange coincidences, striking similitudes occur much oftener than people imagine in the play and whirl of this strange life. You have doubts, I am sure you have, as to how poor Reid, the husband of the woman whom John Denton means to marry, lost his life. So have I;—strong doubts."

"What then is your purpose, Mr. Mowbray?"

"I am not sure that I myself know. I mean as to the effect of that which I purpose to do or say. We shall see. What was I thinking of? Oh! the play of Hamlet, where the cunning scene, reproducing the king's crime, affords irrefragable proof of the king's guilt. Now, do you mark, reverend sir,—my mind will be otherwise occupied,—do you mark John Denton's demeanour whilst I relate the story or anecdote I have spoken of. This proposed marriage of his with the widow Reid annoys, irritates, disgusts me. I see, sir," added Mowbray, after a pause, and with a chilly smile, "I see, sir, that you almost doubt whether or not it is William Mowbray, the fisherman, who is speaking to you; and that if so, William Mowbray must be a little drunk!"

"Mr. Mowbray you *are* much excited; but as to your being drunk, such a thought has not entered my head."

"It would be a very natural thought for all that. I have drunk a large quantity of brandy since I read

that puppy's letter. To drown remorse. I do not at all blame Clara, and I curse myself."

John Denton came in, but shrank back at finding me there.

"Come in, mate," said Mowbray, sinking at once into his ordinary, colloquial style. "His reverence won't bite you. I want to have a chat with you about several things. Fill your pipe, and take a sip of this stuff; it will keep the wind, which seems to want to blow the windows in, out of your stomach."

John Denton, who looked at least ten years older than when I had last seen him, crept, sideling, to a chair, avoiding to catch my eye ("In every bush an officer!"), seated himself, and was helped to pipe and liquor by Mowbray.

It *was* rough weather without; but, fiercely as the wind roared and howled, my ear caught, at intervals, the sound of wailing,—the sobbing, hysterical wailing of a girl,—from the far bedroom of the cottage, Clara's chamber. Kirkton's baseness was then known to her—poor stricken child!

"He is sure to be here," said John Denton, in reply to a question which, preoccupied for the moment by Clara Mowbray's distress, I had not heard. "He's sure to be here, spite of the weather. He was putting on his cloak and comforter when I came away."

The unbolted outer door creaked on its hinges;

and a gentle tap followed upon the door of the tiny sitting-room.

"Come in. Oh, it's you, Mr. Kirkton. Take a seat. No, Clara is not here, but Clara's father has a word or two of a sort to say to you."

Whilst thus speaking Mowbray passed quickly behind the startled young gentleman, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

"His Reverence is here," continued Mowbray, reseating himself. "So you need not feel alarmed."

"Alarmed!" echoed Archibald Kirkton. "Why should I feel alarmed, Mr. Mowbray?"

"You *look* scared," retorted Mowbray, "and you must best know why."

"I have brought a book for Miss Mowbray," said Kirkton, after a puzzled pause, "and may as well leave it with you."

"Never mind about the book till you and I come to an understanding about Clara."

"An understanding about Clara!—About Miss Mowbray in presence of—of——"

"In presence of these witnesses! Why, yes, because I wish to be able to prove, if need be, that you knew all about the antecedents of Clara—I beg pardon, of Miss Mowbray's father. I am informed," continued the possessed fisherman—I can think of no other word than "possessed" to indicate the deadly passion which raged within him, stone-pale as was his face; cool, measured as were his words—"I

am informed that you are deeply in love with my daughter, that you have told her so a hundred times, and sealed that declaration with oaths that you will marry her the instant certain obstacles in the way, arising from family complications, shall have been removed or surmounted. Now that is magnanimous on your part, and I should be ashamed of myself if I did not act towards you in a reciprocal spirit. Before, therefore, you finally decide upon forming an irrevocable compact or connection with Clara Mowbray, be pleased to hear, and warily meditate, a dark and warning chapter in the life of the man who now addresses you. Nay, sir, you *shall* hear me."

"What does all this mean?" exclaimed Kirkton. "The door locked too! How dare you detain me, sir?"

"How *dare* I?" hoarsely laughed Mowbray. "How dare I? You shall know in a few minutes how much I can dare, in certain circumstances, and that knowledge will, I have no doubt, prove salutary."

"This conduct, Mr. Mowbray, is insulting, unwarrantable. Nevertheless I resign myself to hear what you have to say."

"To begin then: I have been sailing for the last fifteen years under false colours. My name, Clara's name, is not Mowbray. What our real name is does not concern you, and, if it did, you would not hear it

from me. The essential point is to enlighten you as to the why and wherefore of my change of name. It is a terrible confession, but I do not shrink from making it, as I am lawyer enough to know that it cannot legally damnify me. I should say it was a hoax, you know."

"If you want to make a confession make it to the priest here," said Kirkton, sullenly. "I don't want to hear it."

"If the reverend gentleman present," rejoined Mowbray, "heard my confession in his capacity of priest, he would do so for *my* soul's health; whereas you must hear it, Mr. Archibald Kirkton, for the salvation of yourself—of your own body and soul, young man!

"You are dumb: I proceed, then, without further preamble, and as briefly as may be.

"I was born, Mr. Archibald Kirkton, of parents in well-to-do circumstances, and received a superior, or at any rate an expensive, education. I prospered, in young manhood, and at a comparatively early age was a considerable shipowner. I was mostly at sea in command of one of my own vessels. At the age of twenty-eight I married Clara's mother. I am not about to prate of beauty, fascination, and all that. Enough to say, that although she was a lowly lass, and, far from being highly educated, I worshipped her very shadow. Clara, my child Clara, was born, and the measure of my felicity brimmed over. My

actual, and prospective life were without the shadow of a fear. And it was from that cloudless sky the crashing thunder fell!—Pass over the brandy, Denton!”

After a huge gulp of the fiery liquid, Mowbray resumed.

“My young wife—her years were ten less than mine—was of a gay, joyous temperament; fond of dress, of pleasure, but guileless, unsuspecting, reliant as a little child. I lavished money upon her; insisted that she debarred herself of no pleasure, no amusement she might fancy. I led her, urged her, sir, into temptation!

“Well, in the early summer, when Clara was just entering her third year, I sailed for Leghorn. Our dwelling was inland, and my wife being partial to sea scenery, I, before leaving, engaged lodgings for her at a fashionable watering-place on the sea-board of a western county. I was absent about five months; during the last two of which I heard once only from Clara: my wife, I mean, our child having been baptized after her mother.

“I feared she was ill, and it was with a beating heart and trembling limbs I neared our home. That happy, thrice happy home, was despoiled, desolate! My wife had left several weeks before. A gay baronet whom she had met at the sea-side watering-place, had beguiled her, and with him she had fled!

"Margaret told me all when the fever of heart and brain had so far cooled that I could comprehend and retain what she said. She also gave me a letter from my wife,—a letter written in the blood of her own heart; so humble, piteous, so full of anguish, self-reproach, and yearning solicitude for her abandoned child, that every word graved itself upon my memory, as if traced with quenchless fire. Another turn of brandy, Denton!"

"I always knew you were a very clever man, but I never heard you talk like a book before," said John Denton, as he poured out the liquor.

"And, perhaps, never will again. I felt pity, compassion only for my lost wife," continued Mowbray; "not a thought of anger, indignation! And with that pity, compassion, a tiger thirst for vengeance, which the seducer's blood alone could slake, came to be a part of my being.

"I had seen the baronet, by chance, several times, but he knew not me: in a double sense did not know me, neither my features, nor my implacable nature. Some hint of my quality though must have reached him, forasmuch that, during nearly two years that I, stanch sleuth hound—you hear, Mr. Archibald Kirkton—during nearly two years that I, stanch sleuth hound, dogged his steps through Europe, he was always on the move. Several times did I get near him;—once in a church, and I would have slain him at the horns of the altar—but he escaped, went

out at a distant door, which the crowded congregation—it was a day of high festival—prevented me from reaching till too late.

“Thus was I continually baffled for, as I have said, nearly two years; during which time I heard that my wife had entered a convent, and I blessed God for it. A blasphemous blessing, by the bye, must that be which exhales from the lips of a man whose sole thought is to kill! kill! kill!

“I perceive, sir, that I horrify you. Well, I *am* getting rather wild and mad; but there is often wholesome medicament to be obtained from seemingly *all*-evil things. See how fascinated, spell-bound, is our young friend, Mr. Archibald Kirkton. *His* clear intellect, already discerns the *moral* of the story, which happily is near its close.

“The baronet was one of the wealthiest in the kingdom, and, like many others that can afford expensive whims, he suddenly took to yachting; purchased a fine schooner,—her name is neither here nor there,—cruised for some months in the Mediterranean, and finally resolved upon a visit to the high latitudes of the North Sea.

“I had for some weeks lost scent of my quarry, when I heard that Sir —, in his splendid yacht, the —, had sailed for the Baltic. I knew those waters well; and, though my means were much reduced, I fitted out a clipper-cruiser of about ninety tons burthen, manned her with a crew that would go

anywhere, and do anything, and sailed from Hull in pursuit.

"I daresay I was somewhat disordered in my brain at the time. In fact, there is no doubt that I was, and always shall be under the like circumstances; but you all know that decided mania does not prevent the madman from nicely calculating how his purpose may be best accomplished. The suicidal maniac, for example, does not attempt to kill himself by cutting off his hair, or by paring his nails; he remembers all about the arteries, and knows very well how the thing is to be done. So did I know how I could best strike Sir —— with security to myself. This consideration is seldom quite absent, depend upon it, although it may be, and is occasionally, pushed aside by all-mastering rage. If I could board the yacht, overpower the crew, stab and pitch Sir —— overboard, —escape to America, or elsewhere, would be easy.

"Foiled again! A white squall, off Heligoland, when all our sails were spread, capsized my vessel, and it was almost by a miracle that the crew were saved. I, a strong swimmer, reached the shore with difficulty. What was next to be done I knew not, could not guess. At last, the devil, who generally helps his own at a pinch,—you see, Mr. Archibald Kirkton, that I do not wish to paint your future father-in-law in too brilliant colours,—the devil, I say, with the distinguishing consideration for his own, peculiar to his devilship, came to my aid.

"I had been knocking about upon the desolate island for some three or four weeks, when a Bremen vessel, in a very leaky state, was brought in by a pilot who had fortunately fallen in with her. I was strolling near the landing-place, and as I knew the Danish and Swedish languages perfectly well, I entered into conversation with the master of the Bremen brig, and learned from him that the English yacht, the ———, was about twelve leagues off, and in sore need of a pilot.

"As we talked, a pilot-smack was getting ready to go to the aid of the said yacht. It was blowing a gale, and the pilot did not much care to put to sea,—a circumstance which befriended me. Accosting the dubious seaman, I said that the navigation thereabout was as familiar to me as to him, and offered to go in his stead. Moreover, happening as I did to personally know the owner of the perilled English yacht, I would give him (the pilot) something more than a trifle to be allowed to take his place. The man entered readily into the bargain, and with a crew of four—neither of whom could speak or understand English—I put off in the direction indicated by the skipper of the Bremen vessel.

We sighted the yacht about an hour before sundown. She had just managed to beat off a rocky lee-shore, and being still in a ticklish position, had the signal for a pilot flying. Another hour passed, and I found myself on board the yacht, which, as a matter

of course, was given into my charge. I purposely spoke in broken English, and his highness *the* baronet supposed me to be a Dane, or other foreign animal. If he had known who I really was——

“I felt sure of my prey. Nothing could—should balk me. Yet, O heaven! what an effort it cost me not to spring at, and wrench, tear the life out of him, the moment my foot touched the deck, and he stood within a yard of me! I should have been foiled; it was necessary to bide my time. I had not long to wait. I do not think, reviewing the events of that terrible night, that I had any *definite* plan for destroying him in my head. *I had come up with him in the death-race*; that, for the moment, was enough.

“The gale had not abated, but the night was fine and clear, and the sheen of the cold bright stars, glanced, to my distempered fancy, ghostly—if there is such a word—upon the cresting, sepulchral, greedy waves, which would not be shaken off, knowing as they did that at least one victim would be flung to them. I am now repeating, or rather giving utterance to the foolish fancies which that night trooped through my brain, proving, if nothing else, that that brain was out of tune. Another glass of brandy, Denton; and don’t you stare so, Mr. Archibald Kirkton. You are, no doubt, horrified to hear that the mother of your beloved was an adulteress. But what of that? You know that passage in *Lear*, be-

ginning with 'Thou rascal Beadle.' No matter ; brandy—brandy !

"John Denton," said Mowbray, upon whose speech the liquor he was gulping down produced no apparent effect ; "John Denton, listen to this part of the story—and do you also, reverend sir.

"I say, John Denton, that the deck of the yacht was deserted, save by the baronet and myself. The men had gone below to shift their drenched clothes. I was at the helm, you understand, and Sir—— at the bow, looking out a-head, as he had volunteered to do. You understand ; I repeat, John Denton, that there were but two of us upon the deck—I at the helm, he forward, at the bow. Nothing looked upon us but the stars of heaven. What, then, could be easier, safer, than to creep, creep, quietly upon him, and, before he could utter a word, fling him to the fishes ? Dear, dear ! a tumbler smashed, and good liquor wasted. Why, I say, John, your hand is getting as shaky as your brother's ; and, hang me if your face is not as lily-like as that of our gentlemanly young friend here, which is scarcely allowable, you being, like myself, plebeian."

I interposed. "Mr. Mowbray," said I, "you are—excuse me—much, very much excited. Your purpose—your double purpose—is, if I rightly understand you, accomplished."

"Not quite. Your patience for a few minutes longer. I say, John, take another nip of brandy ;

I always do when ghosts rise up before me. Confound it—another glass gone! You are wonderfully nervous to night, John.

“Better are you? That’s well; and now permit me to finish this ugly story. I did *not* creep, creep stealthily towards the baronet. No, but I lashed the helm amidship and marched, if a sailor can march, noisily, soundingly, you understand, towards him. I proposed to myself to catch the villain by the throat when he turned round, and by fair mastery—hissing into his ear as I did so that I was Clara’s husband, pitch him overboard.

“He turned round as soundingly I approached him, and at the same moment half-a-dozen men tumbled up from below.

“Foiled again! My just vengeance would never be fulfilled, it seemed! We shall see.

“The wind, though furious, was fair, and enabled me to give Heligoland a wide berth, which I promised to do.

“I could very easily have done so. Standing at the bow with a trumpet in my hand, what was to prevent me, as the yacht neared the reef eastward of the island—what was, I say, to prevent me shouting to the helmsman, to “port” the helm, which would have swept us well to windward of the jagged line of rock against and over which the white breakers were furiously dashing? Nothing could of course have prevented me, but the unconquerable instinct of ven-

geance which I have said, and now repeat is, and whilst I live *will* be, the dominant passion of my being. So prompted, and the fear of death for myself vanishing before the exultant certainty of the seducer's destruction, I roared through the trumpet, "Starboard! Hard-up! Quick! Smart!"

"At that moment the yacht was flying through the water at the rate of at least twelve knots an hour. A half-minute had not passed, the trumpet was still at my lips, when the vessel swept upon the reef with a force which stove in her bow as if it had been made of glass!

"Myself instantly whelmed in the raging waves, I heard neither the cries of those who went down with me, nor of those, the greater number, who being aft the vessel, were not immediately precipitated into the sea. The after part of the yacht did not at once break up, but the stern was tilted into the air at so sharp an angle that the doomed wretches were obliged to cling to the after rigging, the helm, the bulwarks, anything, to gain for themselves a few horrible moments of despairing life.

"I saw not this!" continued Mowbray, after another gulp of brandy, "I saw not this till some ten minutes, I suppose, had passed, but ten minutes is an hour in such a case. I was busy fighting for my own life with the furious sea, fighting with the energy and power of a strong, practised swimmer. A fight of despair, it seemed, for so completely was I environed,

whelmed by the tall, crested waves, that I could not discern how I might reach the shore, should my strength not fail me. Tossed here and there, blinded, drenched, but just able to keep myself from sinking, I was about to sullenly yield up life, when my hands struck against some wooden object. It was a large hencoop that had belonged to the yacht; one capable of supporting three or four persons. Eagerly I clutched at, clung to it, and so sustained, recovered breath and strength, all the more quickly that I found myself in a much less furious sea, enclosed or nearly so by a semicircle of rocks over which my chance-raft must, with me, have been driven or hurled. Clearing my eyes of the blinding brine, I looked towards the wreck, and saw what I have described,—a sad, afflictive spectacle to one guiltless of the blood of the poor fellows,—to me, their murderer,—frightful, maddening!

“I cannot say—I have never been able to decide in my own mind—whether I at the moment actually discerned a woman upon the wreck, or whether the horrible possibility that Clara might have been in the yacht below, for the first time flashed through my brain. Certainly I lost my senses, though still clinging with firm grasp to the coop. You may judge for yourselves. Finally I was cast on shore, not so bruised and exhausted but that the Islanders, who witnessed the seemingly-unaccountable loss of the vessel soon brought me to by their one simple remedy,—

copious drenches of liquor. It was some time, however, before my mind was clear: then instantly the image of my wife, my gentle, betrayed wife, standing upon the broken, parting wreck, with dishevelled hair, and hands uplifted in prayer to the deaf heavens,— flashed upon memory or imagination, as with a glare of hell-fire, and I shrieked with unutterable horror.

"It was, it could only be an illusion of the imagination! I was certain of it. A device of the devil to destroy me: I could not be so damned beneath all depth in hell as that."

"You must not drink so madly," said I, making a snatch at the bottle. Mowbray was too quick for me. "You will bring on an access of brain-fever," I added.

"Brain-fever!" cried Mowbray, with a laugh, which mingled with the *glug-glug* of the liquor: "Why, my brain is on fire! It always is when I but think of that devil's deed; much less when as now, I—— But I must finish with it.

"I *would* satisfy myself that the affrighting image was an illusion, and I continued on the beach watching for the bodies as they were driven ashore. I saw his—the baronet's: ha! ha! He would betray no more wives! Three men saved themselves upon some loose planking. Two, I rescued myself at the peril of my own life. So you see I am not *all* devil. Those five men were too far gone to comprehend my eager

questioning. They were borne inland by the Heligolanders, and I was for a time left to keep fearful watch upon the beach alone. As the hours drew on a glimmering of real hope began to sparkle in my brain, and warm my heart. The wind had fallen, the moon was down, and the stars were paling in the clear gray dawn, when a floating object, gleaming doubtfully in the yet dim light, at about twenty feet from where I stood, caught and fixed my straining gaze.

"A bunch of tawny sea-weed! To be sure,—what else could it be? And yet—— I could hear my heart knock at my ribs; a cold sweat bedewed my body, and I had barely strength to realize the terrible dread which shook my frame. I *did* realize it. The tawny sea-weed was *her* golden tresses, the face which I uplifted to the light, that of my beautiful, beloved, murdered wife—murdered by me!

"More than a year afterwards I was discharged from an English Lunatic Asylum,—cured—mark you, *cured*.

"Since then I have lived some fifteen years of accursed life; the curse lightened, it is true, rendered bearable by the knowledge that my existence was and is necessary to the welfare of *her* child, of our Clara. Of the fisherman's daughter, Archibald Kirkton," added Mowbray, with almost a shout, and striking that silent, staring, young gentleman upon the cheek

with the purloined, unfinished letter, "of whom you dared write in this scrawl, which I fling in your face, vile hound!"

Kirkton sprang up from his chair, but seemed unable to tear away his fascinated gaze from that of the ancient mariner who had disburthened himself of his terrible story, for the young gentleman's especial behoof.

There was no reply in words, and Mowbray resumed:

"I have lived, as I told you, in order that I may watch over my child. For that alone I care to live. And yet, have I led her, in my blind folly, into temptation! I shall remedy that error,—blot out that crime. Not, in such a case, daring to trust to a girl's firmness; placing slight faith in the judgment of a confiding young woman, whose affections may have been surprised, I now solemnly declare to you, Archibald Kirkton, and you will please read this declaration by the light of the narrative you have just heard; I declare to you, I say, Archibald Kirkton, that if harm befall Clara, directly or indirectly through you—no matter for your excuses, valid or otherwise,—no matter that she be, which it is monstrous to suppose—still, I repeat, no matter that she be a consenting party—Nay, I will add," continued Mowbray, "that if from this hour, from this moment, you dare importune her, dare seek to correspond with her, or do not refuse to correspond with her, *I will*

kill you, Archibald Kirkton, as certainly as that I killed the betrayer of my wife,—only with swifter coming-on, with speedier vengeance! Lay this warning to heart young man, and remember that were you, in the case supposed, contrite as was David,—did you offer to make amends by marriage, and that Clara, herself, upon her knees, begged for your life, William Mowbray would, could you take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost corner of the earth, find and slay you, on the instant. My say is said—Begone!”

So awed was Kirkton by the father's tremendous energy of manner and language,—very feebly rendered by me,—that he *backed* out of the room in the way, as I am told, courtiers do from the presence of royalty, Mowbray closely following up, to unlock the door. (May I be permitted to remark, that having once witnessed the performance of “As you like it,” where there was nothing to pay for admission, and therefore not forbidden to priests, I mentally likened Kirkton's exit to that of William before Touchstone. It would, however, be truer to say, I think, that this was an after-thought, when the tragic incidents of Mowbray's narrative had become dimmed by the lapse of time, and the ludicrous circumstances connected or associated therewith, alone vividly survived, as is their wont, in my memory.)

The foregoing parenthesis has prevented my saying

in the proper place, that Kirkton had forgotten to take away his book, which noticing, Mowbray snatched up the volume, hurried out, and flung it after the terrified proprietor.

“Good evening, John Denton,” murmured Mowbray, as he dropped into a seat, and hid his face in his hands, yielding to mental reaction, and the fully-felt effect of the enormous quantity of brandy he had swallowed,—“good evening, John.”

John Denton left at once; and though I did not at the time so much heed,—that is to say, did not attach importance to—the expression of deadly hate which shot from out his blood-shot, half-drunken eyes, or to the close clenching of his hands as he glared whilst passing through the door at unobservant Mowbray, I quite understood that John Denton hated William Mowbray with a deadly hatred, for having presumed to suspect, and in a certain way to proclaim, his suspicion as to *how* Reid came by his death.

For myself, I was tossed to and fro in a sea of doubt, dismay, conjecture. Could the terrible story to which we had been listening be really true,—or was it but a device to terrify Kirkton? I would fain have hoped so, but could not; remembering his request on the previous Sunday but one, when he was quite sober, and, in a comparative degree, calm, unexcited,—that I would celebrate masses for the souls of fifteen persons drowned in the North Sea—one a woman, called Clara!

The tale was, I feared, but too true in its main features, though, likely enough, overwrought in colouring, in order to impress Kirkton with a more vivid apprehension of the swift vengeance sure to overtake him, should harm befall Clara Mowbray. Alas! for Mowbray himself,—madman!—murderer! Who could deliver *him* from the body of that death!

At the same time, it was quite plain that no legal action or inquiry could be based upon a volunteered confession, which, however morally convinced the hearers might be of its substantive truth, could not, from the very nature of the case as disclosed, be in the slightest degree corroborated by other evidence.

William Mowbray fell asleep, and I left the room without seeking to awake him. In the passage I met the servant, Margaret. Her face was white as the paper upon which I am writing, and she trembled as with ague. She was expecting me, and, with finger on lip, invited me to follow into another room.

We spoke long and earnestly together. Margaret, by listening at the door of the little front room, had heard all that passed. As far as her own knowledge went, Mr. Mowbray's story was, she said, strictly true. As to his real name, of course I would not ask her to disclose it. Enough to say that he came of an old, northern stock, and was expensively educated. Margaret did not believe he was right in his head at times, but she had never heard him go on as he had

that evening. That which the faithful, affectionate woman had, I found, chiefly at heart was, to entreat that I would drop no hint of what I had heard to Clara. "It would break her heart, and she has already grief enough. Poor child, she has wept herself to sleep. Master showed her that letter of Kirkton's. I could tear the villain's eyes out," added Margaret, with vixenish vehemence. "The false, lying, cowardly knave!" In such a matter, of course I promised to be not only circumspect, but secret.

In passing, I looked in through the diamond-pane casement at the Dentons. Seeing only James there,—his brother was probably gone on a visit to the young widow Reid,—I lifted the latch, and went in. The young man was quite drunk, and vainly attempted respectfully to rise to his feet. As I think I have before stated, he, repulsed in his suit to Clara Mowbray, had sunk into the condition of a sot,—that modern mode of Cupidian and other suicide, the victims of which outnumber a thousandfold those who die by pistol, halter, or by more direct poisons.

It was not a time for remonstrance, and I merely asked if Mr. Kirkton was within. I intended to have enforced, in a better spirit I hope, the warning lesson which he had received from Mowbray.

James Denton managed, with difficulty and much hiccupping, to inform me that Kirkton had only

looked in for two or three minutes, said he was off to London forthwith, and promised to send a direction to which his things were to be forwarded.

"Not stay to pack his things!" was my unspoken exclamation. What fear was it that had driven him so hastily away! William Mowbray's menace was only a conditional one. Surely that condition had not——Tut! I recalled to mind Clara Mowbray's prideful innocence of aspect at the chapel, and felt perfectly reassured. No, no,—the feebly-nerved young gentleman had been seized with panic-fear that such a terrible desperado as Mowbray might take it into his hot head to make assurance doubly sure, by killing him, Archibald Kirkton, out of hand. That seemed to be the likeliest explanation.

My mind was sorely troubled by the sayings and doings at the fishing hamlet, which I revisited the next day but one. Mowbray was fishing with the elder Denton; Clara — poor child! — kept her bed, and Margaret was chalk-white, and *trembly* — her own word, as before. James Denton was wandering up and down with glazed eyes and staggering gait,—drunk in fact,—though it was morning. The lost young man was fast drinking himself mad. At least into that peculiar phase of madness called *dolirium tremens*, of which even I could discover incipient symptoms. It would have been quite useless to

attempt reasoning with him, and I made my way up the lane which led to the widow Reid's dwelling.

That very comely, nice-mannered, and, for her class, intelligent woman was at home. Her humble place was clean as a new pin. The child, I did not, as it happened, see. My ostensible errand was to ask why she, a Catholic, did not act up to her duty;—meaning by duty, regular attendance at Mass, and so on.

She coloured, hesitated, and at last said that she *did* attend chapel at Easter,—made it a point of doing so. I next alluded, as delicately as might be, to the rumour of her approaching marriage with John Denton. Was that rumour well-founded? I asked.

“Why yes, quite so,” Mrs. Reid replied with ready candour. “It was a capital match for her who had nothing—less than nothing. John Denton was a thrifty, prosperous man. To be sure *The Wave*, for the most part, belonged to Mr. Mowbray. Still, she would have a comfortable, independent home, with no care in life for herself, or *for her boy*. John Denton is in a great hurry, to be sure,” she added with a blush and smile, “and that, it may be, displeases your reverence. But I don't see how *I* could find fault with that! Besides, we are old acquaintances.”

I did not quite like the young widow's saucyish

tone, but as I dared not so much as hint my opinion as to the *manner* of Reid's death, which, after all, rested only upon William Mowbray's suspicion and mine, I, with a common-place admonition anent the prudence of looking narrowly before you leap the world to come, of marriage, took civil leave.

Archibald Kirkton's sudden flight, and William Mowbray's determination to shoot him should he dare return, were, I noticed, freely spoken of by the gossips of the hamlet. A pity, for Miss Clara's sake.

Ten or eleven days had passed when a fisherman brought me a verbal message from the widow Reid. She was ill, and wished to see a priest immediately. Having by cross-examination ascertained that there was no imminent danger, I deferred my visit till early the next day.

I found Mrs. Reid in bed. She appeared to be in great mental distress, but I was surprised and annoyed to hear that she had no bodily ailment, which an apothecary might not cure. "Why, on earth, then," I angrily asked, "did you send for me?"

The reply was that she could not, dared not go out, and was really very ill. She had, miserable sinner though she was, received the sacrament twice during the previous year, and no doubt her time was close at hand. "Would I receive her confession?"

"Certainly."

Bah! The confession was neither more nor less than one of those one hears perpetually; all so much alike that they defy a priest to remember, *distinguishingly*, anything of them five minutes after they are uttered:—"Told a lie,—had given way to passion,—scandalized a neighbour," *et cetera*.

The ceremonial completed I was going away with the feeling that I had been absurdly trifled with, when the widow Reid exclaimed, "Don't go, sir! For the love of Heaven, don't go! Now I have done my duty, I may tell your reverence that the evening before last, meaning Wednesday evening, just about eight o'clock, and after I had put my boy to bed, I strolled down towards John Denton's cottage. He did not expect me and was not in, but his drunken brother James was. I could not stay with *him*, so I sauntered along the shore till I came to the turning leading to 'The Three Alders,' which, by a round-about way, brings one back again near to Denton's cottage. I reckoned, from what the brother said, that John would be at his place by the time I reached it that way. So, your reverence, I walked on in the bright moonlight till I came within sight of 'The Three Alders,' but was myself not quite clear of the copse hard-by. There are two paths just there, one leading by my cottage, and the other to the beach. Well, reverend sir, as I live and breathe, and as I hope for mercy hereafter, a man, dressed as a sailor, came up from the left-hand road and stopped

at the turning as if not decided which way to take. I kept back, for in that lonely place, and late for the time of year, a woman would not like to meet a strange man. At last he made up his mind to take the path to the beach, and turning fully round I saw—Holy Mother of God, and all the saints defend us!—I saw the face, as plainly, as surely as I ever did in my life—of my dead, drowned husband!”

“The face of your husband!”

“Yes, your reverence, the face of my husband—paler, thinner, than it was in life—but his face. He looked towards where I stood, knowing, of course, I was there. I strove to speak, but could not; and I fell down senseless. When I came to myself, the moon and stars were shining bright as before, but *he* was gone! How I got home I hardly know. Nobody that I passed had seen him. It was to me, and me only, he came. A token of death;—does not your reverence think so?”

“Not a bit of it. The sightless messengers of God do not so communicate His decrees to mortals. You were not asleep, nor——. Pardon me; I remember now that you are not tainted with the prevailing vice of this part of the country.”

“I was awake and sober,” said the woman, with excusable asperity; “and as sure as that I live, the spirit of my departed husband has appeared to me. For what purpose—to what end, God will make known. One thing will come of it,” added Mrs.

Reid, with a very becoming blush,—“one thing will come of it, which you, sir, will, I believe, approve; I won’t marry John Denton! No, not if he could make me Queen of England. I can’t tell the reason, sir; but I won’t.”

“I am rejoiced to hear you say so. The still small voice, though you do not distinguish the words it utters, *may* have brought a warning from God.”

“I have sent several messages to John Denton asking him to come here, that I may plainly tell him I have changed my mind; but he refuses to come.”

“You alone saw your husband—his ghost I mean?”

“No one else, that we can hear. The warning was to me alone. Either for death, or not to marry John Denton. Time will prove.”

“Truly so. Meanwhile, hold to the resolution not to marry till at least a year has gone by since the day when your husband was swept from the deck of *The Wave* into the North Sea. The feeling which prompts that resolution is, I have a strong conviction, a righteous one.”

The young widow agreed to follow my advice though to do so she would have to seek service in the neighbouring town. I promised to assist her in doing so, and left the cottage or hut much excited and perplexed.

In passing through the hamlet, I heard the Widow Reid’s notion that she had seen her husband’s ghost,

ridiculed by everybody I spoke with. Mowbray was civilly reserved as usual,* Clara, who had suddenly fallen ill again, was a-bed, and Margaret herself strangely discomposed. She was not in a communicative mood, and I made no stay. James Denton was at home, but, the wench-of-all-work told me, raging mad with drink. I did not see him.

I was much startled by Mrs. Reid's positive conviction that she had seen her husband's ghost. As to ghost, that was merely absurd; but might it not be that she had really seen Reid himself, alive, in the body? It was certainly possible that such a remarkable swimmer as he was reputed to be might have reached the Danish shore. 'Yes, but in that case, where was he now concealing himself, and for what purpose? Why, moreover, had he not taken the path leading to his wife's dwelling? The sincerity of the woman's belief could not be doubted, but might not the "ghost" have been merely the coinage of an excited, and, in a certain sense, diseased imagination? It was possible that this was the true solution of the seeming mystery. At all events, the Widow Reid would not, for a considerable time to come, marry John Denton. I rejoiced at that.

On the very next Sunday evening I was quite startled to see James Denton walk swiftly up the chapel aisle, just as the acolytes were extinguishing the altar candles. He came direct towards the little vestry room, as with a resolved purpose,—and,

judging by his walk, he was sober. His visage presented less satisfactory signs. The eyes glowed with a wild, troubled fierceness, and the red bloated cheeks rendered more observable the cadaverous yellow-white of the region about his mouth, and twitching lips. His hands, too, shook like those of a confirmed drunkard of a morning, before he has re-braced his nerves by fresh libations.

"I am come to confession, reverend sir," he said, in a quick, nervous tone. "It's many years ago that I did, but I think it will ease my mind. Besides, no harm *can* come of it, any how."

"I may not refuse. Still, I would recommend delay till to-morrow. You may be calmer."

"No, no, sir; now—now! My mind is in a flurry, to be sure. To-morrow I may be mad—who shall say? We are all God's puppets, as I have somewhere read."

He knelt down, repeated the prescribed formula after me, and plunged at once into a statement that was really no confession at all, but which, nevertheless, held me spell-bound to the close. I give it, stripped of its surplusage.

"You know, reverend father, that I have had the drunken madness upon me for some time; and I hope it was only a drunken dream that's crazing my brain now. It's upon that I crave your advice. You have often been in our large room on the ground floor. It's partitioned into two rooms, and a small

borrowed light from the front is the only window to the small back room, where I sleep. Well, reverend father, I, last Wednesday evening as ever was, looking through that narrow borrowed light, felt positive I saw—though I hope your reverence will prove it to have been a drunken dream—looking through that little window, I repeat, I felt positive I saw the ghost of poor Reid that was drowned.”

“Reid’s ghost! You, last Wednesday evening, saw Reid’s ghost?”

“As plain as I see you, sir. That is, if I wasn’t mad or dreaming. I’d better tell you just how it happened. I awoke burning with thirst,—if that also wasn’t part of the dream,—and got out of bed to find the drink which brother John always looks to for me. The jug was empty, and my brother, I therefore concluded, was not come home. The servant-girl, who does not sleep at our place, was, I supposed, gone home,—as she does after making up the front-room fire, and putting things tidy. She might not, however, be gone; so I tip-toed, and peeped through the small borrowed light to see,—and there, close by the fire, warming its hands, or pretending to do so, and facing me, sat Reid’s ghost! I could not, I think, mistake the face, white and thin as it looked, for Kirkton’s;—impossible! Besides, it had on sailor’s clothes. So skeared was I, that I staggered back, and fell down upon the bed insensible. How long I remained so, whether one, two, or three hours, I can-

not say; nor whether I did or did not dream of a noise as of quarrelling, and a struggle, which was certainly mixed up in my mind as from a dream, when I came to, or awoke. The thirst was worse than ever, and again I reached out my hand for the jug. It had been filled. John must, therefore, have returned home. Knowing that gave me courage; so after taking a good pull at the jug, I again peeped through the pane of glass. Either I was bewitched, or drunk, or dreaming, or all three at once, or I saw, as plainly as I do your reverence, Mr. Kirkton, lying as if asleep upon the old sofa under the window!"

"Mr. Kirkton! What ridiculous rigmarole is this you are endeavouring to impose upon me?"

"Mr. Kirkton, sir. I could not see the face, it is true; but it was, you know, impossible to mistake the clothes. Reid was gone, and my brother was not in the room. My mind, no doubt, was sadly weak, confused, dizzy; and the awful thought struck me that I had seen the troubled spirits of two murdered men. The troubled spirit of one murdered man, I should say,"—continued James Denton, with much trepidation, and catching himself back as it were,—“of one murdered man; since Reid was, as I told you, sir, *accidentally* drowned. Mr. Kirkton, it seemed to flash through me,—knowing as I did that Mowbray had sworn to kill him, and was just the man to keep his oath,—Mr. Kirkton, it seemed to flash through me, had been foully murdered by

Mowbray. Pray God forgive me if I wronged him.—
But surely it *must* have been all a drunken dream ! ”

“ Finish what you have to say. ”

“ Well, your reverence, the notion that I had seen two spirits from the other world knocked me over again, and when I recovered my senses it was broad daylight. I have thought it over again and again, till I get as crazed as when the drink-horrors were strongest upon me. Yet it must have been, *could* only have been, as brother John says, a madman’s dream, seeing that I had not recovered from the drink-fever, and was raging with thirst at the time. He—John I mean—won’t hear of my mentioning such silly stuff, and would be desperately angry if he knew—which of course he won’t—that I had spoken of it to your reverence. For all that, John,”—continued my so-called penitent,—“ for all that, John was taken terribly aback when I told him what I had seen or dreamed ; he trembled, and turned white as a sheet. Ay, and he takes on sorely about it still, hard as he tries to believe and persuade me, that it is all stuff and nonsense. What do *you* say, reverend father ? That I was suffering under drunken delirium, I hope and trust ? ”

“ You have heard that Mrs. Reid declares she saw her husband’s ghost on the same evening that you did ? ”

“ Never heard a word of it ! ” exclaimed James Denton, startled to his feet by the *shock* of the in-

timation; "Never heard a word of it! I have not been out of doors for a long time. Surely—surely, it can't be true. Did she speak to it?"

"No; nor *it* to her. Have you anything more to say?"

"Nothing, except, reverend father, to ask for your opinion and counsel."

"My answer is, that I don't believe in ghosts, or ghost-dreams: my counsel, that you strictly keep your own till I see you again. Now begone; and especially remember that your brother must not know that you have communicated with me."

Where to seek the key of that dark riddle! Reid seen by his wife and James Denton on the same evening! Kirkton seen; and neither afterwards heard of in the neighbourhood! Then the confused dream-sensations of a quarrel, struggle, as related by James Denton. That was not so difficult of interpretation. But Kirkton so suddenly returned, and as suddenly to disappear! And John Denton, who had replenished the drink-jug, to have seen, known, nothing of all that, and to have sternly forbidden his brother to speak upon the subject!

Verily a dark riddle,—the clue to which, though indistinctly palpable, as it were, vanished as I sought to seize and realize it. I would walk over on the morrow to the fishing hamlet.

I did so betimes. Mrs. Reid, who was much

better,—well, in fact,—persisted as strongly as before that she had seen her husband's ghost: adding, that for a kingdom she would not marry John Denton. In after days, she, being a good Catholic, attributed that sensible resolve to the soul-heard suggestions of her guardian angel, though her bodily ears were too gross and deaf to catch the whispered warning. The more common-sense solution is, that she had a strong doubt whether it might not have been her husband himself that she had seen, instead of his ghost.

"John Denton," she added, with a flush of natural vanity, "had much changed for the worse since she refused to have anything more to say to him. He was taking to drink, like his brother." Had she seen or heard anything of Mr. Kirkton? She had not; did not believe any one else had seen or heard of him. *Had* he been met with in the village, she would certainly have heard of it.

I could not find either of the Dentons. The cottage-door was locked, and no answer was returned to my continued knocking. They were not at home—at all events, not to me.

Mowbray *was* at home, and in answer to my timidly-introduced questioning as to whether he had received any tidings of Kirkton, he replied with rough bluntness that he had heard of him, and had sought but failed to meet him. The truth is," said Mowbray, with a savage snap of his square massive jaw, "the truth is, I detected Margaret in the act of reading a note from

the scoundrel, which had been pushed under the door by some one who at the same time knocked loudly and made off. It was about six in the evening, and cloudy, so that although Margaret sharply opened the door and looked out she could see no one. The note on the outside was directed to Margaret; within addressed to Clara; was signed A. Kirkton, and solicited a meeting with her the same evening, at eight o'clock, on the Bluff. I was there," continued Mowbray, "but no Kirkton! No doubt he had placed some one on the look-out who apprized him that he would meet the father instead of the daughter at the place of assignation. It was well for the skulking villain that he was *not* there."

Having said so much Mowbray peremptorily changed the subject of conversation, evidently a repulsive one to him; and I left without being permitted to see Clara or Margaret.

Had Mowbray told me *all* the truth respecting Kirkton's return to the hamlet, and his audacious overture to Clara? I feared not, but could no longer doubt that James Denton had really seen Kirkton. I believed also that he, as well as the wife, had seen Reid.

I had been scarcely returned an hour to my temporary home from a sick-call, at a considerable distance off, which had kept me away nearly two days, when James Denton, pushing by the servant,

rushed into the room, where I was sitting, and exclaimed, without preface, that all was discovered! Kirkton's body had been washed ashore near the Bluff. It was frightfully mangled, and the surgeons had found a musket-ball in the body. Mowbray was in custody charged with the murder. The breathless messenger added that Miss Clara, who was distracted with grief and horror, begged me to come to her immediately.

Stunned though I was by the frightful news, I lost not a moment in complying with the poor girl's request. Whilst walking swiftly towards the village, James Denton put me in possession of the full particulars as they came out at the first investigation before the magistrates. The interception of Kirkton's note I knew of before, and Mowbray, it appeared, had loaded a fowling-piece and went off with it to the Bluff where he expected to find Kirkton. He, no doubt, met him there, and shot him. Two men had sworn that they had heard a gun fired in that direction, at about nine o'clock. There was some hitch in the evidence here, as Margaret deposed that Mowbray returned home at a few minutes before nine o'clock. The men, it was supposed, had to some extent mistaken the hour. Mowbray must then have hurled the body over the Bluff into the sea; forgetting, James Denton remarked, that the tides about there would be sure to fling back a corpse to pretty near the place it was cast into. Margaret could not avoid acknowledg-

ing that her master had uttered frightful maledictions against Kirkton whilst loading his gun, as well as upon former occasions. John Denton was called upon to fortify this evidence by deposing to the threats which Mowbray had, in his hearing, launched against Kirkton; but he excused himself from doing so by the plea that he, himself, was tipsy at the time alluded to, and could not charge his memory as to the words used.

"Your brother refused to give evidence against Mowbray! That sounds oddly in my ear. What was the prisoner's answer to the charge? Did he confess his guilt?"

"Not he. He admitted that he had gone out with the *intention* of killing Kirkton, but declared that he could not find him. He also said he had loaded his gun with slugs, not with a bullet. His assertions induced no credence, and he was remanded to custody, to be again brought up for the formal completion of the depositions, on the following Monday."

When I reached the Mowbrays' dwelling I found that Clara had become so prostrated by long-continued hysteria that it was impossible I could be allowed to speak with her. Best so. It is not when the flesh is quivering and the blood flowing from a recent wound that the balm of Christian consolation can be applied with effect. Till Time has in some degree stanchèd the hurt, the consoler's words fall upon deaf ears.

I saw the corpse: a frightful spectacle! The insanity of rage which Mowbray, as the reader is aware, in a manner prided himself upon displaying in certain phases of demoniac passion, must have fully possessed him on the evening of the murder. The face of the deceased had been smashed by being, it was thought, stamped upon; *after death*, the surgeons said. It would have been utterly impossible to identify the corpse as that of Kirkton but for the unmistakable clothes, a watch, and several letters, of rather old date, found upon him, and decipherable though saturated by the sea, which had also thoroughly washed the curls, of which he was so proud, out of his brown hair. Unhappy Clara! Hers was indeed a cruel cross to bear. The death of a lover by a father's hand; the father's life soon to be forfeited, on the scaffold, for that of the lover! My heart bled for her!

The next day's (Saturday) county paper contained full details of the proceedings before the magistrates, and I found that in substance James Denton had reported them aright.

I have a strong aversion to such scenes, nevertheless I determined to be present at the Monday's hearing, if only to clear up, by close observation of the prisoner's demeanour, certain misgivings as to his guilt which I could not silence or reason away.

The place at which the magistrates of the district transacted justice-business was situate about two miles distant from the fishing hamlet, and I was not

more than ten minutes' walk therefrom when I heard a quick, running step on the hard path behind me, and my name called out in a voice which caused me to stop and turn round with a feeling of absolute consternation. The voice *was* that of Archibald Kirkton! I could scarcely believe my ears, my eyes, and a child might have knocked me down with a feather!

Kirkton's explanation of his appearance there, in the body, was, I found, quite a natural one, when the confusion of my brain and the ringing in my ears permitted me to hear and mark it.

He had gone, not to London, but to a seaport about forty miles off, whence he intended to embark for France, in which country he purposed to pedestrianize for three or four months. He had written, in that sense, to John Denton, and requested him not to send his things on till he, Kirkton, returned to England, as he did not wish to be encumbered with them.

"Light breaks upon the thick darkness, though still confusedly," I exclaimed; "but pray, go on."

"I have nothing further to say, except that a shift of wind prevented the vessel from sailing on the day named, and happening to see the county paper on Saturday evening, I there read the astounding report of the proceedings before the magistrates. Mowbray is a dangerous ruffian, but of course I could not allow him to be hanged. I doubt, too, that that dreadful

story which he flung, as so many flaming arrows, in my face, was quite true. At least——”

“Never mind that just now,” I interrupted. “You have not returned here since you left in such a hurry?”

“Certainly not.”

“Enough! Let us hasten to the justice-room.”

I need not pause to describe the commotion, the astonishment, which the appearance of Archibald Kirkton in the justice-room occasioned. The only person who remained comparatively calm, was the prisoner, Mowbray, himself.

The tumult was subsiding, when the eager voice of a woman, who was pushing through the crowd, made itself shrilly heard, and presently Mrs. Reid, alternately flushing red and white, and trembling in every limb, forced herself to the front.

“I have something to say, gentlemen,” she began, in a palpitating yet solemn voice. “I have, for the first time, just seen the corpse; it is that of my husband, who was said to have been drowned in the North Sea a long time ago. John Denton, there,” she added rapidly, as if fearing to trust her own firmness,—“swore to me that he saw him drowned; but I have now good reason for believing that my husband returned last Wednesday evening week, and went to John Denton’s cottage.”

I had not previously observed John Denton. His back had been towards me; but directly Mrs. Reid’s

voice was heard he swung round, and if her face had been that of the fabled Gorgon, *his* could not have exhibited a stonier terror.

"This gentleman,"—said a lad, stepping forward, and pointing to Mr. Kirkton,—"*is not the person calling himself Kirkton, who asked me to take a note to Mowbray's cottage. That man would be like him,*" he added, pointing to the pallid face and the staring eyes of John Denton,—"*that man would be like him, if he was dressed differently. I did not see him before.*"

This witness was the boy who had been hired in the neighbouring town to take the note directed to Margaret, which had been thrust under Mowbray's door.

I will dwell no longer upon that very painful scene. Sufficient criminating evidence to warrant the detention of John Denton was received, and he was ordered to be confined in the lock-up house adjacent till the morrow, when he would be again brought before the magistrates. The court was then adjourned, Mowbray having been first formally discharged out of custody; and the half-stifed audience rushed out into the open air.

As they did so, Clara Mowbray, with Margaret, came up. They had heard the joyful news, and were both violently weeping—joyful tears, of course. Clara, sustained by the strong supporting arms of her father, who manifested bitter impatience, so to speak,

of the gratulations by which he was assailed, was hurriedly borne, rather than led, back home.

Margaret did not immediately follow. She was desirous of understanding all about it, and had even the temerity to shake hands with Kirkton. "Had he not," she whisperingly replied to my reproving look,—“had he not saved the master's life? and Miss Clara's too, for that matter!”

The sight of Clara had a powerful effect on Kirkton; and, spite of my earnest dissuasion—well knowing as I did that the incident would be surely reported to vindictive, implacable William Mowbray,—he, after a minute or so's hesitation, hurried after Margaret, with the intent, I feared, of arranging an assignation with Clara. It proved so. An unnoticed listener heard the imprudent woman assure him that he should see Clara some time that evening. Mr. Mowbray would no doubt go to bed early, and for a few minutes, not more, late as it might be, Mr. Kirkton *should* speak with Clara. This was reported to Mowbray within half an hour after the rash promise was given. I was also made acquainted with it, though not so directly as was Mowbray. Forthwith I sought out Kirkton, assured him, with the sincerity of entire conviction, that Mowbray's terrible resolve,—the resolve of a partial maniac, no doubt,—was unchanged, unweakened, by what had passed; and that if he kept the appointment Mowbray would certainly kill him. Kirkton was far from being

blessed or cursed with unyielding nerves, ~~and~~ his courage, after no great lapse of time, cooled down to the point of assuring me that he would be off out of harm's way at once, without beat of drum. I applauded his decision, and, that he might not swerve from it, walked with him to the town, and fairly saw him off by the evening coach. We further agreed that I would arrange that his clothes, watch, &c., left at the Dentons, should, as soon as possible, be forwarded to the address he left with me.

And now hasten we to the last scene, which ends this history.

John Denton had been remanded upon the charge of having wilfully murdered William Reid. The evidence, to the bystanders, seemed weak enough, but he knew, or feared, that it might be made overwhelming. It may be, too, that the arrow having been launched by the hand of a woman whom he certainly loved with deep devotion, helped to unnerve him.

However that may have been, John Denton asked that, before being confined in the lock-up house, he might be allowed a strictly-private interview with his brother; his avowed object being to give James full instructions for the attorney whom he, the prisoner, wished to appear for him the next morning. In the present day, especially under metropolitan police regulations, such a request would be laughed at. It was different then and there.

The magistrates thought the request a reasonable one, and James Denton was admitted to a long private interview with the prisoner, at the close of which John Denton was taken away to the lock-up house.

The prisoner, as I afterwards well knew, confessed everything during that dismal conference; his motive being to free his brother's mind of any notion that he could hope to escape the gallows through the failure of evidence to convict.

That was no drunken dream of James Denton's on the memorable Wednesday evening; it was a dread reality. John, upon returning home, found the man whom he had flung overboard, and believed to be drowned, sitting quietly before the cottage fire. Reid's avowed object in going there before he let anybody else know of his arrival was to make John Denton pay handsomely for silence. His terms were exorbitant, his words and manner aggravating, insolent. He had come for his wife, too, he tauntingly said. At last, a struggle took place, and John Denton seizing an iron mallet used in boat-mending, which happened to be near, struck Reid on the temple with it, killing him, or nearly so, by a single blow. Fear-stricken at what he had done, John Denton glared eagerly around for means of concealing his crime. James, he ascertained, was asleep; but should he awake, the murderer had no fear of being betrayed by him. Quickly the thought struck John Denton

of stripping the body, clothing it in Mr. Kirkton's clothes, placing it in a sack, and casting it over the Bluff. The first part of the job was soon effected, and, the change of habiliments completed, the slain sailor was placed upon the sofa, whilst Denton ascertained if the coast was clear. The coast *was* clear; and having first taken care to mutilate the face of the corpse beyond all possibility of recognition, and to discharge a bullet into the body from a large-bored pistol, it was flung into the sea, then at about high tide. John Denton then returned home, unobserved by any one.

He was safe. Fear might lie him down and sleep, as he would manage matters. Mr. Kirkton was gone for three or four months to France, where news of such a deed, should the body, as was probable, be flung back by the tides, would not reach him. Mowbray, if the corpse was found, would be alone suspected—and if not hanged, which he, Denton, did not wish, would be imprisoned. To carry out the plan, and assure that suspicion, nay, absolute presumption of guilt, should at once fall upon Mowbray, he sent the forged note to Margaret for Clara Mowbray. He also fired the gun on the evening Mowbray vainly sought the supposed seducer, the report of which two witnesses swore to having heard. His intention was to marry the widow Reid without delay, and taking his savings, which were considerable, with him, sail in *The Wave* for South America. This would be all

the more easily managed should Mowbray be taken up for the murder, but in any case there would be no difficulty. His brother, himself, and the boy, would be crew enough, and when but a few short weeks had passed, he should be beyond capture or pursuit.

We have seen how that fine Satan-suggested scheme broke down; and now John Denton's slender chance of life hangs upon the success of a bold device which his brother has sworn at any risk to carry through. The brothers had always felt a strong affection for each other.

James, whose face is whiter even than his brother's, is gone to the cottage; John is securely bolted into the strong lock-up house. Under the lee of the bluff headland, riding at her moorings, is *The Wave*. She has enough of water and provisions on board, and the boy sleeps in her. *The Wave* must be out of sight long ere dawn, or John Denton will be hanged before he is many weeks older, for the March assize is not very distant. By 11 o'clock John ought to be freed from prison, and as the moon will then be up, he will probably meet some one in the course of the two miles which lie between the lock-up house and the cutter. That danger must be provided against. Kirkton is known to be in the neighbourhood; there are plenty of his peculiarly-fashioned garments, and two of his hats in the cottage; disguised in which, John Denton will pass along without fear of detection. So James, having secured all the money in the place,

and selected several sharp files, makes up a bundle of clothes, and steals forth into the yet dark night.

It will be a work of time—filing through those two stout iron bars; but the brother works with might and main, sweating profusely, freezing though the weather be. The lock-up is strong, but solitary, and no one imagines that an attempt to liberate the prisoner will be made.

The attempt has not only been made but has succeeded; and it is not quite 11. John Denton is standing on the outside of the lock-up, by his brother. The freed captive trembles very much, but a long pull at a brandy-flask warms his blood, and with James's help he has soon exchanged his sailor's suit for one of Mr. Kirkton's. With the hat pulled well over the brow the disguise is complete. No one passing within half a dozen yards could detect it.

The brothers part, arranging where to meet near the head of the Bluff. The moon has risen, but there seems no ground for fear, and John Denton, well-fortified with brandy, passes briskly on. After walking about half-a-mile, a man whom he knows very well, and who seems rather drunk, hails him from a little distance as Mr. Kirkton, and remarks that it is a fine night, but cursed cold.

At last he is close to the path which diverges from Mowbray's cottage towards the roughish ravine along which he intends passing towards the head of the

Bluff, whence a precipitous path leads down to the sea-shore. All danger is past; he breathes freely, and accelerates his pace. Ha! Whose shadow is that? A man's, and crossing the path he must himself pursue,—at some hundred yards' distance. Yet who can be there at such a time? He must have been mistaken. He proceeds, and presently hears the familiar fisherman's hail, which tells that James has reached the place of meeting, and is waiting for him. He darts forward at a run; the brothers see each other in the bright moonlight, and James waves his hat in triumph. At that moment a man steps swiftly from behind a crag, levels a gun, fires, and John Denton falls with a scream and a curse, mortally wounded, upon the jagged path. Mowbray has killed him in mistake for Kirkton!

Reid's murderer survived about twelve hours, and with his last breath recognized that he had been overtaken by the judgment of a just God.

I have but one or two lines to add. William Mowbray died in a lunatic asylum. Clara was claimed and taken to the home of her father's wealthy northern friends. Mr. Kirkton I have never since met or heard of.

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

NO. 3.—THE WRECK ON THE ICEBERG.

IN the year 18— I went to London, and though not attached to either Mission, frequently preached and heard confessions at the Sardinian and Moorfields chapels.

Amongst the letters of introduction to Catholic families of good standing in society, with which I had been favoured, was one to a gentleman whom we will call Mr. Kennedy, a widower, residing with his son Arthur, at Hammersmith.

A stronger contrast, both physical and moral, than that presented by the father and son can hardly be imagined. Kennedy, senior,—who had been many years in the Civil Service of the East India Company, from which he had retired with a considerable

pension,—was a short, shrivelled, morose old gentleman, soured with a world in which he had failed to win any considerable prize,—meaning a prize commensurate with his exalted merits as measured by his own valuation.

Arthur Kennedy, on the other hand, was a tall, handsome youth, slightly over twenty; one of the gayest natures imaginable, and, in some respects, a very estimable person. Unfortunately there was one capital defect in his character. He was a creature of impulse,—capricious, fleeting, but for the time overpowering, impulse; by which I mean that he was governed by absorbing, but transient purpose, in place of resolve, based upon reason and principle. He was, also, wonderfully susceptible to the influence of “*la grande passion*,” an amusing instance of which, strongly illustrative of his inconstant, capricious disposition, fell in my way two or three months after I made his acquaintance. The enchantress, who this time suddenly subjugated his susceptible soul, was a young, and certainly very pretty, milliner or mantua-maker, whom Mr. Kennedy’s housekeeper had hired to assist her in completing some dress work. Arthur Kennedy was so crazed by her charms, as to write her a flaming declaration of passionate affection, eternal constancy, and so on, clenched by an offer to flee with her forthwith to Gretna or Greenland, for the consummation of their loves. The exultant damsel at once assented

(strictly stipulating for Gretna, not Greenland) ; but in her triumph, incautiously showed her lover's flattering missive to a companion, who, of course, lost no time in imparting the interesting secret to Mrs. Petre. I chanced to arrive, at the God-speed of the discovery ; and the housekeeper decided to consult me, in the first instance, rather than Mr. Kennedy. I at once undertook to remonstrate with Arthur upon the folly, the insanity, of the step he was about, presumed, to take, and the more willingly that the facile-minded young man reposed great confidence in me—not, at that time, as to a priest, but as to a friend. There was no occasion for my interference. The pretty milliner's education had been sadly neglected ; the writing, spelling, and diction, of her note of acceptance were detestable, vulgar in the extreme,—so much so, as to quite disenchant her fanciful lover. How, as he said, could a girl who scrawled such wretched pothooks, and spelt dear, “deer,”—heart, “arte,”—be a divinity to be worshipped by a man of education and refinement ? Of course not ; and I was deputed to arrange the silly affair, which I did without much trouble ; the girl's mother, a decent woman, happening fortunately to be a Catholic, and easily amenable therefore to admonition,—that is, to a priest's admonition. The foolish young man's foolish note was exchanged for a sensible one of five pounds' value—and there an end.

Such a father and son no one could be surprised to

find living—though under the same roof—in a state of moral estrangement. Arthur Kennedy, I am afraid, both disliked and despised his father; and that stern, saturnine father, there could be no doubt whatever, looked with intense disgust upon a kaleidoscope idiosyncrasy, which at every twist and turn conjured up new and brilliant hopes and anguries from the fleeting fantasies which sparkle in the path of enthusiastic youth. I may here remark that neither of the Kennedys was more than a nominal, passive Catholic as to creed and faith,—which is to say, that whenever they attended divine service, their place of worship was a Catholic church or chapel, and that if either had been asked what his religion was, he would have mechanically replied, that of a Roman Catholic. Of the peculiar duties enjoined to the faithful of the Church they were unobservant, if not disdainful.

Mr. Kennedy died of heart disease about six months after the milliner affair. His son was not much affected, even by the suddenness of the summons;—was not the world full of untimely graves, and had not his father reached, or nearly so, the orthodox limit of human life? A sharper trial awaited him. The morose old man, careless of the future of his son, had lived up to his income; the pension, of course, died with him; and Arthur Kennedy soon became aware that after all just debts had been paid, and everything sold, to the last article of

furniture, he would be the possessor of certainly not more than five hundred pounds!

This discovery sent down the mercury of his hot mounting blood to zero, and kept it there, till one day, when I was with him, Mr. James Kennedy, his uncle, and a wealthy merchant of Mincing Lane, called, self-invited, and, in the kindest manner, proffered sympathy and succour. I, as well as Arthur, had frequently heard his father speak of this brother, whom he never visited, with supercilious scorn, as a man who had risen in the commercial world by dint of sordid cunning and plodding perseverance, unrelieved by a spark of generous feeling. The insolence of his brother's success dwarfing, in a material sense, his own social status, had rendered the East India Company's servant sovereignly unjust to his relative, who was really a man of a genial nature, and a thorough gentleman in manners and education.

Mr. James Kennedy proposed that his nephew should at once enter his counting-house, and if he proved diligent and capable, the uncle pledged himself to push his fortunes. I eagerly supported the proposal, and Arthur Kennedy, though with an ill grace, finally acceded thereto. He had thought to have entered the army; and now, instead of a cornetcy, to accept of a clerkship, was humiliating, well-nigh intolerable! He, however, as I have said, finally assented; matters of detail were arranged, and Mr. James Kennedy took friendly leave.

When Arthur Kennedy called upon me, scarcely a fortnight afterwards, I found that discontent with his new vocation had completely passed away, and that the rebound from the depths of despair had rocketed him up into the empyrean of a commercial paradise, upon the beatitudes whereof he rhapsodized with breathless enthusiasm. Who could seriously deny the real superiority of the mercantile profession over all others—arms, law, physic, divinity inclusive? True, he was to be a trader; but a merchant-trader! His uncle did business on a grand scale with the Americas and West Indies. Everybody knew that commerce was the only road to riches—that first power in the world. He had been an idiot, therefore, to murmur at being removed from the barren career of a poor gentleman without influential patronage, to the lists where the real prizes of the world were contended for! And Mr. Arthur Kennedy nothing doubted that whilst his hair yet retained its natural colour, he should take his place amongst merchant princes, the true nobility of England.

The fire which glowed upon young Kennedy's cheek, and shone in his eyes, as he gave glib utterance to the foregoing rhodomontade, suggested that some more immediately potent stimulant than that of a hungering after riches—though I had some time before assured myself that that passion was strongly latent within him—must have had some share in kindling such excitement.

"Your uncle," I remarked, "is really the kind——"

"My uncle," he interrupted with vivacity, "is the best, the most generous of men."

"And your cousin——"

"Charming, angelic, divine!" he again broke in with yet livelier vehemence. "The sweetest, most fascinating of human beings!"

"'Charming, angelic, divine!' The sweetest, most fascinating of human beings!' Surely, strange epithets as applied to your uncle's son!"

"Pooh! bosh! You know very well I was speaking of Rosamond, not Robert, Kennedy. By the way," he added, as he rose to go, "you have not yet called in Cavendish Square. My uncle will be very glad to see you. Good-bye!"

Happening to be one evening in the vicinity of Mr. James Kennedy's West-end residence, I paid him a visit. Dinner had been some time over, and the gentlemen, Mr. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Arthur Kennedy, and Charles Dalrymple, the son of a wealthy shipowner, had joined Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter in the drawing-room. My impression of the ladies was an agreeable one. The mamma was a lady-like matron—Miss Rosamond a pretty, graceful young person, to whom the adjectives, "charming, angelic, divine," might be applied with no more of

extravagance than is usually tolerated from youthful lovers' lips. And there was no doubt, not the least, that Arthur Kennedy really loved his charming cousin; nor that Charles Dalrymple was a rival suitor. The young lady's brilliant smiles shone indifferently on both. At all events, I, having but slight skill in the interpretation of such mysteries, did not perceive any decided indication of a preference; though there was, I fancied, a certain caressing tone in her voice when she addressed Arthur Kennedy. That might, however, arise from cousinly sympathy and regard.

There was no shadow of doubt that Arthur was Mr. Kennedy's favourite. The young man had, I was told, addressed himself with a will to business,—Rosamond's bright eyes having, we may be sure, lent fire to the fierce enthusiasm with which he always entered upon a new pursuit. So much was his uncle pleased with him that he was already advanced to a confidential post in the Mincing-lane establishment.

The road to felicity and fortune was therefore fairly before Arthur Kennedy, and, for a considerable time for him, he pursued it vigorously. Yet scarcely six months had passed before the strain had become intolerable. He would do anything, unheard-of things,—"fight, drink up Eisel, eat a crocodile," shoot Charles Dalrymple,—to become the husband of Rosamond Kennedy; but *work* for her at that dreary

desk, week after week, month after month,—it may be year after year,—was to him simply impossible. Delightful, no doubt, transcendently so, to be a millionaire, a merchant-prince, but to toil step by step up the wearying ascent which leads to that dazzling height was hopelessly out of his power. He could not do it for a thousand Rosamonds.

Arthur Kennedy had handsome lodgings in Oxford Street, where I often spent the evening with him, but so much did his absurd folly in continually harping upon “the miserable martyrdom of the counting-house,” and his determination to in some way escape therefrom, annoy me, that I ceased for about a month to call upon him. When I did see him again I found that Satan, in the likeness of one Dubrowski, a Polish swindler, had surprisingly improved the opportunity I had, most unhappily, afforded.

Dubrowski, a professional gamester, occupied the second floor of the house in Oxford Street. The splenetic *ennui* which devoured young Kennedy having excited his vulpine curiosity, he contrived, during my evening-absences, to easily insinuate himself into Arthur’s confidence, and that done, he forthwith pointed out a pleasant primrose path to the possession of ample wealth and—Miss Rosamond Kennedy!

Were it not that every-day’s experience proves that the coarsest knavery counts its dupes by hundreds, I could hardly expect the reader to believe that

Arthur Kennedy, an intelligent, educated man, could for a moment have been bamboozled by the imposture palmed upon him by so transparent a charlatan as Dubrowski. This:—

He, Dubrowski, had profoundly studied the science of chances, the result of which, after years of labour, was the construction of an algebraic formula, which, strictly adhered to, at *faro*, or *roulette*—I do not remember which—would prove a mine of gold to the possessor of the precious secret. Dubrowski would gratuitously instruct his young friend, for whom he felt a sincere attachment, in the scientific problem he had himself elaborated at a cost of so much toil of brain, and Arthur Kennedy's five hundred pounds would, in a comparatively brief space of time, grow into many thousands.

I was utterly confounded, when Arthur Kennedy, with flashing eyes, and every muscle of his frame vibrating with strong excitement, disclosed the swindler's scheme to me.

"Is it possible," I exclaimed, "that you can attach the slightest credence to a stupid lie, wrapped up in black-leg jargon?"

"Lie! Jargon!" retorted Arthur Kennedy. "I have *proved* Dubrowski's faith and truth. Look here!"—he continued, with great earnestness,—
 "look here!—I have played once only, and won this bag of gold—more than one hundred sovereigns! Lie! jargon—forsooth! The accuracy of my friend's

formula of the doctrine of chances is as demonstrable as a problem in Euclid ! ”

The absurd infatuation of the young man angered as much as it disquieted me ; but it was useless arguing with him : the demon of play possessed him wholly, and I went away in a rage.

Would that I had exerted a sterner self-control !—but I was young then. Experience had not taught me how to steer my present and onward course by the light which reveals and moralizes the mistakes and calamities of the past. Then my fear for the credulous, misguided young man did not contemplate a greater misfortune than the loss of his own five hundred pounds ; a loss, which I succeeded in persuading myself might ultimately prove a great gain, by flinging him back, however rudely, into the beaten paths of honest industry. Alas, for the vanity of human prescience ! I was certainly much to blame : I should have taken counsel with his uncle.

The festival of Easter was close at hand, and the Catholic chapels were, for those days, thronged of an evening by penitents, more or less contrite, who came to shrive their souls preparatory to partaking, spiritually, in the mystery of the Resurrection. One of the priests of Lincoln's Inn Fields was incapacitated by indisposition from the continuous discharge of his arduous functions, and I readily volunteered to relieve him of a portion of his labour. I was,

however, engaged at Moorfields every day in Holy Week, till Holy, or, as Protestants say, Good-Friday ; on the evening of which I attended at the Sardinian chapel. Persons conversant with Catholic worship are aware that on that evening the service is of a peculiarly solemn character—the chants all minors, and that during “Tenebræ,” the lights on the high altar being one by one extinguished, an oppressive gloom, save to the eye of faith, pervades the sacred edifice.

I had mingled with the congregation during the service, at the conclusion of which, looking round upon the persons whose confessions I had volunteered to hear, I started as if a spectre confronted me. In the distance, near a confessional, stood Arthur Kennedy. His person was partially concealed in the deep shadow, from out of which his white sepulchral face gleamed forth in ghastly distinctness. Why was he there ? What meant the expression of those burning eyes, staring upon vacancy ? for it was plain that he saw nothing before or around him.

A priest passed along the aisle, and entered the confessional near him. The movement among the kneeling penitents aroused him, and he *rushed*, as if distrustful of his own purpose, into the confessional. In a minute,—in less than a minute,—he was out again ; gazed for a few moments confusedly about, without observing me, and left the chapel.

What might such strange conduct portend ? What

the secret of which he had come to disburden his conscience, and which at the last moment he had feared to disclose, even under the seal of confession? Something, I felt sure, arising out of his intimacy with Dubrowski—of his familiarity with the accursed gaming-table.

Yet how? The loss of his five hundred pounds? Not that alone. Mere pecuniary loss would never blanch a *young* man's face to that hue. Never! Grievous doubts and fears oppressed me, knowing as I did that he filled the position of confidential cashier in one of the departments of his uncle's establishment; and excusing myself, as I best could, from entering that evening upon the duties I had taken upon myself, I hastened to Arthur Kennedy's lodgings. He was at home, and received me with agitated fervour—so to speak. The wine he was drinking had not brought back colour to his cheeks, nor steadiness to his nerves. He was still death-white, as in the chapel, and his shaking hand failed, after several attempts, to pour me out a glass of wine. He was endeavouring to do so for the third or fourth time, when a loud single knock sounded on the street-door; the decanter dropped from his hand, smashing to bits on the floor, and he hearkened, with dilated eyes and suspended breath, to a footstep which quickly ascended the stairs.

A servant brought in a note,—“From Mr. Kennedy, of Cavendish Square.”

"Read—read!" gasped Arthur Kennedy; "I cannot."

Instantly breaking the seal, I read aloud the few sentences it contained, to the effect that his uncle wished to see him immediately. "This is really all," I remarked.

"All! And enough too!" he exclaimed, with strong emotion. "Well, the thunderbolt has fallen, and suspense and hope—foolish, frantic hope—being gone, craven fear should follow. See, I can pour out the wine now," he added, filling a large tumbler from another decanter, and emptying it at a gulp.

"You will go with me?" he inquired, putting on his hat.

I intimated assent by a gesture; for so astounded was I, that the words I would have spoken stuck in my throat.

Mr. Kennedy received us with his usual cordial courtesy. He had news—he hoped agreeable news—for his nephew, whose depression of spirit for some time past had greatly disquieted him—and Rosamond.—(The last two words peculiarly emphasized.)—A change of scene might do him a world of good, and an opportunity of obtaining it had just occurred. The accounts last received from the agent at New Orleans were very unsatisfactory, and it was important that they should be tested on the spot by some one upon whose intelligence and integrity reliance could be placed. Mr. Kennedy had therefore selected his

nephew for the mission. He had first thought of sending his son Robert, but, as Arthur knew, his health had lately given way, and it had been decided, under medical sanction, that when the spring should be further advanced he, accompanied by Charles Dalrymple, would proceed to the Northern and Western States of America. The climate of New Orleans, and the harassing work to be gone through, would, it was believed, tend rather to further impair than amend his health.

The silent astonishment with which Arthur Kennedy listened to his uncle was shared by myself. Truly, an odd kind of "thunderbolt" was Mr. Kennedy's proposition! The staring bewilderment of his nephew surprised and somewhat alarmed the merchant.

"What, in Heaven's name, is the matter?" he exclaimed, taking Arthur affectionately by the hand. "Has anything happened?" he added, addressing me.

"No, no, no—nothing;" burst from the young man's quivering lips. "A—a spasm," he stammered, turning to the sideboard—we had been received in the dining-room—and clutching a caraffe of brandy. "Better now," he said, again facing his uncle, but still with unassured, disquieted gaze. "I felt unwell, and the surprise—leaving Rosamond, too, so suddenly, and for so long a time."

The falsehood thus suggested changed Mr. Ken-

nedy's alarm to hilarity. "Oh, that is it!" he laughingly exclaimed. "A *jealous* spasm. Well, four or five months are, I daresay, an eternity in a lover's calendar; but it will come to an end, like all things else, never fear. Then didn't I mention—purposely mention, foolish boy—that Charles Dalrymple will soon leave England for a much longer period?"

"True, true;—I was very foolish. Did you say I was to start immediately?"

"Yes; it is essential there should be no delay, and everything is arranged to enable you to sail in the American Mail-Packet which leaves London to-morrow morning. I have been so busy," added Mr. Kennedy, "preparing the papers necessary for your guidance, that I have had no time to examine your cash account and vouchers, according to monthly custom, and have therefore locked them up till your return."

Had not the door suddenly opened as Mr. Kennedy ceased speaking, admitting his wife and daughter, he could hardly have failed to be struck by the deep-drawn, only partially-suppressed, half-sigh, half-scream of relief which escaped his nephew. I heard it with a shudder, instantly divining as I did its sad significance. The unhappy young man knew that I did, and, when I took leave a few minutes afterwards, there was a mute, agonizingly-earnest appeal for silence on my part, in his eyes, and the pressure of his hand, which I should have lacked the power,

had I had the inclination to resist. The trembling culprit had obtained a respite, a brief adjournment of the day of shame and ruin. No more than that, I felt convinced.

The Kennedys of Cavendish Square were not even nominal Catholics, and I did not see either of them during five or six months. When I did meet Mr. Kennedy not far from his place of business, Mincing Lane, it was purely by accident. His greeting was kind as ever, and taking my arm, he, in a manner, dragged me into his private room. I had no wish for an interview with him; a cold fear always coming over me whenever my thoughts reverted to Arthur Kennedy and the dark future which seemed to await him.

"My nephew, and your friend Arthur, has returned from New Orleans," said Mr. Kennedy. "He arrived about a fortnight since."

The tone and manner of the merchant reassured me: I breathed freely again.

"Is he well?" I asked.

"Yes, in bodily health." Mr. Kennedy paused thoughtfully, and then said, "Yes, quite well in bodily health, but he has lost that fine buoyancy of spirit which used to distinguish him. Except, indeed, by fits and starts, when he is in my daughter's company, and then he is obstreperously gay. You were in his confidence, and we may, without impropriety, speak together of such matters. The wedding, by the bye,

is to take place immediately after my son Robert returns from America. I fear," continued Mr. Kennedy, "that Arthur has an unconquerable aversion to business; the more inexplicable inasmuch as he is so well qualified to attain mercantile eminence. He made a first-rate hit at New Orleans; cleared many thousands by one bold, well-calculated stroke."

"How may that have happened?"

"I will tell you. Having performed his task at New Orleans, with tact and skill, he was about embarking for England, when a disabled barque of very large tonnage, *The Ganges*, was towed into the port by an American vessel. The barque had been found at sea many hundred leagues out of her course, dismasted, and abandoned by her crew. Under what precise circumstances she was abandoned remains to be discovered. The cargo consisted of Indigo, in perfectly sound condition, which was offered for sale, in bulk, for the benefit of the salvors. It happened, curiously enough, that in the last letter Arthur received from me, it was casually mentioned that in consequence of the short supply reported from India, and a prevalent rumour that several ships laden with the article had been lost, Indigo had reached an enormous quotation in the London market. This was hint sufficient for my sharp-witted nephew, who forthwith purchased the entire cargo of *The Ganges*, by bills on my house of course, transhipped it on board a fast ship, *The Queen of the South*, made one of the

quickest voyages home upon record, and arriving five days before any other Indigo ship was reported here, realized many thousands by the venture, the half of which was fairly his own, and I only acted with common honesty in presenting him with it. A very capital hit indeed!" added Mr. Kennedy, gleefully rubbing his hands.

After hearing that, it was not difficult to understand how Arthur Kennedy's "cash account" had been made "right." This was my thought. My words were—

"Mr. Arthur Kennedy is a very fortunate, and at the same time, very puzzling person. Prosperous in circumstances, and about to wed the lady of his choice, and yet, you intimate, a prey to melancholy!"

"Too true," said Mr. Kennedy, in a saddened tone. "I cannot comprehend it at all. You used to have considerable influence with him, and I shall be glad if you will see him. Come and dine with us—the sooner the better."

"He cannot be otherwise than desirous of marrying his charming cousin. Excuse my bluntness," I added quickly, and colouring to the temples.

"God bless you," replied Mr. Kennedy, "he is madly importunate with me not to delay the marriage till Robert's return."

"Charles Dalrymple will return with your son. May not that circumstance account for Arthur's unrest of mind, and the importunity you speak of?"

"I think not, and yet—— But do you come—soon I hope—and judge for yourself. I have no skill at interpreting riddles."

A family in Cavendish Square had just sat down to dinner, when my name was announced. The company consisted of the Kennedys and five or six intimate friends. Arthur could not conceal the agitation which my entrance excited. I was not surprised at that. I was the only person that had penetrated his guilty secret, and my accusing presence could not but trouble him, strong as might be the reliance which he placed upon my honour and discretion. He soon regained his outward calm, and, after the ladies had retired, became, helped with copious draughts of wine, boisterously gay: an altogether forced, unnatural gaiety, and as easily detected as the flaring rouge upon a harlot's withered cheek.

What new grief or remorse prompted such unmistakable symptoms of a mind diseased? Some more afflictive memory or apprehension, I was afraid, than could be excited by a *cancelled* crime, humanly speaking; proof of which no one, not even I, possessed, and never should.

It was a memorable evening. As we were about to join the ladies, Dalrymple senior was announced. His aspect and manner, full of dismay, sorrow, compassion, anticipated the woeful tidings of which he was the bearer. *The Leopard*, in which

Robert Kennedy and his own son sailed for America, had been wrecked on her passage out, and every soul on board, except Charles Dalrymple and two sailors, had perished. Poor Mr. Kennedy fell down in a fit. Presently, as we were applying burnt feathers and vinegar to the bereaved father, there was a cry of women, and in rushed his wife and daughter, in a state of distraction. I could not, if I would, describe the tumult of agony and terror which ensued. I was myself too agitated to mark anything distinctly, till after the room had become cleared, as I supposed, of everybody except myself.

It was not so. Upon looking round, I saw Arthur Kennedy standing by, and supporting himself by the chimney-piece. Bright beads of sweat stood out upon his clammy forehead, and through his eyes flashed lurid gleams of horror and remorse.

"Did he say—did the letter say," he stammered, "that *The Leopard*—a brig, I know, was wrecked upon—upon an—an iceberg?"

"Assuredly not. No particulars are given in Charles Dalrymple's letter. *The Leopard* was wrecked on her passage out, and all on board, except three persons, perished. Nothing more."

"You are sure the letter did not say *founded*?"

"No; wrecked."

"Wrecked—wrecked," he muttered. "There are many modes of wreck—many. Yet a brig—in the passage out—and just about the time! If—but no,

no—it cannot be that I am lost beyond the reach of mercy !”

I could not answer a word. Presence of mind and speech alike failed me.

“ Will you be at home to-morrow evening ? ” he asked. “ I can no longer endure this pent-up agony—this hell of unshared, uncommunicated doubt, suspense, despair. At your own home ; I will not go to a chapel.”

I readily assented, and proposed that he should at once go away with me in a hack, and I would see him to his lodgings. He had the sense to comply, and when taking leave I again promised to wait at home, and hear what he had to communicate.

Nine o'clock had struck, and I was persuaded that Arthur Kennedy had repented him of the appointment, when he was announced, and presently entered the room in a state of extreme excitement, partly caused, I saw, by wine.

Seating himself, and fixing his blood-shot eyes upon me with a kind of sardonic, mocking expression, as if he half despised himself for the weakness which brought him there, he said,—

“ You are true to your promise ; thank you. But when was not a priest eager to entrap men into spiritual bondage ! Pardon me, I am crazed to-night. I come for advice, counsel,—for some of that balm for minds diseased which you say can only

be had genuine at your shop. Forgive me," he again broke in—"I am a fool, as well as villain. But mind, I am not going to kneel down; I have not done that to a man since I was a child, and will not begin again now."

"Go on; I shall hold your communication as made by one gentleman to another, not as from a penitent to a priest. Your confidence will be held equally sacred, and we can omit the preliminary formula, which, under the circumstances, would be little less than blasphemy."

"The *Confiteor*, you mean,—'Holy father,' and all that. Be it so; and now, then, to make a clean breast of it. Stay, you must wear a stole; I must have all the guarantees."

I declined compliance with his request, though scarcely justified in doing so. He did not insist, and the sad disclosure proceeded.

It was morning when Arthur Kennedy left me, and it will be necessary therefore to condense the prolix, passionate narrative which consumed so many hours in the telling.

I had guessed correctly as to the cause which occasioned his appearance at the Catholic chapel on the evening of Holy Friday. Having been swindled by Dubrowski and Company out of all his own money, he had madly as wickedly risked over four hundred pounds belonging to his uncle, and of course was speedily plundered of that also. This part of his

story was but slightly discussed. The money had been quietly replaced on his return from America; and no positive wrong having, as it happened, been done, the crime itself did not afflict his conscience. At all events, it was a venial offence, whatever the law of the land might say, in comparison with the giant sin, the memory of which tortured, distracted him.

On the third day after the purchase of the Indigo of the New Orleans brokers, *The Queen of the South*, bound for London or Liverpool, was running through the Gulf, carrying with her a favourable, steady breeze. Arthur Kennedy was super-cargo, and the skipper, Mr. John Marley, was bound to obey his directions as to the course of the ship, unless such directions would peril the safety of the vessel.

It was, after all, it seemed, a pretty nearly even chance whether the profit to be realized would be enormous, trifling, or even *nil*: all depending upon *The Queen of the South* reaching London, or Liverpool, before or after other Indigo ships, two of which had been lately spoken with by a vessel that arrived at New Orleans on the very day *The Queen of the South* cleared out of that port. A few hours' advantage in the race would make all the difference.

Arthur Kennedy then perfectly comprehended that swiftness was the condition of success; and savagely did he chafe under the slightest impediment that

lessened *The Queen of the South's* rate of speed. The wind was however, upon the whole, favourable, and when passing, though far to westward, of the banks of Newfoundland, a stiff breeze sprang up, immediately after the disappearance of a dense fog that had prevailed for the previous ten or twelve hours, which sent the ship through the water at the rate, Captain Marley announced, of ten knots an hour. Should that speed be maintained England was but eleven or twelve days distant.

Those were uplifting words to Arthur Kennedy, who scarcely felt his feet as he paced to and fro the deck on that brilliant summer night. Fortune—I give his own words, not mine—fortune had at last ceased to persecute him; all trace of the crime he had committed would in a few days be for ever obliterated, and he should again sleep in spite of thunder. Then it could scarcely be doubted that his uncle, delighted with the prescient commercial audacity he had displayed, would no longer delay his union with Rosamond Kennedy. All that, so short a time since, he had feared was lost to him for ever—by his own accursed folly lost—wealth, Rosamond, an unstained name, were again within his reach! The excitable young man wept with emotion, and for the first time during many weeks could bear to look up at the bright pure stars, whose radiance no longer seemed to mock his shame, his vileness—rather to kiss and calm him to serenity and peace.

Whilst under the influence of that wild ecstasy, Simpson, first mate of the ship, placing a telescope in his hand, pointed to an enormous iceberg—a mountainous island of ice, far away to leeward, adown the rugged slopes of which rivers were rushing and sparkling in the moon and starlight. The summer temperature was fast dissolving the huge agglomeration of ice, but the mass was still immense, and, the mate declared, affected the thermometer even at that distance.

Arthur Kennedy was gazing with curious interest at an object, the extent and strangeness of which always inspires a feeling of wonder and awe, when, upon opening up a crescent-bay, so to speak, of the floating ice-island, he caught sight of a large brig, stranded upon the far-outstretching shallow ice-shore. He returned the glass to the mate, who looked through it long and heedfully before speaking.

“A fine craft wrecked there—English, too,” he said, “and, if my eyes don’t deceive me, there are—let me count—six, seven, eight human beings upon the berg. Ah! I see two more crawling round a point of the ice-island. It’s a pity for you, sir,” added the man, “for of course we must get the ship afore the wind, and take the poor creatures off. One can see a rare way off in these latitudes when the weather’s clear and bright as it is now, and I should say they can’t be less than eight or nine leagues away. It’ll hinder the voyage, going there

and beating back all eighteen hours, and perhaps twice as much, if the tides, leastways currents, which there's no accounting for in the neighbourhood of icebergs, should turn out contrary."

As the man was speaking, Arthur Kennedy felt, he told me, as if the hot blood so lately dancing joyously in his veins was congealing to ice. In an instant a dark veil had fallen before and shut out the bright future that had dawned upon him with such brilliant promise. He was simply Fortune's fool. But must he tamely accept such a cursed chance? By Heaven he would *not* be so baulked, ruined, shamed! The ship *should* hold her course, whatever the consequence to others.

"You are mistaken, Simpson," said the supercargo savagely, and snatching the glass from the mate, "You mistake shadows for human beings. There is no living thing there! nor is there a boat that I can see. The crew have no doubt left in them for Newfoundland."

"Mistaken, am I?" persisted the mate; "I calculate not. If them people are shadows, I'm a shadow myself—that's a fact. The boats may have been stove in. Ah! there's the flash of a signal-gun. They, of course, see us, as well as we see them."

"Fudge! lies!" exclaimed Kennedy, all the devil in his nature roused and raging. "It was a flash of moonlight reflected from a bright point of

the ice. Even you do not pretend to have heard the report of a signal-gun."

"Report!—no, sir," doggedly rejoined Simpson, "the noise of the popguns that merchantmen generally carry with them ain't often heard at nine leagues' distance to windward. There goes another flash of moonlight! Again—another."

"You are a perverse fool" was the angry retort, and, snatching the glass from the mate's hand, Arthur Kennedy flung it, knowing it was the only one in the ship, overboard. Then he dived below, was gone about five minutes, and on his reappearance said, hurriedly, "Here, Simpson, take this, and mind you say nothing to the skipper about how the glass was lost. It dropped over the side, you know, by accident." Simpson understood him perfectly well, especially when he found a canvas-bag containing forty sovereigns in his hand.

Arthur Kennedy plunged into his bed-berth striving after sleep. Sleep would not come till copious draughts of brandy steeped his senses in drunken, chaotic slumber. "The sleep of devils! I was tossed in a whirlpool of conflicting horrors! Now freezing on the iceberg,—slipping, slipping off into the devouring sea, whilst human fiends, that might have saved me, mocked and gibbered in my face. Then plunged into molten fire, the flames whereof leapt down my throat, licking up all moisture there with their fiery tongues. I awoke in

that torture, caused, no doubt, by the brandy I had swallowed, and immediately rushed on deck. The first mate was there, and I ordered him to put the ship before the wind, and run for the iceberg. The man smiled derisively, said it was full five hours since I went below, that it was now quite useless to attempt reaching the iceberg, adding that we were at least fifty miles nearer England than when I pitched the glass overboard.

"It was true that I must have been full the time he stated below, for the sun was high above the horizon, and the constant breeze was driving us onward with accelerated speed. I felt that the iceberg and its occupants, as far as I was concerned, were a portion of the irredeemable past, and I again hastened to hide myself below. The mate subsequently remarked that it was possible enough that some vessel whose cargo was not Indigo that wanted selling in a hurry might have passed near the iceberg, and taken the poor fellows off. I hugged that hope.

"Not for long," continued Arthur Kennedy, with wild despair, "could I clasp and hold that precious hope. Since I have reached England—since the price of murder was put into my hands—the spectre of the perishing wretches on the iceberg has haunted me day and night. And now—now,"—he fairly screamed,—“the horrible fantasy, if it be a fantasy, possesses me that the wrecked brig was *The Leopard*

of London;—one of the abandoned unfortunates on the ice—Rosamond's brother!"

Full six months have passed away since Mr. Kennedy received the news of his son's death, and, strange to say, Charles Dalrymple, who was picked up and conveyed to New York in an American vessel, has sent home no particulars of the loss of *The Leopard*. He expects shortly to arrive in England, when, of course, he will give full details of the catastrophe. "Very strange behaviour," remarks Mr. Kennedy to me, "but Charles Dalrymple was always an eccentric young man—I fancy, however, that his father knows all about it."

Meanwhile, the strong hours have, as they ever do, brought healing on their wings, and arrangements are again in progress for the marriage of Arthur with Rosamond Kennedy.

It still wanted some six or seven weeks to the wedding-day when Charles Dalrymple arrived from America, and without delay paid his respects in Cavendish Square. He still evaded going into details of the wreck of *The Leopard*; the subject was a too painful one—another time, &c. It chanced that there was to be a family dinner party the next evening but one, and Charles Dalrymple, somewhat to Mr. Kennedy's surprise, at once accepted a purely formal invitation to be present.

I was amongst the guests, and noticed, with a ner-

vous irritability I could not shake off, the sardonic, bitter irony, the flashing, triumphant hate with which Charles Dalrymple watched the flurried efforts of Arthur Kennedy to appear at ease, and the quantity of wine he drank to steady his nerves. At last *the* toast of the evening was proposed: "Miss Kennedy, and her future and most fortunate husband, Mr. Arthur Kennedy." The company—all of whom were relatives or intimate friends—rose to do honour to the toast, when every arm was suddenly paralyzed, every eye dilated with dismay and astonishment, by Charles Dalrymple's ringing tones.

"One moment, ladies and gentlemen: I have a preface to that toast, which preface will be a brief history of the wreck of *The Leopard* on her voyage out to New York, which, for sundry well-considered reasons, I have till now declined to make public. *The Leopard* was wrecked during a fog upon an iceberg, to the westward of the banks of Newfoundland. About a dozen of us, Robert Kennedy amongst the number, managed to get firm footing upon the ice. The fog cleared up, a brilliant night ensued, and a large three-masted ship, with the stars and stripes flying at the fore, hove in sight, at about eight leagues to windward. We made signals of distress, and with great difficulty fired a small cannon three times. We were seen. William Simpson, the first mate of the ship, whom—thanks to God's retributive providence—I met with at New Orleans, urged the supercargo,

who was virtually in command of the ship, to run for the iceberg and take off the unfortunates, who would else perish miserably in a few hours. The supercargo refused to do so, and bribed the mate to acquiescent silence with forty sovereigns. The American ship passed on, leaving us to our fate. That fate—to Robert Kennedy and eight others—was death—a lingering, cruel death. Well, ladies and gentlemen, that ship was *The Queen of the South*—that supercargo, Arthur Kennedy! Do you question the terrible truth of what I solemnly assert? If you do, look at him—look at Arthur Kennedy, and then say if a doubt can remain upon your minds that there stands, trembles, writhes, before you, the atrocious villain who, having slain the brother, contemplates the unutterable crime of making the sister of the murdered man his wife!”

* * * *

About two months afterwards Arthur Kennedy obtained a commission in the East India Company's service, and forthwith embarked for Madras. I do not think he has since visited England. I have heard, but cannot vouch for its truth, that he formed a connection with a Begum, or some such personage, of India. Mr. Kennedy and his daughter went abroad, and did not return till Rosamond had reached the age of full womanhood. She married happily—not with Charles Dalrymple.

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

NO. 4.—WHAT I SAW AND HEARD IN JERSEY.

ST. HELIER's, the capital of picturesque Jersey, may now, as I have read, and been otherwise informed, boast of a handsome Catholic church. Forty years ago I can aver, of my own personal knowledge, that a meaner, dingier place of worship than the so-called Catholic chapel there could scarcely have been found in the British Islands, which is saying a good deal. It was nothing but a dingy room on the basement-floor of a dingy, tumble-down house in a narrow, dirty street. The worshippers were, for the most part, the families of Irishmen employed in the coarser labour of building Fort Regent, one of the costly follies of that Georgian era, which has left such deep traces in the dividend books of British Consols. There were not a

few discharged Irish soldiers who, having heard of the low cost of living in the metropolis of the Channel Islands—especially of the fabulous cheapness of spirits and tobacco—had strayed thither to secure as much of the “comforts” of life as the absence of duties upon articles of consumption might place within reach of their petty pensions. The congregation, including a few French, amounted to about one hundred and fifty souls. I do not think there was one native of either sex amongst them. The Channel Islands were very thoroughly reformed at an early period of the great change; and having no literature worthy of the name, and being, moreover, with many good sound qualities, one of the most literal, unimaginative communities it is possible to conceive, the dim, religious light of ancient days, never wholly stamped out in England, had, for them, been utterly quenched in the blank wastes of unremembered time. This I mention, as, in my belief, a dry, indisputable fact, not as suggesting a religious regret, or a sacerdotal sneer. I must add, that I was in the island but a short time, and that my acquaintance with the native community was a very limited one. It may be, therefore, that my estimate of them is, to a certain extent, an erroneous one; and I am quite sure that the incidental notices which this narrative involves of the peculiar customs of the place—especially of its judicial policy and practice—will not be free from error, though, as to the main facts, I *cannot* be mistaken.

Amongst the non-Irish part of the congregation worshipping in Hue Street, were three persons, two men and one woman, who, from what was surmised and known of their antecedents, and their actual mode of life, puzzled and interested me.

One of the men was a Welsh, the other a Lancashire, man. The Welshman, and very much the oldest, whose name, say, was John Morgan, sold drugs and simples, in the preparation of which he was reputed to be skilful. He was in fair circumstances, and in money matters had a character for just, if close, dealing. He had travelled much and far. His religion was, I suspected—for he would never speak with me upon the subject—a mere pretext for accompanying his wife, of whom he was said to be rabidly jealous, to chapel. He was a dry, withered old man, with a sour, weazened face, though in frame still well enough *set-up*, showing that he had served in the army; a fact which the pension he received from the British Government placed indeed beyond doubt.

The *set-up* of the other man—we may call him Richard Hall—and other unmistakable soldier-signs, showed that he, too, had shouldered Brown Bess in active service. But he had no pension. His years may have numbered forty. He bore them well, and was still a very handsome man; swarthy less from natural complexion than from long exposure in hot climates. The moral aspect of Hall in his ordinary and exceptional moods, was a study

and not a satisfactory one. His bold, brown eyes shone, when in repose, with the clear light of a calm, unquailing courage; and yet, at times, when some memory shook him, as I feared, or, as others noticed more frequently than I, when Morgan's wife—of whom presently—shot at him one of her keen, southern, arrowy glances,—expressive of what, it was impossible to guess,—how instantly did that calm, clear light leap up into a glare of terror, which, vanishing, left a troubled, despairing expression, not unlike that of a fearful, betrayed girl! He was married to an ailing woman, and had one child,—a pretty boy of about four years of age, upon whom he passionately doted. The wife seldom left home. I saw her once only during life. A meek, fading, melancholy *gentlewoman*, not long, it was evident, for this world. The family's income, a very meagre one I understood, would die with her. She and her husband, whose manner towards her was kind and tender,—humbly kind and tender,—were not only thus low, but both had, I was sure, fallen from a height. Hall's religion, I may add, was patently a mere pretence, like Morgan's, and like him assumed with some inexplicable reference to the druggist's wife. They lived at a small cottage in the Vallée des Vaux (Valley of Valleys), a charming locality, about, if I remember rightly, two miles distant from St. Helier's.

Morgan's wife was a Maltese; her age twenty-four

or five. He had married her abroad,—caught by her personal attractions, which were of a showy kind enough. A tall, dark, large-framed woman, instinct with wild wilfulness and passion, which flashed and glared from two of the fiercest eyes I have ever seen. Theirs could not but be an accursed home, where hate and scorn, dotage and decay, kept house together! Madam Morgan, as she was called, had been born and reared a Catholic, but her faith, like that of her husband and his friend, was a mere Sunday sham. I never saw her, save at the public sabbath morning service, and not once, that I remember, did I exchange ten words with her. What might be the nature of the hold she had obtained over Richard Hall was a mystery to the few folk who pursed lips and shook heads over the matter, except that there could be little doubt that it had been forged and riveted by fear. It was equally certain that Morgan was not cognizant of the secret.

He and Hall were, indeed, very good friends, and an occasion arose which enabled the druggist to do the latter a service, whilst rendering himself a greater one.

There arrived one day, by the mail-packet from Weymouth, a wealthy English gentleman, whose age might be somewhat on the shady side of thirty, accompanied by a young mother and *their* child, a boy about the age of Hall's. I never saw either of them, but the story ran that the gentleman had, about five years

previously, formed an attachment to, or, more correctly, imbibed a passion for, a girl whose sole dowry was that fatal one of beauty. I need not further outline the old, old story. The gentleman was now about to espouse an eligible party, and it was essential that the improper *liaison* should be severed at once. Now, Mr. B—— was very far from being an ungenerous man, in a pecuniary sense; so, after the inevitable necessities had been explained and enforced, it was agreed that the mother and child should take up their amply-provided-for abode in one of the Channel Islands—Jersey being the finally-adopted choice. Arrived there, Mr. B—— set about purchasing a suitable domicile for the spirit-broken girl-woman. Delay, arising from the confounding complications of Jersey house and land tenure, which, not in the least comprehending myself, I could hardly hope to make intelligible or interesting to the reader, kept Mr. B—— a much longer time than he had calculated upon in the island. He was thereby saved a large sum of money. Some disease, finding, perhaps, its complementary virus in the soul-sickness which had seized upon Miss S—— (writing *her* name at length will not afford much betraying light—it was Smith), carried her off in a few days. The boy, too, sickened, and Mr. B—— becoming alarmed for the child, and feeling but slight confidence in the skill of the medical gentlemen who had vainly prescribed for the mother, took counsel of a Jersey nurse, who assured him that

one Morgan, of Hue Street, was cognizant of herbal remedies, which would act upon his little boy like a charm. Morgan was, consequently, applied to—his medicaments had the hoped-for effect, and Mr. B—— was pleased, grateful.

This state of things suggested grave considerations to the father's mind. The mother being happily disposed of—does any one suppose he did not *think* she was happily disposed of? At all events, I do, if he did not.—The mother, I repeat, being happily disposed of in the graveyard of the old church, the pressing question was, how to disembarass himself—in a parental, gentlemanly way, of course—of the child. To take back the boy to England was undesirable, inexpedient. Why need he do so? He would speak to that good, clever Morgan, offer him a hundred pounds per annum to provide the child with a good, comfortable home in Jersey, under Mr. Morgan's own immediate supervision, till Henry reached ten years of age, when another, and much more liberal arrangement would be entered into.

Mr. B—— did speak to Mr. Morgan, who jumped at the offer. The wealthy English magnate was so much pleased with this satisfactory termination of a troublesome business, that he handed over a cheque for three years in advance (three hundred pounds). "And if," he added, as he left the druggist's den in Hue Street, "if there should be a fatal relapse of the disorder, or if poor little Henry, who, I cannot conceal from my-

self, is a very delicate child, should pass away from any other disease, I shall not trouble you for any balance that may be due to me,—with the understanding, of course, *that, after strict inquiry, I am satisfied that the boy has been skilfully and kindly treated.*”

This conversation was overheard by Madam Morgan and Jean Guillemot, an assistant, and superior sort of drug deliverer, employed by Morgan. I am bound to say that it was subsequently proved, beyond all doubt, that Mr. B——, in saying that he would not claim the balance of the 300*l.*, in the event, by implication, of the child's early decease, did not intend to convey a sinister suggestion. The words I have italicized, and which, in substance, it was proved he uttered, seem alone to be sufficient proof of that. The truth was, that three hundred pounds, in Mr. B——'s estimation was a trifle scarcely requiring a second thought.

The result was, that Morgan applied to Hall, pointed out that the illegitimate waif left to his care would be a nice companion for his own little Henry —(both children had the same baptismal name); that the friendship which would grow up between the two might prove, in the future, of great advantage to little Hall. Finally, that the fifty pounds per annum—one half-year in immediate advance—which he was authorized to pay for the maintenance of the rich man's son, would enable him, Richard Hall, to

supply his wife with the nourishing delicacies she so much required. Hall joyfully acquiesced, and the bargain was sealed by the payment over to him of twenty-five sovereigns for the first half-year's board and lodging.

The nourishing delicacies which the money enabled Hall to procure his wife did not save her. (Her maiden name was Emily Brown. It was some years afterwards pointed out to me in a paragraph of an old provincial newspaper, as that of the belle of a county ball.) Some one casually mentioned to me that she was dying, and I called, I think the next day, at the cottage in La Vallée des Vaux.

I asked for Mrs. Hall. "You are too late," said the husband, bitterly; "she is dead."

"I was not sent for. Nor did I know that your wife was a Catholic."

"My wife was *not* a Catholic in the usual meaning of the term. Still I should have been glad—but the final warning was so very sudden—that words of blessed, if illusive, promise, such as, I am the Resurrection and the Life, had fallen upon her dying ear. But that is of little real consequence. Will you see her, sir?"

The face of the corpse strongly affected me, custom-hardened as I was to such sights. Not painfully—the very reverse; the deep-graven lines which sorrow of no ordinary kind had traced upon the prematurely-aged features, the effacing hand of death had already smoothed out, restoring to them some touches of the

youth-sweetness that had been so sadly marred and clouded. I never, I think, before or since, saw the rapture of repose, which often rests for a while upon the countenance of the recently dead, so beautifully realized.

"A joyful release, poor girl!" said a husky, broken voice beside me. It was Richard Hall's, whose face was much whiter than his dead wife's.

"I said a joyful release," he repeated. "Yes—yes, she must be in heaven if there is one, and angels go there. I killed her, and with her last breath she blessed *me*. I want no sermonizing, reverend sir,—not now, at least. Look there!—look there!" he added, pointing to the dead face,—“who could preach like that? Go away; I would, I *must*, be alone.”

Three or four Sundays passed, and neither the Morgans nor Hall made their appearance at the chapel. I incidentally heard that Jean Guillemot had reported that Madam Morgan's behaviour to her husband was greatly changed for the better. Of Richard Hall I heard nothing; till having one afternoon taken a more than usually long, roundabout walk, I found myself benighted whilst still at a considerable distance from home. There was a faint star-light, and the air was still and warm, so that—except that I was hungry and tired—the inconvenience was but a slight one. Walking wearily on, I soon found myself in the Vallée des Vaux. I thought it would be taking

no very great liberty to call and refresh myself at Richard Hall's. Accordingly, I struck off for the cottage, which on two sides was completely hidden by trees, between which leafy screens and the cottage there was a strip of rich meadow land.

I was about to *turn* the intervening copse, and get to the open, when the sound of voices, one of them Richard Hall's, struck my ear and arrested my steps. The tone—*his* tone—was humble, deprecatory, but I did not catch the words. He was replied to in a woman's voice,—high, fierce, menacing, but, though not more than twenty yards off, I could not comprehend a word. I quickly discovered the reason why. They were talking in the Maltese patois, and the colloquists were Richard Hall and Madam Morgan. Hall cowered before the woman's storm of words, which it was easy to discern were full of fiery menace, like a beaten hound.

I did not choose to play the spy upon them, and, during a momentary pause in the wordy fray, I shouted out a request to be informed if I was on the direct road to St. Helier's. A dead silence instantly ensued, but a minute's reflection having, of course, satisfied them that I could not have understood one word of their dialogue, Hall replied, "Yes, straight on, sir." Straight on I went, and in about half an hour reached my temporary domicile.

Two days afterwards Richard Hall sailed for Eng-

land, *alone*, leaving Mr. B——'s child and his own in charge of a Madam Le Tublin, a respectable Jersey woman. He intended to be absent a fortnight only. When that time had about expired, a letter reached Jersey, precisely how addressed I do not know, but which was obtained at the Post Office, where it was to be left till called for by Madam Morgan. The letter (I am now about to pursue the narrative in direct sequence, as afterwards set forth in judicial evidence)—the letter, then, was very unsatisfactory to her in one essential respect, announcing, as it did, that he should be able to bring back very little money. His son would, however, be handsomely provided for by his deceased wife's relatives.

It may be as well here to state that Madam Morgan, who loathed her husband, had formed a violent but quite unreturned attachment to Hall; and, his wife being dead, had finally compelled him—himself and the future of his son being hopelessly in her power—to return with as much money as he could procure and elope with her to the Mauritius, where she had well-to-do connections. The security that he *would* return and fulfil the criminal contract being that his son should not leave the island till they were off and far away. The wretched woman had reckoned upon his obtaining several hundred pounds: that hope frustrated, the vicious, wilful devil eagerly debated with herself as to how the disappointment might be remedied.

Including Mr. B——'s money, there was, she knew, nearly four hundred pounds sterling in her husband's actual possession. But how to obtain it? He was never long absent from the house, and, whether or not from some latent suspicion that had been awakened in his mind, invariably of late, upon his return, examined the hoard. Let us not dwell upon the dark thoughts, which, by her own after-confession, brooded over the mind of a woman whose seared conscience seems to have been accessible to no touch of pity or remorse, and whom an illicit, ungovernable passion, combined with scornful hate of her husband, maddened, blinded!

The irretrievable step to which Hell, inflaming her passions with all its fires, pushed her, was not taken when a seemingly less perilous course was opened to her.

Mr. B——'s son was attacked by a disorder prevalent amongst children. The illness was made light of by Morgan, but a physician, consulted by Mrs. Le Tublin, held a different opinion, prescribed for the child, and Mrs. Le Tublin had the medicine made up by Morgan. On the third day, or rather evening, Mrs. Le Tublin's niece called for another bottle of the same mixture. The girl added that her aunt said Henry was much better, upon hearing which, Morgan, unconscious of evil intention, said, with mock seriousness—though Mary Le Tublin after-

wards deposed—with sudden, savage rage,—that that news took between two and three hundred pounds out of his pocket.

Morgan made up the medicine with his own hands, and gave it to the girl. The assistant was out, but Madam Morgan was in the shop, and witnessed, heard all that passed. Not long afterwards Morgan was sent for to some distance, and left the place.

Now then, madam, the Fiend whispers you to quickly execute the thought which is flashing through your brain. She *is* quick;—grasps a phial of precisely the size and make of that in which the medicine had been put, and pours into it a deadly poison of the same colour, or nearly so; fills the phial up, and abstracts one table-spoonful. She then labels the phial precisely as that was labelled which her husband gave to Mary Le Tublin, and hurries off towards La Vallée des Vaux.

It is very dark, but the woman knows the house well, and, creeping stealthily in by a scarcely-ever-locked back door, remains *perdu* till the medicine has been given to the suffering child. Mary Le Tublin has left, and Mrs. Le Tublin is quietly taking supper in a lower room.

Only one thing she believes can baffle her. Mrs. Le Tublin may not, perhaps, have left the medicine bottle in the sick room. That, however, was not likely, and proved not to be the case. Luckily, too

there was no candle in the chamber. Groping silently, for the child might not be asleep, though the draught sent was a powerfully-composing one, Madam Morgan finds, seizes the phial, exchanges it for that which she has brought,—regains the high road and her own home unperceived, and, as it fell out, before her husband.

Madam Morgan's scheme was not so badly reasoned. Upon discovery of the death of the child, soon to follow upon the administering by Mrs. Le Tublin of the second dose, the doctor would be sent for in hot haste. The cause of death would be instantly apparent, and even supposing—which that remark of Morgan's about the two or three hundred pounds he should be out of pocket if the child recovered made very improbable—but even supposing that it would ultimately be adjudged that he had only made a fatal mistake,—he would be forthwith seized, hurried off to prison, no bail permitted, whilst she, the wife, would take unchallenged possession of the four hundred pounds in gold and silver locked up in the strong box. Enough that, for herself and Richard Hall, for a long time.

Ah! Madam Morgan, an unseen Nemesis sped with you step by step upon that fearful errand. Henry, Mr. B——'s son, had so quickly recovered that, by the physician's order, he was removed to an adjacent house, Henry, Richard Hall's son, having meanwhile sickened of the disorder. It was this

child, the only fetter with which you have bound Richard Hall that he cannot break,—at whose bedside you have placed the poison. You are, however, a murderess in purpose only. The child was dying when you were there, and did not live to take the second dose.

John Morgan and Madam Morgan were in bed. Morgan slumbered profoundly; the woman had not closed her eyes during the night. Not that she repented of her crime, or was shaken by fear of the dread retribution which in another world might await her. She had no such stuff in her thoughts. But upon reviewing the circumstances she did not feel so confident of escaping *earthly* punishment. In the first place, she could not be sure that no one had seen her enter or leave the cottage at La Vallée. This was a terrible fear. Again, the poison which she substituted for the medicine was kept in a particular place: her husband would be quite certain that he could not have mistaken the jar which contained it, for that from which he had taken the chief ingredient of the physician's prescription. It was on the other side of the shop, and he must, to have done so, have gone round the counter opposite to that behind which he stood when serving Mary Le Tublin. The principle of the two preparations, I may observe, was the same. The active ingredient in the druggist's mixture was laudanum, of a strength suited to a child. In that made up by his wife the

chief ingredient was morphine, the potent principle or essence of opium, of very many times the strength of the laudanum used by Morgan. Another consideration flushed her veins with feverish apprehension. The written direction on the label, "One tablespoonful every four hours," had necessarily been written by herself. Her writing did not at all resemble Morgan's, and she had taken the precaution to rub out the words, leaving a few ink marks only, as if the direction had been effaced by accidental friction. But would not Mrs. Tublin be positive that the label was perfect when she left the phial on the bed-room table? Had the written direction been previously effaced, how could she have known the quantity to give the child? Madam Morgan had not thought of that!

Again, Morgan's inconsiderate observation as to the loss he should sustain if the child recovered, looked at more closely, seemed rather a proof of innocence than guilt. Would any man in his senses have made such a remark to a stranger if conscious of a criminal purpose, at the very moment, too, he was handing a poison-potion to the hearer?

Still, during the first flash of the discovery that the child had been poisoned, Morgan, it could hardly be doubted, would be seized and hurried off to gaol. Criminal process in the island was, she had heard, extremely slow, and she would have ample time to abscond with Hall, taking the money with them.

Should any suspicion ultimately attach to her, she would be beyond the reach of the law. No one would know whither they had gone, and it was a far cry to the Mauritius. Hall would not dare refuse to depart at once. She had him on the hip, and to prove to him of what she was capable if defied, a hint of that night's doings might be whispered in his ear. He, perhaps, imagined that her love would always interpose between her threats and their realization. It would be well, therefore, that he should clearly perceive the metal she was made of, and, knowing that, defy her if he dare.

Thus ran the troubled current of the woman's thoughts, when, soon after day-dawn, the sound of numerous feet, and a confused murmur of voices, rapidly approaching, struck her listening ear. Were the agents of justice already on the track?

A thundering summons at the street-door answered the question. Madam Morgan roused her husband, who, scrambling on his clothes, ran down stairs, opened the door, and found himself, whilst still hardly awake, in the custody of the police.

The centenier was accompanied by several inferior police officers, as well as by Mary Le Tublin, and the prescribing physician.

"You gave this phial, yesterday, to this young woman?" abruptly exclaimed the centenier.

Morgan said he certainly did.

"You villain! it contains a deadly poison, one dose

of which has killed the child. Away, to gaol at once!" And, before ten minutes had passed, the astounded drug-seller found himself safely caged, *au secret*, for the present.

Criminal, like civil procedure in Jersey, was very summary at the outset. The police were clothed with certain judicial as well as executive powers. This arose, almost necessarily, from the constitution of the force, as it existed at the time I am writing of. The constable was chief of the police, and had a seat in the "States," or legislative assembly of the island. He and the centeniers were nominated by the ratepayers; whether the vingteniers were so chosen I do not know. The service was honorary, and the individuals composing the force were, for the most part, respectable tradesmen. The name of the centenier who apprehended Morgan was, if I mistake not, Maurant. He was proprietor of a printing office, and published a newspaper in the French language. The preliminary process was, if the centenier so willed it, to seize the alleged culprit and lock him up in gaol. On the following Saturday the prisoner would be brought before the court; the centenier's report read by the Attorney-General, and upon his requisition the accused would be remanded to prison, or bailed, as the case might be. No defence was heard at that stage of the proceedings. A day was subsequently appointed for the hearing of witnesses in presence of the court and prisoner, but not of

the jury who would have to decide of his guilt or innocence. This was usually a long, tedious business (seldom continued from day to day!), the questions and replies being all reduced to writing. A day was next appointed for the prisoner to be arraigned before the *Enditement*, which meant the police, who sat as a jury. The depositions were read through, then came the pleadings; and the verdict, which, if adverse to the accused by a simple majority, sent him or her before *La Grande Enquête*, or twenty-four principal rate-payers, selected and summoned by the crown officer; five of whom sufficed to acquit the prisoner. The verdict was oddly returned:—"More innocent than guilty!" or, "More guilty than innocent!"

The reader will now understand how it was that Morgan was kept in prison during a whole fortnight without opportunity to offer the slightest defence or explanation. I am not aware that much positive wrong was inflicted, as a rule, by such clumsy judicial machinery, the corrective of a practically free press, acting upon public opinion, usually sufficing, I was told, to prevent or remedy any glaring abuses. In the case of Morgan, however, it was undeniable that the dilatory mode of procedure bore heavily upon him, and, but for the overruling providence of God, might have had fatal results.

I do not remember that there was any regular *post-mortem* examination of the body of the child. It was

taken for granted that the boy had been poisoned, and it was besides strongly asserted that vegetable poisons could not be traced by any known analysis. The lamentable fact was assumed to be beyond doubt by myself, as well as everybody else, and the corpse was buried.

Hall's return to Jersey was delayed. His deceased wife's relatives had relented, furnished him with a considerable sum of money, and the position to be made for his son was quite a splendid one. No wonder, therefore, that he turned with aversion and disgust from the proposals of a wanton, who held him, as before stated, by no other ligature than that of fear. She was to the full as mercenary, he knew, as she was fierce and wilful, and might, he hoped, be bribed to silence.

Thus hoping and planning, Richard Hall embarked at Weymouth for Jersey. The report given in Mr. Mourant's paper of the death of the child and Morgan's apprehension, had not been copied into the English papers; Madam Morgan, for many reasons easily understood, did not allude to the subject in her letters; so that Hall, when he stepped upon the quay where the woman awaited him, was in total ignorance of what had occurred during his absence. He was, he told me, much amazed that she should be there, openly to meet him in the face of day.

Arrived at Hue Street, he learned that Morgan was in prison, and upon what charge. He was much

shocked. It might have been his own child instead of Mr. B——'s. The very thought was a heart-quake. Hall was, however, quite sure that the criminality of Morgan amounted to no more, at the worst, than inexcusable carelessness.

Madam Morgan's nervous anxiety to leave the island without delay soon found expression, and as Hall urged objection after objection to the proposal, finishing with an offer of half the money he had brought with him, if she would consent to abandon the project, and not betray the fatal secret she was possessed of, the fury of the woman—a woman of volcanic temperament outraged in her woman's vanity—flamed to frenzy.

"I will proclaim you, Richard Hall," she raged, "to be Peter Ward, the felon, condemned to death at Malta, and who escaped his doom on the very eve of execution, chiefly by my help. You will be hanged, and then what of the fine prospects of the retaken felon's son? I will not keep your secret another hour;—by the living God, I will not!"

"You have *not* faithfully kept it," rejoined Hall, with fierce bitterness. "You destroyed my wife with it."

"The truth destroyed her, Richard Hall, just as the truth will destroy you, and make a pauper, a condemned outcast of your son."

"You did not tell Emily, venomous serpent that you are, *all* the truth;—that the crime for which I was condemned to death——"

"For which you remain condemned to death——"

"That the crime for which I was condemned to death involved no moral degradation."

"It involved the gallows."

"The blow had told, the poisoned arrow had done its work;—my explanation came too late. Curse you! I'll not be paramour to the wretch that killed *her*. Do your worst; I can die but once."

"How many deaths will your son die, from being pointed at as the child of a father strangled at the gallows for his crimes and from pinching want? Nay, probably enough, the gallows will be his portion as well as yours. Destitution and despair are successful caterers for that ancient institution."

Hall groaned. The woman had touched the right chord; and his spirit quailed before hers. Still he could not believe that she would ever really denounce him to the authorities, and, after an interval of gloomy silence, he replied in that sense.

"Your bark is worse than your bite. I smile at a threat that will never be executed. You could gain nothing by betraying me. When cooler you will accept the offer I have just made; for, by the Eternal! I will not continue to be the vassal of the accursed woman who slew my wife."

Hall drank freely during the altercation (carried on in the Maltese tongue, lest it should be overheard by the shopman), and the liquor, of course, inflamed his naturally hot, but unstable temper.

The last sentence had scarcely passed his lips, when the woman, in a transport of rage, sprang at and collared him. The devil in her eye, coupled with her fearful words, mastered him, and he shook like a coward.

"My bark is worse than my bite is it, Richard Hall?" she screamed. "Listen, fool! Then tell me so again." And in a few rapid sentences she told him how Mr. B——'s child came by its death, and by whose agency.

He was dumb-founded, horror-stricken, and no longer entertained any illusion as to the length the dreadful woman would go, when her passions were aroused. If he broke with her his own doom would be sealed, his boy a castaway. The thought glanced through his beating brain, that he might, perhaps, use the terrible avowal he had just heard as a means of retorting upon her the menace by which she held him at her mercy. A little reflection showed the fallacy of that notion. She would, of course, deny having made such a confession—a most improbable thing for any sane person to do—and where could he find corroborative proof? His head was in the lion's mouth, and he must, at all events, temporize, if not finally succumb. The woman was triumphant.

I must here explain that Mrs. Le Tublin had only been engaged by Hall about four-and-twenty hours

before he left the island. He did not speak French, or the Jersey patois, and Mrs. Le Tublin knew very little English. The two children, who in person and features resembled each other, were dressed alike, and both called Henry. Hence it happened that Mrs. Le Tublin had mistaken Henry B—— for Henry Hall. The children themselves only spoke English, so far as they could speak at all. This is the only explanation I can give of the supposed fact set forth in Mr. Centenier Mourant's report, and accepted without question, that the dead child was the son of an English gentleman, not resident on the Island. Upon being subsequently questioned by the Procureur-Général, Mrs. Le Tublin said both the children had several times spoken of "papa," but never, in her hearing, mentioned the sire-name of either. She could herself scarcely comprehend how it had happened that she held it for certain that the deceased child was Mr. B——'s.

Return we now to Hue Street, and the persons debating such fearful issues there.

Hall has yielded. A sullen calm has succeeded to the furious hurricane of words, and an understanding has been come to. The wind happens to be favourable, and a vessel will sail at the next full tide—about eleven o'clock at night—for Plymouth. Madam Morgan has undertaken to secure berths for herself, Hall, and the child. Hall himself must, therefore, lose no time in going to La Vallée des Vaux, settle with Mrs. Le Tublin, and bring away his son.

Thus agreed, the pair left the house together, and went their several ways.

It was growing dark, and I had just closed a book I had been reading, when an old pensioner rushed into the chapel parlour, to say that there was a terrible commotion over at Morgan the druggist's,—that the house was filled with police, and an excited mob gathering outside. The centenier wished to see me, as I knew the parties, who were very violent.

I went over; with some difficulty making my way through the crowd, who already blocked up the narrow street. The truth—distorted and exaggerated truth—had spread through the town like wild-fire, and fierce denunciations of the woman Morgan were upon every tongue.

Thus without. Within, the scene was terrific, from the demoniac intensity of the passions which prompted the mutual fury of the woman Morgan and of Hall, who, but for the resolute interposition of the officers, would have torn each other to pieces. Hall was unquestionably *mad* for the time; his frame and features were convulsed as by a giant agony, and his curses of the woman who had destroyed his wife and child were appalling.

The woman, forcibly restrained by two strong men, raged, stamped, struggled, like a chained tigress; denounced Hall to be the condemned felon Ward, and in her utter frenzy repeated over and over again, with jibing laughter, triumphant yelling, how she

had sent the boy after its mother, and would finish by hanging the father and husband. The energy of her indomitable will positively triumphed over the difficulty of expressing herself in Jersey-English, so as to be understood; and though much she said was unintelligible, the main sense and purport of her screaming, yelling talk, was plain enough.

One might as well have rebuked the winds, bidding them be calm, as those two raving maniacs. The police, who behaved with great forbearance, allowed them to rave on, and accuse each other to their hearts' content, in the interest of public justice. At last their physical strength gave way; two vehicles were procured—the mob without being angry and dangerous—and the woman and man were safely lodged in prison.

The next day but one was Saturday, when Morgan, his wife, and Hall, were severally presented at the bar of the Royal Court. The Attorney-General proposed that Morgan should be admitted to bail; Richard Hall remanded to prison, till an answer to the communication respecting him that had been forwarded to the English military authorities, had been received. As to the woman Morgan, he required that she be remanded on the charge of wilful murder. These “conclusions,” as they were called, of the crown-officer, were granted by the Jurats, as a matter of course. Upon this occasion the woman was doggedly

silent and sullen ; Hall, calm—resigned. Fate with him had done its worst.

The trial of Madam Morgan was proceeded with vigorously. The chief witness against her was Richard Hall—that is to say, her own confession. Her counsel, Mr. Damaresq, who was retained by her husband, strove to invalidate his testimony forasmuch as he was admittedly a felon condemned to death by a competent tribunal. The woman would not avail herself of the lawyer's subtlety ; again and again asseverated that she *did* poison the child ; and whilst Hall was in court, dwelt with devilish delight upon each incident of the crime ; beneath the infliction of which dagger-strokes the unfortunate man writhed with torture.

To a question from the bailiff, or president of the court, as to the crime for which he had been adjudged to die, Hall answered, that, in the Island of Malta, he, under circumstances which in his own opinion morally justified him, stabbed his superior officer, the Captain of his Company. He had been condemned to be shot—not hanged.

"To be hanged, you liar !" screamed the woman. "To be hanged—hanged—hanged ! as I shall be."

"To be shot, gentlemen," calmly repeated Hall. "And if," he added, "the British authorities would order the sentence to be executed here, I should be deeply thankful. For me, in this world, there is neither hope nor fear, and I shall welcome the hour which shuts it from my sight for ever."

I was present at the pleadings before the Enditement, or Police Jury, and was particularly struck by a point, very ably put by Mr. Dumaresq, which had not occurred to me before. The confession, should be taken, he argued, as a whole,—not one part admitted, and another rejected. Now the prisoner had declared that she exchanged the phials, and this was borne out by Mrs. Le Tablin's evidence, *after* the only dose taken by the child had been administered. How on earth, then, could the boy have been poisoned by morphine, which was never given him ? ”

“Ho! ho!” screamed the prisoner. “You are curious upon that point, are you? Understand, then, that I myself opened the sleeping child's lips, and poured enough down its throat to kill a horse.”

The truth was, that the woman had become insane, and was possessed with a fiendish desire to prove to Hall that she had killed his child. By mistake, it was true—still *for his sake*. That she knew was torture, hell-fire!

The Enditement pronounced her more guilty than innocent. In due time she was arraigned before La Grande Enquête, and as only four of the jurors dissented from the verdict of more guilty than innocent, she was convicted of wilful murder.

It was evening when the verdict was pronounced, for the pleadings had consumed much time. The crowded court was dimly lit up, and the ceremony of pronouncing sentence of death seemed to me pecu-

liarily impressive. The jurats (magistrates), ten, I think, in number, stood up in their scarlet robes, and put on their hats. The prisoner was then commanded to kneel down. She refused to do so—burst into a passion of rage, tragic in its terror, bravely as she had previously borne herself. She was literally forced down upon her knees, and in that position the wretched creature hurled at the greatly-affected bailiff, a torrent of wild invective, of piteous wailing, of mad defiance, and sobbing prayers for mercy.

The sentence was pronounced. The prisoner was to be hanged that day fortnight, *sauf la grace du Prince* (saving the king's mercy).

Many persons, myself amongst them, were not satisfied with the verdict. One gentleman, a surgeon, not long established in St. Heliers, who had followed the evidence with great attention, firmly believed that, however criminal the woman's intention might have been, the child had really died a natural death. Lord Sidmouth was Home Secretary at the time, and a petition, setting forth all the circumstances, was carefully drawn up, and forthwith despatched to his lordship. The answer came by the next mail. A reprieve was granted, and the Attorney-General was ordered to have the body of the child exhumed, in order that it should be conclusively ascertained if death had or had not been caused by poison.

The result was the declaration upon oath, by three scientific gentlemen, that the child had died a natural

death! Madam Morgan's sentence was, after some delay, commuted to two years' imprisonment; an informal proceeding, it seemed to me, but substantially just, perhaps, all circumstances considered.

I happened to meet with her, about seven years afterwards, at a populous town in Lancashire. She was then a widow in indigent circumstances. The discipline of penal chastisement had tamed, and a higher influence had softened her fierce, obdurate nature. This life, with its hopes, its fears, its sorrows, had ceased to interest her, except as affording time for cleansing her soul of its foul stains. I believe she was victorious in that supreme struggle.

After several weeks' delay, Hall—otherwise Ward—was sent to Portsmouth, where he embarked in the *Neptune* troop-ship, for Malta, there to undergo his sentence. I had conversed with him several times without much edification to myself or him. He did not hold ghostly counsel in great esteem.—(By the way, what a finely-expressive word is Saxon “ghostly,” compared with Franco-Latin “spiritual.”)—A few days, however, before he was taken from the Jersey gaol, he sent a pressing message, requesting me to visit him without delay. I did so, and he placed in my hand a long, closely-written paper. “The story of my life,” he said. “Be pleased to make such use of it as your own sense of justice and generosity may dictate.”

I and the sympathizing surgeon read it carefully through, transcribed, without loss of time, the portion of the narrative which bore upon the proceedings before the court-martial at Malta, and forwarded the same to Lord Sidmouth.

An official reply from the Horse Guards reached me about a fortnight afterwards. The troop-ship *Neptune*, with the prisoner on board, had, I was informed, sailed for Malta. As, however, the statement I had forwarded would, if substantiated, materially palliate the offence of which the prisoner had been found guilty, his royal highness, the commander-in-chief, had despatched an order by a mail-packet to suspend the execution of the sentence, till a full inquiry into all the circumstances had been made and reported to his royal highness. As the *Neptune* troop-ship would call at Gibraltar on her way out, to disembark troops and stores, it was probable that the mail-packet would reach Malta in time to give effect to the respite accorded by the commander-in-chief. The official note concluded with the uncomfortable remark, that if I had sent the statement direct to the Horse Guards, instead of to the Home Office, which had no jurisdiction in the case, the order for a re-investigation of the matter would have gone out with the prisoner!

The writing confided to me by Hall I found to be a wordy, pretentious narrative of the chief events

in his life. The accents of a real experience have always, however, a certain charm, stilted and inflated as the tone may be, and I, therefore, place the paper, with many omissions, before the reader:—

“From my Prison in the Island of Jersey, 18—.

“During my confinement here, I have meditated my past life with a calmness unattainable when I was whelmed, and madly struggling in the turbid depths, the whirling currents of a world from which I shall soon finally escape. The gloom and silence of a dungeon clear the mental vision, and I see in a truer light many things which before I contemplated through the distorting mists of an irritable selfishness.

“Why, it may be asked by others, as it has been by me of myself—why should I take the trouble to record the vicissitudes of an existence that few will read—in which still fewer will take interest? An obscure conscript, early struck down in the battle of life, should silently resign himself to dust and oblivion. Why, when dying, make a sign, if none will heed it?

“True: yet the instinct of a spiritual humanity rebels against such abnegation. I cannot realize my own annihilation. I do not understand how any sentient being can. Assuredly, the *élite* of mankind—poets, warriors, statesmen, who write, fight, legislate for posthumous fame—do not, or the prize for which

they contend would be, confessedly to themselves, an absurd phantom.

"I cannot bear to think that the slightest shadow of blame should, in the minds of her relatives, dwell upon the memory of my wife. I argue with myself, that she, that my boy, are now, that I myself soon shall be, as we were a hundred years ago—nothing! My intellect assents, yet shrinks, from acting upon that all-dreadful proposition. The Rev. Mr. Maurice says, if I understand him rightly, that Satan is the incarnation of intellect, devoid of faith and love; and that faith and love are the only sure guides to truth. May be so—and yet——

"I am still, as ever, dallying with time and opportunity, and if I continue to do so, that which my hand has found to do will remain undone. The order to deliver me up to the military authorities may arrive at any hour. The bullets of the firing party will, at all events, still my tongue and pen.

"The last sentence, I *must* pause to remark, has excited a feeling which flushes my face as with shame. Yet it is one which is never, perhaps, wholly extinguished in the human breast. I mean the love of life for its own sake—only a prolonged agony as that life may be. I am no coward, as I have often proved; and the executioners will not, I dare answer for it, detect the slightest tremor in my look or bearing. Still, I cannot disguise from myself, if I would, that *one* motive which has set my pen in motion is the

hope—a faint one—that a clear statement of all the circumstances preceding the act which, according to the stern code of martial law, justified the sentence to die passed upon me, may, if brought to the knowledge of the authorities, lead to a reversal of that doom. Let me add, that I no longer feel the loathing of life, and all that it inherits, which found utterance in the court-house. The blessed discovery since made that my boy was withdrawn from earth by the hand of God (*I will* believe that Henry and Emily are in heaven)—the blessed discovery I say, that my boy was withdrawn from earth by the hand of God, not stung to death by a serpent, whose venomous nature I had excited to fell activity, has rendered existence endurable, nay, a thing to be fought for, though not with very passionate earnestness.

“No matter in what city, town, or village I was born; enough to say that I am a native of Lancashire. My father was a gentleman, in the conventional meaning of the word; that is, he toiled not, neither did he spin; and was major in a yeomanry cavalry corps. My mother was sole daughter and heiress of an old, decayed, but still, in a modified sense, wealthy Catholic family. Her dowry was twenty thousand pounds in cash, and seven hundred pounds per annum, terminating with her life. Major T—— was poor: he had nothing, much less than nothing, having been, when he married, steeped to the lips in

debt. On the other hand, he was one of the handsomest, most fascinating men I have ever seen. My mother was *not* handsome. That is to say, any one would have so judged who could not appreciate the sweet, tender loveliness which irradiated her plain features, and imparted grace, ay, and dignity, to a figure not symmetrical. Then my father was a scoffing sceptic; my mother pious to a child-like degree. There was no limit to *her* faith. Pious beliefs, as they are termed—such as placing credence in impossible relics, holy coats of Treves, and so on, which, if I understand the matter right, are no more articles of faith in the Catholic than in the Protestant Church, were accepted by her in as meek a spirit of unquestioning submission as the verities enunciated on the Mount.

“Need I add, that the household of the handsome, scoffing sceptic, and the childish-credulous believer, was necessarily a most unhappy one? There was ever a grim, ghastly, yet undefinable shadow in our house. That shadow will reach from my cradle to my grave.

“The ill-matched pair were reproduced, with variations, in their two children, my sister and myself. Jane had her mother’s unquestioning faith, with something of her father’s defiant fierceness. I inherited all his disbelief in God and man; dashed and weakened by *her* reliant yieldingness.

“Jane was our mother’s loving, duteous child; I, her unruly, disobedient son; encouraged to be so by

my father, who, from the earliest time of which my memory takes cognizance, took a devilish delight in cultivating, *forcing* the evil elements of my nature.—(Standing as I do upon the extremest verge of a precipice to which *he* led me, whence I must, untimely, leap the life or death to come, I will not mince my words.)—Yet, I think—nay, I am sure—my mother loved me with a more anxious love than she did Jane; and I, rude, undutiful boy that I was, worshipped her in my heart of hearts. A time came when it was my high privilege to give proof that I was her own true, fearless son. The Reverend Mr. Maurice will, I am sure, excuse the seeming egotism. It is only fair that the few slightly-good deeds I have done should have mention in this, my last dying speech and confession.

“The St.-Leger race had come off, and my father was a heavy loser. How he was to face settling-day I could not imagine. But he had a plan for extricating himself. About a month previously, a bequest, approaching to three thousand pounds, had been handed over to my mother. This sum, though bequeathed absolutely to her, was intended, as she well knew, to be Jane’s marriage portion. Major T—— had long since squandered the twenty thousand pounds he received with his wife, was more hopelessly than ever in debt; and, except for my mother’s annuity, we were paupers. The three thousand pounds, or nearly that amount, handed over

by the executors, my mother deposited in an iron chest which stood in a small room adjoining, and separating her bedchamber and mine. Her intention was to invest the money in a mortgage upon land,—a security recommended to her by Mr. Carden, the solicitor to her family; and she only awaited the completion of the papers to conclude the transaction.

“All this was of course known to her husband, and on the day after our return from the races, a scandalous scene ensued. From that morning dates the misfortunes of my life. Major T———*—he would* always call himself *Major T——*, and insist upon others doing so—Major T—— asked my mother to lend him at least half the legacy. To lend him fifteen hundred pounds was simply to defeat the intention of the devisor, a maternal aunt, and rob Jane of that amount. His request was refused; and finding entreaty, expostulation useless—for where a clear principle was involved my meek mother could be firm, even with him—he had recourse to threats, brutal threats. Finally, in the whirlwind of his rage,—I blush to write the words,—he uplifted his arm to strike her. I had entered the room unheard, unperceived by him; but my mother was aware of my presence, and had glanced appealingly, more than once, to her son for protection. My blood was on fire, and, ere his arm could descend, I had caught him by the collar, and swung him round with a force

which threw him in a heap to a further corner of the apartment. I was about three-and-twenty then, and possessed of great muscular power. I had, it seems to me, only performed a duty in defending my mother from brutal violence; and yet, so sacred is the relation of a father to his son, that I felt the next moment as if I had committed a sacrilegious crime. Will not the reader find some excuse for the faults, follies, sins of my life, in the lamentable fact that I grew to manhood in a home where such an act was not only possible, but, as I shall always think, praiseworthy?

“From that time my father hated me with a deadly, unappeasable hatred. It must be remembered that he was haughty as Lucifer.

“Nevertheless, he so far controlled himself as to assume a tone and demeanour of reconciliation during the next two days. On the third, he sent me, as evening was falling, to a place about sixteen miles off, with a note, addressed to Mr. Bradshaw, a lawyer. ‘If Bradshaw is not at home, or if it should be late before you can see him, you must sleep there to-night,’ said my father. I replied that I would do so, and rode off at speed.

“The spraining of an ankle had detained Mr. Bradshaw at home. But for that he would certainly have been away, and could not have returned till very late at night, probably not till the next morning. ‘Your father knew that perfectly well,’ added Mr. Bradshaw. ‘It was his business exclusively upon which I should

be now engaged twenty miles hence, but for the accident to my foot. Ah!’ continued the lawyer, who had broken the seal of the note whilst speaking, ‘I am heartily glad of this unlooked-for news. Your father has, he writes me, succeeded in effecting a loan which will enable him to make things right at Doncaster. That is very fortunate, for otherwise Major T——, as far as the betting world is concerned, and betting, between you and I, is his bread of life, must have gone off into space.’

“Mr. Bradshaw added, that I might tell my father his business should not suffer by the untoward accident which had befallen himself; concluding with an invitation to stay supper. I was nothing loath to do so, and it was nearly eleven o’clock when I found myself again in the saddle on my road home. It was late, truly; but what of that? The night was fine, though rather dark, and the mare I bestrode knew every inch of the way as well as I did myself.

“It was more than half-past twelve when I rode into the paddock at the back of our residence. There was no light in any of the rooms, the family and servants having, as usual, retired to rest at least an hour before. This was of no consequence. I knew where to find the key of the stable, and having attended to the mare, I myself entered the house at a side-door by means of a latch-key, crept softly up-stairs, lest I should disturb my mother and Jane, whose nerves had been sadly jarred by my father’s

violent language and threats with reference to the legacy.

"The house was perfectly still, and I got into bed without, in the slightest degree, disturbing its quiet. I was soon asleep, thanks to my thirty-two miles' ride, and Mr. Bradshaw's freely-partaken-of hospitality.

"What awoke me I cannot say; but broad awake I found myself whilst it was yet deep night. This was a very rare occurrence with me; and, turning over, I was again addressing myself to sleep, when the sound of softly-falling, yet heavy footsteps, in the adjoining room, wherein stood the iron safe before spoken of, caught my ear. Was I dreaming? Certainly not. There was unquestionably some one moving about in that room. Presently I heard a key turn, and the sharp snap of a lock. Burglars must have forced admittance into the house, and were pillaging the iron safe. There could be no doubt about it; and I slid, as it were, softly out of bed. I had no weapon at hand, but fear, under such circumstances, was a stranger to me. Still, it would be well to provide myself with something that would strike harder than my naked fists, and it occurred to me that a soda-water bottle was not a weapon to be despised in such an emergency. Arming myself with one, I stealthily opened my chamber-door, peered into the contiguous room, and, by the faint starlight, saw a man rifling the iron chest. I sprang forward with a bound and shout, striking at his head. I missed my aim in the

flurry, and immediately found myself at death-grips with the burglar—I shouting ‘thieves!’ ‘murder!’ the while, with the whole power of my lungs. The fellow was clothed in a smock-frock, and his face was covered by a crape mask. The struggle was a desperate one, for the burglar made almost superhuman efforts to throw me off, and escape. The household were soon afoot—a groom and stable-helper rushed in to my assistance, and the game was clearly up with the robber. My mother and sister, who slept together, I should state, had been awakened before I was, and lay cowering in speechless terror.

“The instant the groom and helper hurried in with lights, the robber with a fierce cry leapt towards me, and said something which I was too excited to catch or comprehend. The movement was misunderstood by the groom, who at once closed with the supposed burglar, tore the crape mask off, and revealed the features of—my father!

“My mother did not long survive that fearful night. The annuity died with her. Mr. Carden took possession of the three thousand pounds, in trust for Jane, and my father and I were beggars.

“There was one supreme hope still left to me. I had gained the affections of one of the purest, gentlest beings that ever graced and blessed the earth. Her father, the rector, liked me,—believed, as did his daughter, that nothing worse than venial, youthful follies could be laid to my charge, so cun-

ningly had I scaled their eyes up, close as oak; and when the blow fell which shattered our roof-tree, the good man assured me, with touching earnestness, that the sad change, no blame being attachable to me, should not invalidate my engagement with Emily.

"I had lost nothing then, except my poor heart-broken mother. Lost her! did I say?—Oh, no! With her last words, when, with a smile as of parting sunlight, her spirit passed away, she promised to pray for me. Her intercession had been heard!

"Nonsense! hypocrisy! That rapturous expression addressed to my affianced bride (who once had a leaning towards the Catholic Church) of faith in saintly intercession was mere rhetorical fudge. I had faith in nothing, save Emily's beauteousness and love, and the rector's amiable simplicity.

"It was not long before the strings that made that music were let down. My sins pursued and found me out. A young woman, a modest, rustic maiden once, prompted by my vengeful father, presented herself before the rector, and placed in his hands a number of letters of mine—false counters with which I had beguiled her. The girl's story could not be gainsaid. I was angrily forbidden the rector's house, and Emily was spirited away I could not discover whither.

"In less than a year afterwards I landed at Bombay with a wing of a King's Regiment of Foot, in which, during a fit of drunken madness, I had en-

listed. I served many years, and when the regiment on its way home disembarked for a year or two's service at Malta, I had gained the rank of serjeant. At Malta I formed the acquaintance of a young woman, now Madam Morgan, who was then servant in a wine-shop, much frequented by the troops. Morgan himself I never saw till he came to live with his wife in this island.

"We had been about a year at Malta when an officer, who had been promoted to a captaincy in the regiment, joined from England; and who, as the Father of Mischief would have it, took command of the company to which I belonged. I knew him well. He was a Lancashire man, by name William Farrer; had been a disappointed suitor for the hand of the rector's daughter, and I had once soundly thrashed him for impertinence towards her and myself. He recognized me at parade with a malignant, sneering smile, and, being acquainted with his character, I knew pretty well what I had to expect. My own follies helped to place me in his power, and so skilfully, so persistently did he exert himself to ruin me, that within six weeks he had contrived to degrade me to the ranks. Even that triumph did not abate his cold-blooded malignity, and the 'regulated' humiliations to which I was compelled to submit in silence drove me at times almost to frenzy. My own fallen condition and my father's memory were the theme of his exasperating jeers, and I had resolved to lodge a

formal complaint against him, when in an evil hour my fierce temper obtained fatal mastery over me.

"I had been on fatigue duty, and, the weather being intensely hot, had, I admit, drank more than I usually did. I was entering barracks when he met me, and perceiving the advantage my condition gave him, taunted and reviled me in the most scandalous manner, capping all, by assuring me that he would take care to inform Miss Emily what a degraded scamp I had become. The cup of rage brimmed over; the bayonet at my side flashed in my hand, and before the taunting coward had time to realize his danger, was driven through his body.

"I was condemned to death with very slight ceremony. In sooth, so bewildered was I, so entirely hopeless of escaping the capital penalty, that I scarcely offered any defence. The court, as the woman Morgan said, condemned me to be hanged, but the general so far commuted the sentence as to order me to be shot. Captain Farrer did not die of his wound, which, however, obliged him to quit the service.

"By what means, or through whose agency, I escaped from custody and Malta must not be told. The woman Morgan, for all she may say, played but a very trifling part in the business. Having reached England in safety, I assumed the name of Hall—Ward was my *nom de guerre*—stole furtively into Lancashire, and made myself known to two old friends, who assisted me with money. Emily was

still single, and I was selfish, ungenerous, base enough to lure her into marriage with a penniless, capitally-convicted felon! No sin that I have committed weighs upon my conscience as that does. The rector might, perhaps, have forgiven her, if his life had not, within twelve months of her flight from home, been cut short by apoplexy. I thought the news would have killed her, and, but for our child, I think it would. By a will made in the first heat of his displeasure, and never cancelled, the rector had bequeathed the whole of his property to distant relatives. Emily was possessed of a small annuity in her own right, and we removed to Jersey as a necessary measure of economy. Dragged down from affluence to poverty, and with her father's death preying upon her mind, never once did that angel-wife reproach her guilty, but deeply-repentant, husband by a word or look.

"The Morgans left Malta for England, and, guided by a clue which I had incautiously afforded, the wife insisted upon settling in Jersey. Thenceforth I was the slave of that woman-fiend. She kept the terrible secret faithfully as regarded Morgan, but my wife she stabbed with it to the heart, in a sudden transport of rage. Emily never rallied from the shock, and, till she died, was haunted by a constant dread of seeing the husband of her choice, the father of her child, dragged off to die a shameful death. Truly a cruel martyrdom were the last years of that pure life.

Happily it is over, and the mother sleeps in peace beside her child. There is balm in that thought.

"If the Reverend Mr. Maurice will forward a copy of this paper to my sister and the four other persons whose names and addresses I subjoin, he will add another to the many favours he has already conferred upon the deeply-grateful writer."

Upon the arrival of Richard Hall, as we may continue to call him, at Malta, he was informed that an order to rehear his case had preceded him there. The result was a commutation of the capital sentence to a long term of imprisonment.

I had left Jersey some nine or ten years when I again heard of him through the friendly surgeon. He had revisited the island for the sole purpose, it seemed, of visiting the spot where his wife and child lay buried. The surgeon himself found him kneeling and weeping by that sad grave, but no longer as one who had no hope of again seeing the lost ones. The contrite mourner wore the dress of some monastic order, and, in reply to the surgeon's request for an explanation, informed the astonished gentleman that he had been a lay brother of a Dominican monastery at Malta for about two years.

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

5.—THE CONFESSION AT SEA.

ONE bitter evening in January, 182—, whilst hurrying along the short street leading from Soho Square to Oxford Street, with head held down, hat partially drawn over my eyes, and cloak-collar turned up, to protect my face from a blinding snow-storm, I suddenly came full butt upon the leading bearer of a sedan-chair. The force of the concussion knocked me off my legs, and him backwards upon the chair, which came to the ground with a crash, and a scream from a lady inside.

The moment I had recovered my feet, and the astounded chair-porter his tongue, he hurled at me a volley of choicest Milesian abuse, till a closer view of

my features showed me to be the new priest he had heard preach at Moorfields, when his tone at once changed to one of apology. He heartily begged my "rivirence's" pardon, and vehemently protested that the accident had been caused by his own awkwardness. I, in turn, excused myself, and having given him a trifle, passed on. Before I had taken twenty steps, the man overtook me. Hearing that I was a priest, the lady in the sedan wished to speak with me.

I turned back, and inquired the lady's pleasure. Instead of immediately replying, she looked with silent scrutiny in my face. The lady herself, as seen by the faint light of a small chemist's shop, close by which the sedan-chair had been brought to a standstill,—was a woman of mature age, dressed in deep black, with which the mortal paleness of her fine features strikingly contrasted; and her dark, unquiet eyes shone—burned, I should say—with a sad, gloomy light.

"I recognize you to be a priest," she said in a feeble, hollow voice, and with a decidedly foreign accent,—“I recognize you to be a priest whom I have more than once heard preach. It is well. Can you call upon me to-morrow? I have pressing need of your ministrations; *urgent* need, as you will admit when I tell you that about two hours ago I heard myself condemned to death.

“Condemned to death!”

“Yes; though the phrase sounds oddly. I mean

that two physicians and one surgeon, all three of eminence, have decided, after consultation on my case, that I am not only incurable, but that I cannot live many weeks, perhaps not many days. This accident," she continued, in an undertone, and speaking to herself,—“this accident would seem to be a providential one,—if there be a Providence,—for I should never have been permitted to send for a priest. Will you come?” she added, in a louder tone.

“Certainly, madam, I will. Favour me with your address; and pray do not remain exposed to this dreadful weather.”

“The malady which is dragging me to the grave is not affected by storm or snow. My address is, Madame St. Arnaud, Greek Street, Soho.”

“I shall remember, madam, and will not fail you, be assured.”

“One moment. Have the complaisance to announce yourself by your name, omitting the prefix of ‘Reverend.’ Wear your cloak as you do now,—it will conceal the clerical cut of the coat. The hour must be three in the afternoon. All this is indispensable: I should not else have a chance of seeing you.”

“Your husband is a Protestant, and an intolerant one, I presume.”

“I have no husband. Adieu, sir; I count upon you.”

This was a singular occurrence. Was Madame St. Arnaud in her right mind? Did the gloomy excitement of her look and manner indicate cerebral disease? Possibly. Yet her speech was coherent, and reasonable enough. In any case it was my duty to call upon her, and I would do so.

I announced myself at the appointed hour to a French servant-woman, of stern, gaunt aspect, whose almost fleshless face resembled brown parchment strained over large, but well-formed skeleton features. There was, however, more than compensating vitality in the woman's piercing black eyes.

"Yes, madame is at home. She expects a physician.—You are one?"

I bowed, not adding one of *souls*. "It is well. Come in, sir. I will inform madame that you are here. They give diplomas in this droll country," she added, turning quickly upon me, "to very young men. But perhaps you have discovered some miraculous specific for the cure of internal cancer. After all,"—thus she went on self-answering,—“after all, it would be cruel to deny to the dying a hope of prolonged life. It helps to conceal the tomb till the last terrible moment, when the lid descends to shut us up for ever in its dark, dumb void. Will not monsieur divest himself of his cloak?" she added sharply. "Permit me——" and Jeanne Bauvais approached a

step nearer, with outstretched hand, to assist in relieving me of the superfluous garment.

I declined to remove it, pleading the intense coldness of the weather, and that I was suffering from a chest complaint, which was true. That my real vocation was suspected I could not doubt, and but that a bell was at the moment rung violently by Madame St. Arnaud, who had heard the knock at the street-door, I should probably have had to choose between asserting a positive untruth, and challenging a peremptory order to leave the house forthwith.

Jeanne Bauvais flung out of the room into which I had been ushered; returned in a couple of minutes, and invited me to follow her to Madame's presence.

"Leave us, good Jeanne," said Madame St. Arnaud, who was lying propped by pillows upon a sofa, "I shall not require your attendance."

The feeble tone in which the order was given was rather that of a suppliant than a mistress. It was obeyed, nevertheless. Jeanne left the room in haste, almost ran down stairs, and we presently heard her open the street-door and pass out.

"She is gone for Julie!" faintly exclaimed Madame St. Arnaud, "and I shall not have time to disclose, to make some poor atonement for the dread guilt which has coiled its serpent-fangs around my heart. Yet she may not find Julie. Quick, then! anointed minister of mercy—it was thus my mother, in the long-vanished time of childhood-innocence, taught me to speak of a

priest of the most high God. Quick! and brief as may be with your office. I have grievously sinned. *Meá culpá—meá culpá!*”

I gathered, from the rapid review she at my request took of her past life, that she was a native of Hâvre de Grace, Normandy. Her father, Amedée Lacoste, was a man of good position there, and at the outbreak of the Revolution had distinguished himself as one of the fiercest provincial promoters of that terrible reaction against the misrule of centuries. His wife was the reverse of her husband—as meek, gentle, pious, as he was proud, violent, and sceptical. She died when her daughter and only child, Estelle (Madame St. Arnaud) was in her ninth year. Estelle married Gustave St. Arnaud, a naval officer, soon after she had passed her sixteenth birthday.

“He was the best, the most devoted of husbands—Spare me!” shrieked the unfortunate lady, breaking off her confession, and her frame quivering with torture, as a terrible pang, precursor of a paroxysm of the cruel disease she was afflicted with, shot through her. “Spare me! O God, the terrible!—O God, the avenger!—If but for a few minutes, spare me!”

Another fearful scream, wrung from her by intense agony, echoed through the house.

Following the direction of her look and shaking hand, I seized a bottle labelled “laudanum.” The written direction ordered that so many drops were

to be taken by Madame St. Arnaud the instant she felt a return of the paroxysms; the dose to be repeated at certain intervals, till they ceased.

The opiate somewhat lulled the pain, though she continued to suffer frightfully. It also seemed to affect her brain, many sentences she uttered during moments of comparative ease, being scarcely intelligible.

"The best of men—I, I the vilest of women. He died—was murdered long since. We had three—no—no—a lie—I had three children, Gustave, Estelle, and—and Julie. Estelle is dead—that is true—quite true; but *not—not* Gustave. No—no—do not believe it. It is a lie—a fiendish lie! He is alive! alive! The oath—*my* oath, that he is dead, registered in the recording angel's Book of Doom, records a lie. Mercy! mercy!" screamed the unhappy lady, wildly beating the air with her hands, and writhing with extremity of mental and bodily torture. "There is no mercy—none! Ah, God! Julie!"

I turned quickly on hearing that name, and found myself closely face to face with a young lady, who, followed by Jeanne, had entered the house and apartment unheard.

A magnificent young creature was Mademoiselle Julie—tall, superbly formed, with splendid dark eyes, and dazzling complexion—a combination of beauties which suggested that she resembled what her mother must

have been, ere age and sin had dimmed and smirched the divine image in which she was created.

At the moment I confronted her, Mademoiselle Julie was white with excitement. Her eyes flashed, and her nostrils dilated with emotion. She, nevertheless, seemed, it struck me, to be acting a part.

"What clerical comedy is being performed here?" she exclaimed. "How dare you, a cowed priest, crawl to the death-couch of a suffering, superstitious woman with a lie in your mouth, under the pretence that you are a physician?"

I denied having so described myself. I was there at Madame Arnaud's especial request, and would not leave her as long as she required, and could possibly profit, by my ministration.

"Ah! you bid me defiance, do you?" retorted Mademoiselle Julie, stepping quite close, and looking insolently in my face. "You know, execrable Jesuit (she spoke in French), you know what the people of this country, worthy of esteem in that, if in nought else, think of a Popish priest who intrudes himself stealthily, in disguise, upon the presence of a dying woman who has something to bequeath—something *to give*. Ha! you understand. Now, then, begone in one moment, or I call the neighbours, who will thrust you out of the house, and hoot you through the streets, if they do nothing worse."

In those days the menace was not an idle one. I, however, answered boldly,

"Your threat is wasted upon me, Mademoiselle. If, indeed, Madame," I added, turning to the suffering lady, whose screams had ceased, "if, indeed, Madame ——" She had swooned. That being the case, I at once quietly retired, but much excited and perplexed in mind.

It might have been a month afterwards, when I was surprised by a visit from Jeanne Bauvais, and still more by the purpose of her errand.

Madame St. Arnaud had died three or four days previously, was to be interred on the morrow in a Protestant cemetery, and Jeanne Bauvais was desirous that I should say the Catholic burial-service over the corpse.

"A silly prejudice, no doubt," said she, "but one in which, though I do not live, I was bred, and shall likely enough die. Besides, Madame wished it, and that the service should be said by you. She was ever kind to me. Do you promise to come to-morrow at about noon? Mademoiselle will be out, and I will have a carpenter to unscrew the coffin-lid, so that you may be able to anoint the body.—You will come?"

"Mademoiselle Julie is not a party to your request?"

"No. Not that she would object, but I do not wish her to know that I have any lingering weakness in respect of such matters. I have taught her, with more or less success, to laugh at such superstitious follies, as I myself have laughed in youth, and

shall continue to laugh as long as I am, as now, full of lusty life. It may be, however," added the woman, "and I fear will be, that child-fancies will return with second childhood, *with the terror of going to bed in the dark.*—Bah! Bah! You will come, monsieur?"

I promised that I would, and Jeanne Bauvais had reached the door, and was about turning the lock-handle to let herself out, when she paused, irresolutely. After a minute's thought she returned to the table at which I was sitting, and placed something on it which I had noticed she held tightly clutched in her hand. It was two guineas wrapped up in paper.

"It's a folly," said the woman, her brown, parchment face reddening as with shame, "a flinging away of precious gold. Still madame wished it to be done. This money," added Jeanne quickly, "is to purchase prayers for the repose of the soul of Madame St. Arnaud, *née* Estelle Lacoste. Good night."

I should not have required a money-offering to induce me to comply with that suffering sinner's last request; and before I slept that night the two guineas had shed a temporary gleam of hope and comfort upon a humble household, whose wants I could not otherwise have relieved. As a curious instance of the strange concatenation of ideas which sometimes arises in the mind, the source or cause of

which connection one is at the time unconscious of, I may mention that it instantly occurred to me, though I had numerous claimants upon the offerings of the faithful, that I could not do better than hand the money given on behalf of Madame St. Arnaud to the wife of one Burton, who had been for several weeks confined to his bed—his straw mattress, that is—with low fever, arising from poor and insufficient diet. This family—there were three children—had, about two months before, arrived from Bath, where the husband had sought, but miserably failed, to establish himself as an artist. I had gathered indirectly from his wife, a singularly-interesting young woman, that Burton had satisfied himself that he had no power to excel in the art he delighted in, and fortunately upheld from sinking into the fatal depths of a morbid despair by strong love for his wife and children, bravely resolved to come to London and work for bread as a common house-painter. He would have succeeded very well in that humble occupation, but, unfortunately, before his weakened frame could be strengthened with sufficient food, he fell ill, and the workhouse seemed to be the only refuge from starvation. I had seen the husband once only, and then, but for a few minutes, and when I called about an hour after Jeanne Bauvais left me, I found the poor fellow sitting up in a chair before a wretched fire;—an image of woe and want. His eyes filled with tears as I placed the two guineas in his wife's hand,

but he did not speak, nor did he, I think, when I first saw him. Hurrying away homeward, I was cudgelling my brains the whole of the way in the endeavour to recall where I had formerly seen Burton, as I was pretty sure I had, when he occupied a very different position. "Pshaw!" I suddenly exclaimed aloud, "I have it. The man is the very image of Madame St. Arnaud! A chance likeness, of course, but a very extraordinary one!" And no question, in my mind, that it was the recognition of that remarkable resemblance, half-unconsciously latent in my mind, which suggested the appropriateness of applying Madame St. Arnaud's two guineas to the relief of the Burtons. I mean, of course, that it was by that subtle agency an especial providence accomplished itself in this particular instance. I could cite not a few similar experiences.

About a fortnight subsequent to my last visit to the Burtons, the wife called at my lodgings, and, finding I was out, left a message to the effect that her husband had so far recovered his strength as to be able to accept an offer of work at a better kind of house-painting from a decorator at Southampton, for which town they were to set out on the following day. I thus lost sight of the Burtons for a long period.

Several years of missionary exertion had so far impaired my health that I was advised to take a long

pedestrian tour on the Continent whilst I had yet sufficient strength to do so. The change of scene, moderate out-of-door exercise, and suspension of clerical labour, the most exhausting, when conscientiously performed, of all labour—authorship excepted—would, it was believed, set me up again in body and mind.

The prescription proved to be a very successful one; and when, after about six months' leisurcly perambulation through the most picturesque parts of France (*La belle France* does not abound in the picturesque, by the way), I, at the end of a brief sojourn in Paris, took "*Diligence*" for *Hâvre de Grace*, from which port I proposed to embark for England, I was a thoroughly-renovated man, mentally and physically.

Man proposes, God disposes! This trite truth, often lightly applied, was, I venture to affirm, of strict application in reference to the apparent misfortune which befell me towards the end of my journey from Paris to *Hâvre de Grace*.

The ludicrously-misnamed "*Diligence*" wended its slow way in safety till, in passing through *Ingouville*, a suburb of *Hâvre de Grace*, its off front-wheel came in contact with the off-wheel of a heavily-laden wood-cart, going in a contrary direction. Over went the "*Diligence*," and I, an outside passenger, in addition to receiving several severe contusions, had my left leg broken. It was necessary to carry

me to the nearest tavern, and surgical assistance having been promptly obtained, the bone was skillfully set.

The breaking of my leg was less permanently injurious than the nervous shock I had sustained. So lasting were its effects, that when comparatively convalescent, and able to walk about, I could not go a dozen yards without fancying that I must fall down if I did not stop and get some passer-by to assist me back again. As to undertaking a voyage to England, the bare idea sent a shudder through me, and I finally hired a lodging for three months upon the côte or hill which overlooks Havre on the north—a charming, healthful locality, dotted here and there with modest suburban dwellings, and commanding a splendid land and sea view.

A Madame Le Blanc was my landlady, and a worthy, discreet woman she was, obliging, and even cheerful, though in her second widowhood. She had one child, a daughter, by her first husband, as I heard after a while,—for being spoken of and to as Lucille only, I naturally concluded her to be a Le Blanc. Lucille was a fairly-educated, pretty girl, something more even of a coquette than pretty girls usually are, and cursed with a tongue which was never still, save when she slept—if then.

Leaving Lucille for a moment, I come to an incident of my story which occurred about a month after I took possession of the lodging. I seldom went

out, and when I did, very early of a morning, for never more than half an hour's walk ; and yet seldomer conversed with or listened to the gossip of either mother or daughter ; but I certainly had heard frequent mention of "Julie," a somewhat distant neighbour and near relative, and always in a bitter, sneering tone, when the speaker was the amiable Lucille ; from which I should have concluded, if I had thought a moment upon the subject, that Julie was prettier, richer, or otherwise more fortunate than that damsel herself. "Julie," a very common name in France, awakened no conjecture in my mind, and it was mechanically, as it were, that upon hearing Lucille, addressing the small servant of all work, who was assisting her to arrange the flowers in my window, say, "Ah ! here comes Mademoiselle Julie's servant, from the Havre post-office no doubt, for she has letters in her hand," that I lifted my eyes from the book I was reading, and, looking through the window, beheld Jeanne Bauvais !

The expression of surprise which escaped me was drowned by Lucille's sharp exclamation, "Ah, she has a letter for us ! Quick !—open the door, Annette."

"For Mademoiselle Lucille St. Arnaud," grated the harsh voice of Jeanne Beauvais, as she tendered a letter. "The postage is twelve sous—*Oiel !*"

I had stepped back out of the line of sight from the door, but Jeanne's inquisitive glance fell upon

me, and she was surprised into an involuntary recognition.

"How," said Lucille, "you know monsieur, Jeanne?"

"Yes," replied the woman, contriving at the same moment to place her finger on her lip, unobserved by Lucille; "Yes, monsieur is a priest: I have heard him preach in London. And now, the twelve sous which I have paid, if you please; I am in haste."

"Ask mamma for twelve sous, to pay for a letter," said Lucille to Annette, not choosing to leave the room herself. The money was brought, and Jeanne left, without another word.

"It seems that your sire-name is the same as that of Mademoiselle Julie St. Arnaud," I remarked.

"Ah! then Monsieur is acquainted with the mistress as well as the servant!" said Lucille, with a laugh.

"I saw Mademoiselle St. Arnaud once, in London."

"Pardon me, monsieur," said Lucille. "It was a rude question for me to ask. A priest must, of course, know hundreds, thousands of people. Mademoiselle Julie and I are cousins, after a sort of left-handed way," she added.

"Indeed! How, pray, may that be?"

"I shall tell you, with the greatest pleasure. Annette, leave the room; mamma must want you."

"If there is any family-secret involved——"

"Oh, my faith, no, monsieur,—unless that can be

called a secret which is perfectly well known to every man, woman, and child, in Hâvre de Grace and its environs. You must know, monsieur," continued Lucille, hugely delighted at having an attentive, interested auditor,—“you must know, monsieur, that there were three brothers St. Arnaud, natives of Hâvre. The eldest, of a wild, roving disposition, left France many, many years since,—it was said for the colonies,—and till about six or seven months ago was never heard of by us; though charming and ingenuous Mademoiselle Julie and her mother had, and to some purpose too, a long time before that. More upon that point presently. Well, Gustave St. Arnaud, a naval officer, married Estelle Lacoste, Julie's mother, and Victor St. Arnaud espoused Lucille Beaugard, *my* mother. Good. So far monsieur comprehends clearly. Gustave St. Arnaud had already two children,—a son, named Gustave, after his father, and a daughter, Estelle; and Madame St. Arnaud—Madame Gustave St. Arnaud, well understood—was near her confinement with a third child, when her husband, who was necessarily much at sea, returned unexpectedly to Hâvre. Great commotion and scandal ensued, and in the duel which took place between Gustave St. Arnaud and Le Sieur de Bougainville, the husband was killed: shortly after which calamity Madame Gustave St. Arnaud gave birth to Julie.

“Perhaps,” continued Lucille, after a pause, “perhaps monsieur is of opinion that such topics should

not be spoken of by a young girl like me. That is, no doubt, right as a rule, but then monsieur is a priest, which makes all the difference in the world."

"Is Mademoiselle Julie rich?"

"Faith, yes, tolerably so, and expects—but it is not quite so sure as she fancies it is—expects to be soon very, very rich—rich as a princess! We shall see; but this is how it is. M. St. Arnaud, senior, who, as I said, disappeared from France many, many years ago, settled in the Isle of France, which now belongs to you English, and there made an immense, enormous fortune. Never having married, he, about eighteen months ago I think, made inquiries respecting his brothers and their families. Unfortunately, my mother, who some ten years ago, having been then nearly two years a widow, married a Captain Le Blanc, and, settling in Paris, was quite forgotten in her native place, to which we returned only about eight months since. Now, Madame Gustave St. Arnaud, through being so dreadfully compromised, could not endure to reside permanently in Havre, yet frequently visited it on various business affairs. The correspondent, moreover, a M. Gibon, with whom my uncle St. Arnaud, senior, had placed himself in communication, was Julie's mother's zealous friend, and he immediately posts off her address—she was then in England, where she has generally resided since the peace—to the Isle of France, with sundry

particulars concerning *her* family, but not a word of my mother or me, nor a syllable about the De Bougainville *scandal*—to use a mild expression. As a natural consequence, a most unjust disposition of his wealth was made by my deceived uncle, provisionally only, however, as it fortunately chanced. Madame Gustave St. Arnaud was to be at once remitted ten thousand francs annually, which annuity, at her death, was to pass to her son, Gustave, and, should he die without heirs, to Julie—Estelle having been dead a number of years. My uncle, besides that, promised that at his death the whole of his property should be disposed of in nearly the same manner—Madame Gustave St. Arnaud to have 20,000 francs per annum for life; Gustave, her son, the great bulk of my uncle's wealth, which, he dying childless, would pass to Julie. Oh, it was monstrous!" exclaimed Lucille, with passionate bitterness, and fanning herself furiously with a handkerchief—"an atrocity!—a crime!"

"Proceed, mademoiselle, you interest me greatly."

"Well, monsieur, all has so far fallen out as anticipated. Mademoiselle Julie at least believes so. Certainly, my uncle Arnaud is dead. News of that event reached here, by an extraordinary chance, nearly two months ago; and as no official, or indeed other communication has yet arrived with respect to the disposition of the property, it is presumed the original intention of the testator has been carried out, and that Mademoiselle Julie is consequently—her mother and

Gustave being both dead—an immensely wealthy heiress ! ”

“ And rightly presumed, I suppose ? ”

“ I don’t know that,” retorted Lucille. “ Soon after we returned here—would to God we had never left !—mamma got scent of what had been going on, obtained my uncle’s address of M. Gibon, and, as she was bound to do in duty to herself and me, immediately wrote off to the Isle of France, stating full particulars, especially of the dreadful Bougainville affair, with newspaper corroboration of all she asserted. She did *not* mention the death of his nephew, Gustave, for the excellent reason that she was not then aware of it. Now, if,” concluded Lucille, “ now, if mamma’s letter reached the Isle of France before my uncle died, Mademoiselle Julie may be a little disappointed. If not, and she consequently inherits all, she has faithfully promised, and I do not for a moment doubt her word, to present me with forty thousand francs, as a marriage portion, and settle a handsome pension upon mamma.”

“ I think that is generous as well as just on her part. Is she likely to be married ? ”

“ Well, I must answer yes and no, monsieur, to that question. Yes ; and to a viscomte—Viscomte Jaubert, if she inherits my uncle’s wealth. No, if she does not. She is good-looking, certainly—handsome even, though not extraordinarily so, as some people pretend,” added the vain damsel, with a sim-

pering smile at her face in an opposite mirror; "but it's *les beaux yeux de sa casette*, I am quite sure, that have captivated the handsome and needy viscomte.

"Let me," continued Lucille, with excessive candour, "let me do Julie the justice to say that I am sure, all else being equal, she would much prefer marrying Victor Moreau, a young and rising advocate at the Rouen bar. He is a native of Havre, and they are, or were, greatly attached to each other. But then, you know, to be the wife of a viscomte! Besides, Jeanne, who has unbounded influence over her—she was her foster-mother—would not hear of her marrying an advocate, when she might wed a peer of France."

There was a knock at the outer door, and presently Jeanne herself entered the room.

"Mademoiselle Julie St. Arnaud wishes to see you, monsieur."

"I will accompany you to her at once," I replied, rising, and putting on my hat.

"You must have heard plenty of gossip, thickly garnished with lies," remarked Jeanne, as we walked on, "from Mademoiselle Julie's artful, lying cousin."

"I never heard Mademoiselle Julie or you spoken of till to-day. I did not even know that Lucille and your mistress were related, or that Lucille's name was St. Arnaud!"

"In that case it was a pity I called. But no matter."

"Take a seat, monsieur," said Jeanne, ushering me into a handsomely-furnished apartment. "Mademoiselle will see you directly."

Whilst waiting for Mademoiselle St. Arnaud, my glance wandered vacantly over the different objects in the room, till suddenly arrested by a sealed letter lying upon a table close to where I stood, addressed to "Mrs. Burton, High Street, Southampton, England."

Riddle upon riddle! Confusion worse confounded! Julie St. Arnaud in correspondence with Mrs. Burton, the likeness of whose husband to Madame St. Arnaud had so forcibly struck me!

What on earth could it mean? Should I *ask* Mademoiselle Julie its meaning? No, no;—it would be highly imprudent to do so. Better be silent—for a time, at least—and *watch*.

Mademoiselle St. Arnaud—though pale, lustrously pale, and much thinner than when I saw her in London—was beautiful, as ever, and her smile and voice, in her now gentle mood, were singularly sweet and fascinating.

"I feel," she said, "that the request I have to make is to a gentleman ('gentleman' in English) almost a superfluous one. It is that you will keep secret from my good, charitable cousin and her mamma, the particulars of the—the disagreeable interview which took place when I met you in London—I mean, as regards my part in the scene. What-

ever communication my mother, in the delirium of pain, may have made, is, of course, sacred."

I assured her that no hint of what had passed on the painful occasion to which she alluded had been, or would be, given to her relatives, or any one else; and, having accepted a glass of wine, I returned to my lodgings.

Lucille intercepted, and would, no doubt, if permitted, have cross-examined me till bed-time; but I peremptorily declined further conversation for that day at least, under the plea of headache, and shutting myself up in my bed-room, remained for several hours in anxious cogitation upon the complicated series of sayings and doings over which the letter addressed to Mrs. Burton threw so startling, yet possibly, deceptive light. For the moment, however, I could do nothing—nothing but keep my surmises to myself, till the time for efficient action arrived, if it ever should arrive.

Another month slipped away, and, quite cured of my nervousness, I was beginning to think of packing up for England, when, having slept later than usual, I was aroused by an unaccountable uproar pervading the whole house. Feet were racing up and down the stairs—doors opening and slamming to—panting voices answering each other in Babel-like confusion, the whole intermingled with screams of rejoicing, triumphant laughter.

"Monsieur! — *Reverend* Monsieur!" screamed

Lucille, and at the same time thumping upon my chamber-door,—“Reverend Monsieur, are you awake? Good news,—great news, monsieur! A letter from the Isle of France. I am the sole heiress! The bastard Julie gets nothing—nothing! Oh! it’s ravishing—delicious!” And away she wildly bounded again.

I was not delighted with the ravishing news, which was, I found, quite authentic. The altered disposition of M. St. Arnaud’s immense wealth (immense, according to French notions—about 800,000 francs, or 32,000 pounds sterling), was to the effect that in the event of Gustave St. Arnaud—to whom everything was primarily bequeathed—dying without issue, and he had died without issue, the entire property, which was to be vested in British funds, went to Lucille, the youngest St. Arnaud’s daughter. All Havre, Lucille told me, was ringing with the glad tidings, and everybody, she averred, was rejoiced for her, and not sorry for that proud minx, Julie. Correlative news flew about with amazing celerity. The Viscomte Jaubert wrote to Julie, respectfully declining, under the circumstances, to fulfil his engagement with her; and Victor Moreau, who happened to be at Havre, was heard to felicitate himself upon his escape from a marriage with a morally illegitimate pauper.

I had, as the reader will readily believe, my own private opinion as to the solidity of the foundation upon which Lucille and her mother were building up

such a dazzling future,—M. Le Viscomte Jaubert to share therein; an opinion much strengthened by Mademoiselle Julie's mockingly-merry rejection of a grant for life of two thousand francs (80*l.*) per annum, offered her at the instance of Madame La Blanc. Lucille was in a towering rage. But she consoled herself with the reflection that poverty's sharp pinch would tame Julie's silly pride, and she would then have to humbly sue for the pittance she had scornfully rejected.

I was glad to get away from the incessant turmoil going on;—the hiring of a fine house,—the purchase of fine furniture, fine dresses (deepest mourning, of course), though not a penny of the great legacy had been received, nor was likely to be, for a long while to come. So I packed up my valise, and embarked in the *Prince Cobourg* Packet, Captain Page, for Southampton. Arrived there, my first business would be to ask Mr. and Mrs. Burton [a few questions.

We were off Cape La Hève, when, going upon deck, I found that one of the passengers was Jeanne Bauvais. I was not much surprised to see her there. She returned my salutation with marked coldness, and when I advised her to go below, as the wind, already high, threatened a gale, she curtly replied that she preferred remaining upon deck under almost any circumstances, to encountering the close atmosphere of the cabin.

There was no doubt, that a dirty night, in seaman

phrase, was coming on. Huge banks of black, billowy clouds were upheaving themselves to windward; and indications, well known to practised eyes, that an electrical as well as wind storm would, before long, burst upon us, were clearly discernible.

By nine in the evening the double storm was at its height. Blue and forked lightning blazed around, and the incessant roll of thunder immediately overhead was to me, a landsman, very impressive.

I do not think any one of us was quite comfortable, though we talked as if thunder-storms at sea were as harmless as in a play-house. One was speaking—how well I remember the circumstance—of Kean's (Edmund Kean) wonderful acting in *Othello*, when a blinding flash flamed through the cabin, and the peculiar *crashing*, explosive roar which I have noticed accompanies or closely follows *fatal* lightning, startled us to our feet. We were still gazing at each other, when hurried movements and a confused clamour upon deck suggested that some accident had occurred. Such was the case. The electric shock had struck and shivered the cutter's topmast and yard, and a heavy splinter, tipped with iron, had knocked down a woman who was sitting in a bent posture near the mast.

Jeanne Bauvais was quickly picked up, and, whilst still insensible, brought below. There happened to be a surgeon amongst the passengers, and powerful restoratives being at hand, consciousness was soon

restored. The medical gentleman then anxiously examined the hurt she had received—her eye eagerly questioning whenever it met his.

"It's all over, my poor woman," he said, in a gentle voice. "Make your peace with God, in whose presence you will stand before another hour has passed. The spine is fractured," he added, addressing the lookers-on, "and the lower extremities are dead already."

"I knew it—I was sure of it," moaned the woman. "It is God's judgment." She saw me, and a gleam of melancholy satisfaction flitted over her face. "Let all leave except him," she said, pointing her trembling finger at me. "He is a priest, and I have much work to do in an hour. You said an hour, sir?"

"Not more than an hour," replied the surgeon, and the cabin was at once silently vacated.

Never can I forget a confession received under circumstances so unusual, impressive, terrifying! The monotonous swinging to and fro of the cabin lamp, the dim light whereof was extinguished, so to speak, every two or three minutes by the glaring lightning, which passing, left us in thicker darkness than before. Then the tramping, shouting, cursing, upon deck, the creaking timbers of the straining ship, the howling of the wind, the swash of the sea, and the crashing thunder, rendering it almost impossible to catch the meaning of the dying woman's gasped-out words, though I bent my ear close down

to her lips,—altogether constituted an *ensemble* of bewildering, distracting horror, the very remembrance of which is distressing.

The confession was, however, mainly accomplished before decided delirium manifested itself. By that confession I learned that Julie was Jeanne Bauvais', *not* Madame St. Arnaud's daughter. Jeanne had been secretly delivered of a female child two days before Madame St. Arnaud's premature confinement, brought on by the fatal issue of the duel in which her betrayed husband was killed. The confusion and terror which reigned throughout the house enabled Jeanne to substitute *her* child for that just born, and which she privily murdered instead of her own, as she had purposed. The terrible fact that she, Jeanne, was her mother, was revealed to the terrified and at first incredulous girl when she was about twelve years of age (Jeanne, however, concealing from her the *murder* of Madame St. Arnaud's infant, which she alleged was still-born), and from that time Julie was her abominable mother's slave; and compelled to rule Madame St. Arnaud by help of the all-mastering love which that unhappy lady felt for her supposed daughter.

"It was I," went on the dying wretch, "it was I that persuaded Gustave to marry a pretty, portionless English girl, then got him turned out of doors to work for his daily bread. He changed his name to Burton. That was pride. He gone, there

would be more for Julie, that is for me. A good but weak woman was Madame. I liked her, but money more. She had to make a written statement, which she did not read, about some trifling affair, and I afterwards succeeded in persuading her that she had sworn her son, Gustave, was dead. That was after her brain was weakened by the cancer agony. It cut her to the quick though. Julie would not stand that, and told her I lied; but she could not believe Julie, though she tried hard to do so. Her reason was shattered. Who'll have to answer for that? Poor Julie struggled fiercely at times to free herself from my clutch. It choked, stifled her. But she couldn't. I threatened to expose the secret of her birth, and have her turned into the street. There I had her. She dreaded poverty. Infamy much more. I lost my hold of her, when Madame died. She defied me then, and *would* send large sums of money to Burton—Gustave you know. She has done so ever since. I was going to see him now, and tell him of his fine fortune. She would have been a good girl, would Julie, but for her mother. I was a child once, and a girl, a handsome one they say, and yet I think I must have been born a devil. There's a flash!—From the bottomless pit. Brimstone—sulphur! I wonder if it's true. Yes, yes, a born-devil. No fault of mine. Again! and redder than the last. 'Spit fire, spout rain!' That's in an English play. I went to school in

England for a year when I was a little girl. Not when I was a handsome girl: That was at Rouen. Malediction upon Rouen! I could always curse. I never remember to have wished to do good. I should like even now, since I must confess everything, to murder Julie's father. But he's in hell long ago. I shall see him there. In an hour, the man said. Didn't I make Julie domineer over Madame! If I hadn't, I should have been turned off myself, for Madame neither loved nor feared me. What a game! And now what is it come to? Fiends! Tortures! Flames! Save me! save me!" she screamed, straining my hand in hers with convulsive force. "Save me! Say masses,—a thousand masses for my soul. Julie will pay for a thousand. Promise—swear——"

Absolute delirium supervened rapidly, and the poor wretch raved frightfully for some ten minutes; then stupor came on, and Jeanne Bauvais died considerably within the hour.

I have to add that I found Jeanne's account of Julie's kindness towards Gustave St. Arnaud strictly true. Gustave's identity being indisputable, he succeeded without difficulty to his uncle's large wealth, to the intense disgust of Mademoiselle Lucille and le Viscomte Jaubert, who is, I think, still a bachelor.

Mademoiselle Julie was for a long time firm in her resolution to retire into a convent, but time,—her

brother's loving sympathy,—Gustave St. Arnaud would never admit that he was *not* her brother,—and a long sojourn with his family in England, where he finally settled, induced her to change her mind. She married in her twenty-fifth year,—highly, and, it is believed, happily. She also settled definitively in England.

Thus terminates, as far as I am concerned, a chain of events, the first link in which was my blindly butting at a sedan-chair porter engaged in his old-world vocation.

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

G.—THE YOUNG CONFESSOR.

THERE is a small chapel dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, charmingly situated in an English southern county, in which I used often to celebrate Divine service. It was built, and provisionally endowed, by an Irish peer, whom we will take leave to entitle Lord Riverton.

This peerage, together with a large lump of money, was conferred for services rendered to Mr. Pitt's government, in assisting to carry the Act of Union. That measure, salutary as it may have proved to both countries, was, we are all aware, furiously opposed by the Irish people, who, in many instances, made the Emerald Isle too hot to hold "the traitors who sold their country,"—blessing their lucky stars the while that they had a country to sell.

Lord Riverton may or may not have been one of these. At all events, he lost no time in removing to England, where he made large investments in land, and built himself a splendid mansion. One only of his Irish estates, a considerable one, in the King's County, was retained in the family.

Riverton Hall is distant about two miles from the Catholic chapel, the building of which modest edifice was begun and rapidly finished during the last six months of his lordship's life, in accordance with a laudable anxiety to no longer delay laying up treasures in heaven, when the riches of earth were felt to be fast slipping from his grasp. His lordship's mother was an earnest Catholic, and it is likely enough that he himself may have been secretly inclined towards that form of faith, though he professed, or he could have rendered the British ministry no aid in the Irish parliament, to be a Protestant. Be that as it may, his prudent lordship, in order to guard against any possible error in the calculation, at the same time built and permanently endowed a Chapel of Ease in connection with the Established Church, in an adjoining county, where he had purchased considerable property.

His lordship—whom, by the way, I never saw—died unmarried, and was succeeded in the title and estates by the eldest of two nephews, the Honourable Charles Bernard, who, although only about thirty years of age, was already stricken with premature

decay. People about him assured me that he was dying—in an absolute, not merely romantic, fanciful sense—of disappointed love; acting, we may be sure, upon an originally weak organization,—the malady, I have always understood, never proving fatal, except in such cases.

It was, I found, positively true, that the second Lord Riverton was dying of that mysterious infection. His lordship honoured me with his confidence, and over and over again did I hear the sad story—not in the confessional—from his own lips, though he always scrupulously avoided mentioning the lady's name, or dropping a hint which might lead to her identification. His brother, the Honourable James Bernard, was, I believe, the only person in England, except himself, that knew her name or dwelling-place. His lordship told me she was a young Irishwoman, and of course endowed, in a transcendent degree, with all possible perfections of person and mind. He should have excepted, it seemed to me, the perennial charms of truth and constancy. Lord Riverton was more generous, perhaps more just, than I. He only blamed her father, who, believing or fearing that the late lord would carry out his often-expressed intention of marrying, insisted upon the lady's (his daughter) acceptance of the hand of an extensive landowner, but who, it was too late discovered, was scarcely more than the nominal proprietor of the estates which passed for his. The Honourable Charles Bernard

believed, and still persisted in believing, that his affection had been fully reciprocated. Intelligence of the marriage came upon him, consequently, with the suddenness and shock of a *coup d'éclair*, when all was sunshine. Many weeks he lay upon a sick bed, was now fast sinking into the grave, and yet never wearied of discoursing, with a kind of sad delight—a mournful tenderness—of a woman whose weakness or caprice had prepared it for him. Strange, passing strange, to at least my ghostly apprehension, are the illusions and vagaries of a “fond” madman!

The second Lord Riverton died, and title and estates were inherited by his brother, the Honourable James Bernard; a very different person from the deceased. He was a hale, wiry, worldly man; had married an Englishwoman, poor as Job, but of high aristocratic connection. “Blood” was a prime consideration with the new lord, and it was soon known that the great object of his ambition was to substitute an English for his Irish peerage. He was, however, scarcely rich enough for that, but as a sufficient establishment could be maintained for half his income, acre might be added rapidly to acre, field to field, till his rent-roll had swelled to dimensions equal to the sustainment of an English barony or earldom, of which the glittering coronet would, he hoped, one day grace the brow of his son and only child, a promising youngster, then about seven years of age.

The mother of the third Lord Riverton was as

strict a Catholic as the mother of the first had been (I believe they both came of the same stock), and still more sedulous in instilling her own faith into the minds of her children. Lady Riverton was as fierce a Protestant; and as her husband was careless of creeds, and would probably remain so as long as the sun of life was high above the horizon, her ladyship was permitted to have her own way in the matter. The endowment of the Catholic chapel,—(seventy pounds per annum, guaranteed by nothing of more legal worth than the first Lord Riverton's promise)—was cancelled, and two or three Irish Catholic servants were dismissed. It was of the last importance that the minds of her ladyship's husband and son should be kept free or purged of Romish predilections, else of what avail would be an English peerage, conferring no seat in the House of Lords!

The chapel was consequently closed, or opened occasionally only at Christmas or Easter, when it was served from the nearest mission.

This was the chief reason that I did not revisit that part of the country till full ten years had passed away. A considerable change had taken place. Lady Riverton had been several years dead. Lord Riverton, though still a model of economical management, had renewed the grant to the chapel, and Divine service was regularly celebrated. The congregation was still extremely scant, and not one of the domestics at Riverton Hall worshipped

there. The Honourable Robert Bernard was at Oxford.

Lord Riverton received me very kindly, and it was at his instance that I remained several months, doing duty for the resident priest (a Spaniard and good man, but whose English was scarcely all that could be wished), whilst he, at Lord Riverton's charges, revisited, for probably the last time, his beloved Grenada.

I was becoming impatient of his long absence, as my services were required elsewhere, when an incident occurred, the ultimate consequences of which, I, being neither a conjuror nor a prophet, did not make the faintest guess of.

A message reached me to the effect that an invalid lady had alighted from a fly, or four-wheeled hack-carriage, at the Riverton Arms, and manifested much concern at hearing that Lord Riverton might not return till the morrow. She, however, despatched a ready-written letter to the hall, next inquired if a Catholic priest resided in the neighbourhood, and upon being told there was, requested that he should be sent for with as little delay as possible.

Only another illustration of the common lot! Yet never does such an event lose its startling solemnity; for how awfully true it is that every death-bed is the final scene of a great tragedy; ay, if the death be a peasant's, the bed a bed of heath

The lady who had summoned me was dying. There could be no question of that. A few hours, more or less, and the struggling spirit would be freed from the crumbling tenement of clay. A superbly-beautiful tenement it must have been, ere suffering, grief, remorse—no, not remorse, self-blame it might be, had marred those queenly features, dimmed the splendour of those large and still lustrous eyes. My long-practised glance showed me that I was in presence of the catastrophe of a strong, high-soaring, *baffled* life, sustained, I also judged, by a pure conscience—pure, as tested by human powers—enabling the moribund to accept that great defeat with calmness and resignation. A noble, touching spectacle!

“I wished to have a priest near me,” said the lady, “as I thought just now that the end was fearfully near. I was not physically equal to the long journey I have compelled myself to take. I feel stronger now.”

“My business here,” she resumed, “is to receive from Lord Riverton’s own lips an assurance that he will be the friend and guardian of my two orphan, and else utterly unfriended, children. He will not refuse me. I have been so many years abroad,” she went on to say, in her sweet, patient voice, “so completely shut out from hearing home news, that you will excuse me for asking if Lord Riverton has formally embraced our faith, for which he always professed the deepest veneration. That, however, may have been merely to please me,” she added, with a

sweet, introspective, and, I thought, *vacant* smile. Was the lightness before death so close at hand ?

I answered that his lordship had not embraced the Catholic faith, but had given substantial proof of his sympathy therewith.

"O yes, I know. Liberality—gentlemanly feeling—hatred of intolerance—and the rest of it. Dross, which *I* might have transmuted into pure gold !"

A carriage, swiftly driven, stopped in front of the tavern, and presently a waiting woman announced that Lord Riverton was in attendance to speak with the lady who had forwarded a note to the Hall.

The lady's agitation at hearing this message alarmed me. She, however, by a wonderful effort of will, for one in her state, controlled her emotion, made a gesture of assent to the servant, and, sinking back upon the pillow, said faintly,

"Do not leave : I may need your counsel."

Lord Riverton softly entered the chamber—his face white and working with perturbation and dismay.

"Not you—not you !" exclaimed the lady with nervous quickness. "Not the Honourable James Bernard. I must see Lord Riverton himself."

"Will you, reverend sir, be pleased to leave us for a few minutes ?" said Lord Riverton.

I instantly complied with his lordship's request, and went down stairs, where I remained *solus* for about half-an-hour, instead of a few minutes.

"The lady up stairs wishes to see you," said Lord

Riverton, who was still far from having recovered his ordinary self-command. "It is a very unpleasant affair, of which you, I cannot doubt—helped by your recollection of certain *confidential* conversations with the late Lord Riverton—have easily solved the enigma. I have undertaken, for the future, the care of the unfortunate lady's children, and that being the only question in issue, it will be well to keep silence upon the subject, even between us two. Painful and useless regrets should be, as quickly as possible, buried memories."

With that his lordship left, and I returned to the death-chamber.

The lady was much exhausted, and sinking fast. The interview with Lord Riverton had evidently hastened her end, which, however, could not, under the most favourable circumstances, have been long delayed.

"Is"—she said, in a voice so low and feeble that I was several times obliged to bend down my head close to hers to catch the words—"Is the promise of—of—this Lord Riverton to be relied upon, think you?"

"In my opinion, to be most confidently relied upon."

"Blessed be God for that. He has promised to watch over Geraldine and Patrick. Would that I had found Charles alive! He died young. Less, much less than a year after—after——. His brother

solemnly assures me I had no part in his early death. I fear that may be a pious deceit, to avoid distressing me at this awful moment. You were in his confidence I am told. Did he speak of me?"

"I have never, madam, heard your name mentioned."

"Thank heaven! Yet so young—so soon after—"

As she spoke, the undefinable change, as if caused by the shadow of the Angel of Death in bodily presence, which he who has once seen can never afterwards mistake, overgrew her face. I hastened to administer the last rites of the church, she remaining feebly conscious the while. Gradually she ceased to breathe; and, with the name of Geraldine upon her lips, about which played a faint, angelic smile, passed peacefully from earth.

* * * * *

Directions for the funeral were given by Lord Riverton. It was a handsomely-furnished one, and the corpse was conveyed to Dublin. No name was inscribed upon the coffin-plate.

About six years afterwards, I was again the officiating priest at the little chapel dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, till a substitute could be found. Popery had made no progress in the locality since my last visit there; but the scythe of Time had reaped its usual harvest, and even glanced unpleasantly near Lord Riverton. He had met with an accident whilst

hunting, which had not only been attended by severe physical injuries, but for a time had terribly shaken his nervous system. He was much better when I saw him, and received me with the old cordiality. He even attended service at the chapel twice or thrice, not, it appeared to me, with sincerity of devotion, though the Emancipation Bill had passed, and a Catholic was of equal value and splendour with a Protestant coronet. His chance of obtaining admission into the ranks of the English Peerage was, he told me, more promising than ever. He frequently spoke with parental pride of his son, who, I knew from the papers, had obtained first-class honours at Oxford. The Honourable Robert Bernard was, and had been for a considerable time, absent on a business visit to Ireland. The steward, who managed the estate in the King's county required looking after, as I understood. Lord Riverton also spoke with restrained frankness, as it were, of the stranger-lady who died at the Riverton Arms. Her adopted name—adopted from necessity, he said—was Conway. He himself had never seen either of the children. His son, the Honourable Robert, wrote enthusiastically of Geraldine. He, Lord Riverton, had placed her with a highly respectable family in Dublin, and meant to give her a reasonable dowry, in the event of marriage, for a girl of her actual status in society. Patrick was studying at Maynooth for the Church, for which the principal of the college reported he had little or no

vocation. Patrick preferred the army, and if he proved to be resolutely bent upon that profession, his Lordship thought he must purchase him a commission.

Upon my remarking that of course Geraldine and Patrick's mother was the lady to whom the late Lord had been so fatally attached, Lord Riverton changed colour, and the topic, with the brusque remark, that that was a matter about which he did not choose to be questioned.

The prolonged absence of the Honourable Robert Bernard in Ireland, became a source of serious irritation to Lord Riverton. What on earth could be keeping the young man in Dublin? Dancing attendance at a sham court could not be so very entertaining.

I chanced to be one day at Riverton Hall when the post arrived. Lord Riverton seized and opened a letter with great eagerness. All colour left his face as he perused it, and a fierce oath, the first I had ever heard from him, surged through his quivering lips. "Excuse me, sir," he said, with sharp abruptness, "I have received ill-news, and must bid you good-day."

His Lordship's irritation having subsided, he sent for me to apologize for his rudeness. "The truth is," he said, "that my son chooses to fancy himself in love with a beautiful beggar—a ——. But I have myself greatly to blame. I was told by more than one person that Geraldine is the image of her mother;

and I—dolt! ass! that I was—gave Robert her address! Never mind! ‘All’s well that ends well.’ Geraldine Conway will never be Lady Riverton. Never, by G——. I would rather see Robert in his coffin! He will return next week. I have written to command his immediate presence here. It will not take long to make him thoroughly comprehend that my son cannot be the husband of Geraldine Conway.”

The Honourable Robert Bernard did not obey the parental mandate so promptly as his Lordship wished. Several unsatisfactory excuses were received; and when the young gentleman did at last make his appearance at the Hall, Lord Riverton was absent on a visit to the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye.

The Honourable Robert was a fine young fellow, full of animal spirits, and of a joyous, genial temperament. In an hour he and I were close acquaintances; in two, confidential friends. By that time I knew all he knew concerning Geraldine Conway. In fact, he brimmed over with Geraldine to an overwhelming degree, though undoubtedly the miniature he wore, unless the limner lied audaciously, excused his ravings. He did not know very much more than myself of the Conway family. He believed their true name was Massey, but was not sure; neither was Geraldine. Her parents had left Ireland a few months after marriage under the pressure of debt.

difficulties, and ultimately the mother had, with her two children, taken refuge from a brutal, beggared husband, in an Austrian convent and under a feigned name. The funds required for that purpose had been supplied, Geraldine and her brother understood, by Lord Riverton. Upon this I remarked, that if the *late* Lord Riverton was meant, the statement must be an error, as his Lordship died about ten months after the mother's marriage with Massey, if Massey was the husband's name. The Honourable Robert Bernard thought I must be right and Geraldine mistaken. In fact, there was a mystery about the whole matter which he would insist upon his father clearing up. Nobody even seemed to know if Massey was alive or dead, or why the name of Conway had been assumed. As to a prolonged opposition on the part of Lord Riverton to his, the son's, union with Geraldine, it was absurd. At all events it would prove futile. He loved and honoured his father, would do any reasonable thing to oblige him; but to make shipwreck of his love, his hopes, his life, in obedience to a causeless caprice, was not to be thought of. Lord Riverton upon calm reflection would comprehend that he had no power of coercion. The family estates were strictly entailed, and he, the son and heir, could readily obtain a large annual income upon the security of his reversionary right to them. Geraldine Conway, or Massey, *should* be his wife, with Lord Riverton's consent he hoped, but if not, certainly without.

I could not doubt the sincerity of the ardent lover's resolve, and being equally sure of the angry opposition of Lord Riverton to the unequal match, I anticipated a violent explosion when the father and son should meet.

I was not in that regard mistaken. I slept at the Hall, and on the morrow witnessed a very painful scene. Lord Riverton returned late at night, and met his son at the breakfast-table. The subject of which the hearts of both were full was soon mooted, and the fierce altercation went on *crescendo*, spite of my endeavours to moderate their mutual violence of tone and temper. The hot debate was at length brought to a climax by a fiercely-solemn declaration of the son—if I may so express myself—that no consideration, no power on earth, should prevail upon him to violate his plighted faith to Geraldine Conway; no—nor to postpone their nuptials.

Lord Riverton, who was scarcely less agitated than his son, was silenced for awhile by that emphatic asseveration. Presently he rose from his chair, and in a voice quivering with rage—at least, I so interpreted the husky broken tones—said:

“There remains then but one alternative. You compel me to make a disclosure which I would fain have avoided. Come with me into the library. That which I have to say must have no auditor save yourself: not even our reverend friend here.”

They had left the room about five minutes, less

perhaps, when the library-bell rang furiously. I hastened thither, and found the Honourable Robert Bernard extended, senseless, on the carpet. In a fit, I at first thought; but he had only fainted, and as soon as he gave signs of returning animation, Lord Riverton insisted that I, as well as the servant who answered the bell, should leave the room. I did so, and the house immediately afterwards.

On the following day I received an incoherent, blotted scrawl from the Honourable Robert Bernard, the confused and confusing purport of which was that he was about to leave England, and should not return for several years, if at all. A curse was upon him, upon his father, upon their house. Marriage with Geraldine was not only impossible, but to think of her as a wife was a crime.

“What devil’s game is his wily, unscrupulous lordship attempting to play?” was my first thought after having with some difficulty deciphered the note. Surely he had not ventured upon the shocking device of insinuating that Geraldine Conway, or whatever her real name might be, was connected by a close, the closest tie of blood with himself! A terrible supposition! Yet what other meaning could be attached to the young man’s expression that “to think of Geraldine as a wife was a crime?”

I felt entirely sure that such a statement or insinuation would be as false as unutterably wicked, and I could hardly bring myself to believe that his lordship,

even for the sake of carrying out the great alliance he had been for some months negotiating on behalf of his son, had taken so hazardous a step. Still, I knew that vaulting ambition, given rein to, will often overleap the most sacred barriers. I would see the young gentleman, and as far as in my power disabuse his mind of the gross invention, which, I suspected, had been palmed upon him.

Too late! The Honourable Robert Bernard had left the Hall several hours previously; and no one knew where a letter would find him, except Lord Riverton himself, and he declined to see me, under the plea of indisposition. His lordship hoped, however, to be able to receive the Reverend Mr. Maurice on the next day but one, if he would have the kindness to look in at the Hall. I did look in, and had a brief, unsatisfactory interview with the noble lord. The communication he had made to his son was of course no business of mine. That was quite clear; and equally so, that he had fulfilled a sacred duty in making it, for which his son would one day thank him. His lordship had nothing further to say upon the subject, and loftily hinted, that if his friendship were prized by me, I ought for the future to scrupulously avoid a topic which only concerned himself and the Honourable Robert Bernard.

Things fell out adversely with Lord Riverton after his son's departure. The negotiations for the great

marriage were broken abruptly off, and with the rupture of that nearly-concluded compact the vision of an English coronet faded to air. The prospective glories of the world—*his* world—eluded, and those he possessed seemed to wither in, his grasp. A correspondence with Patrick Conway, who had left Maynooth and since resided with his sister in Dublin, irritated and harassed him more than he would confess. His lordship had offered to purchase a commission in the army for “the insolent fool.” The proffered gift was indignantly declined, and Patrick Conway, or Massey, emigrated to Monte Video, South America. His sister Geraldine was to follow as soon as he had made a home for her. Then his lordship’s son, his much-loved son, seldom wrote to him, and when he did, briefly and coldly, upon business matters alone. A gloomy and depressing cloud chilled and darkened Lord Riverton’s brilliant noon of life. (He was not much on the shady side of fifty.) By-and-by, a fire at the Hall, which burst out at dead of night, though he fortunately escaped unhurt, brought on again the nervous prostration which the accident in the hunting-field had first induced. This time he did not rally from the attack, and confirmed hypochondria appeared likely to supervene. That fear was realized; superstition preceding and accompanying the terrible malady. What in his lordship’s case I mean by superstition, was the revival in his mind of the terrors—religious terrors so called—of childhood,

combined with the too common notion that alms-gifts money-benefactions—not bestowed in a spirit of charity and love, but solely with a view to avoid hell and win heaven, a working for wages, in short,—was the true mode of securing tranquillity of spirit, of obtaining the peace which passeth understanding!

I was closely observant of the phases of mind through which his lordship was passing, and felt the while quite sure that in the sepulchre he was whitening some hideous skeleton lay concealed from the world's eye, but ever present in ghastly ghostliness to his own introspective vision. What might be its form and lineaments? Difficult to say, except that there could be little doubt that it had relation to the Conways or Masseys. I felt confident of that.

His lordship came often to chapel, and I more than once saw *Felix* tremble in the contemplation of life, death, and judgment to come. But it would not be to me, I felt quite sure, that he would expose his soul-sores; not me whom he would ask to aid in razing out the written troubles of his brain. Oh no! Some one of less experience would suit him better—one who, not knowing or suspecting the truth, would accept without too close questioning his own gloze of the deeds, of which he might gently, tenderly, accuse himself.

Thus reasoning with myself, I was not surprised to read an advertisement in *The Tablet*, just about that time started by Mr. Lucas, stating that the services

of a Roman Catholic Chaplain were required in Lord Riverton's household. As there was no Catholic servant in the establishment, the Chaplain could only be wanted by his lordship. It was added in the advertisement that a knowledge of chess would be a desideratum, and that refined manners and a classical education were indispensable. The amount of stipend might be fixed, in a reasonable sense, by the priest himself.

"Yes," said Lord Riverton, when I mentioned that I had seen the advertisement—"Yes; I am anxious to secure the society, and, of course, the services of a cultivated priest. I am growing old. The ice of age seems to be chilling my blood at an earlier period, and with swifter progress, than is usually the case. My son, too, is self-exiled: and I feel alone in the world. I have need, therefore, of a divinely-commissioned guide, philosopher, and friend, and one not too stern or ascetic."

"A physician, whose duty will be not to probe the ulcerous place, but to skin and flem it."

"I beg pardon, sir. I wish to obtain the society of a cultivated priest, of a consecrated *gentleman*. And, I believe I have succeeded to admiration. Of course you have heard of the Reverend Charles Mordaunt, one of the Douay priests?"

"Certainly I have; and that he is endowed with marvellous fluency of speech. For so young a man he has acquired an extraordinary reputation. Surely he is not going to subside into a chaplaincy?"

"His health has suffered from over-exertion, and his medical adviser insists that he must give up preaching for two or three years. My son knows him well, and writes strongly in his praise. I have confidence in Robert's recommendation, as he perfectly understands the kind of person that will suit me. Then, his testimonials are unexceptionable."

"There can be no doubt of that; still he is very young."

"So much the better. How old was the best-loved of the Apostles?"

There was no answering that, and I said no more upon the subject.

Not only a young, but a singularly handsome, man was the Reverend Charles Mordaunt. Where had I before seen that face?—not the form of face, but the expression, which, whenever anything was said which saddened him—and this was often—flitted over his features? I could not remember; but the spiritual shadow seemed familiar to me. Or was it a dream-memory which haunted me? Likely enough.

Certainly, a very accomplished gentleman was the young priest; and what a mastering influence he early acquired over Lord Riverton's weakened mind! A subduing influence, arising in a great degree, no doubt, from the natural power which a strong will exerts over a feeble one. Yet there seemed to be some other influence at work. I fancied that there was a kind of growing triumph in the chaplain's tone

and manner when especially addressing his lordship, as if he felt sure of obtaining irresistible ascendancy over him. Yet Lord Riverton had not, I knew, been formally received into the Church, nor had he made confession, though that preliminary step would not, I was sure, be long delayed, so morbidly apprehensive of death had his lordship become.

A slight fit of paralysis hastened the conclusive step. His lordship feared to longer dally with the issues of eternity; and a note was brought to Mr. Mor-daunt whilst we sat together in the library at Riverton Hall, containing two or three lines, traced with a trembling hand, intimating his lordship's anxious desire to make general confession without delay.

The chaplain's face, as he read the note aloud, flashed with triumph, expressive of a more vivid interest in the spiritual welfare of his noble patron than I had given him credit for. The next moment he was white and trembling with emotion, and his voice faltered with agitated earnestness, so to speak, as he rose to leave the room, and required of me a promise not to quit the Hall till he should have again seen and spoken with me. I consented, though considerably more puzzled by the manner of the request than by its substance. I also heard the chaplain direct a servant to see immediately if the medical gentleman, who had been in constant attendance upon Lord Riverton during the previous week, was within call.

These were extraordinary doings, and a suspicion that had once before dimly suggested itself arose in my mind. The chaplain had never previously, as far as my knowledge went, manifested much priestly zeal. He had even refused, with something of scornful asperity, to once preach in my place, high as his qualifications in that respect were said to be. Another circumstance puzzled me. Lord Riverton had been informed by his son that the fervent preacher's health necessitated absolute repose, and yet it seemed to me that he was in the full vigour of youthful life. There was, I almost felt sure, some terrible mystification in progress, and I determined to write that very day to one of the principals at Douay, whom I knew very well, requesting information as to the antecedents and true character of the Reverend Charles Mordaunt. Fears and doubtings shook me, and I remembered, with a hot flush, the chaplain's confusion when I made some casual inquiry of him respecting that very principal. How could I have been so unheeding, so blind ! The Reverend Mr. Mordaunt was, I knew, a young man, some eight-and-twenty years of age ; but Lord Riverton's chaplain looked, at all events, four or five years younger than that !

I was startled out of my reverie by a sudden commotion in the direction of Lord Riverton's chamber, and hastening out of the library, I saw the chaplain descending the grand staircase in a state of wild excitement, two or three steps at a time. To cap

my consternation and bewilderment, he seized rudely hold of me, literally pushed me back into the library, slammed to the door after him, and burst into wild, exultant, uncontrollable laughter.

"This is strange behaviour for a priest, who has just come from fulfilling one of his most solemn functions," said I, with angry heat, as soon as I could make myself heard.

"Priest me no priest!" retorted the supposed chaplain, with a shout. "I am Patrick Conway, at your reverence's service. Capitally done, by Jove!" he added, with a renewed burst of triumph.

"Not a priest! Not the Reverend Charles Mor-daunt! You are an arrant impostor then."

"Impostor in your reverend teeth! I am Geraldine Conway's (I like that name better than Massey) brother, and the Honourable Robert Bernard's fast friend, who did *not* emigrate to Monte Video. Impostor, forsooth! My own private opinion, spite of Maynooth teaching, is, let me tell you, that the true confessor, if the last two words are reconcilable, is the real impostor, by assuming—impotent earth-worm that he is!—to anticipate and pronounce the decrees of Almighty God. Beshrew my tongue!" added Patrick Conway, with quick feeling; "I have no right to address you in such language. The truth is, as the seniors of Maynooth early discovered, I have no religious vocation whatever, in their meaning of the phrase. Ah, but I say," he continued, "didn't I

famously act the part of a highly-devotional, world-contemning young priest, bamboozling, not only the titled imbecile up-stairs, but your astute self? By heaven, it was gloriously managed, but how I contrived to keep my countenance when we three were especially spiritual and solemn was, and is, a marvel to myself! I let on afterwards; and, as I'm a gentleman, I was often afraid that people in the room under my sleeping chamber would hear the bed shake under me. His cautious lordship would not confess to you," went on the exultant young Irishman. "O dear no; he was too wily for that. You he would frequently meet again, and the silent reproach in your eye would not be pleasant; whilst the Reverend Charles Mordaunt, who was so morbidly anxious to seclude himself from the world in the quietude of a monastery, was just the man to shrive the old sinner. There, don't look so scared, sir. A great, an immense good has been accomplished, and not the slightest harm done. His lordship won't take final leave of this Vale of Tears for some years to come, I'll answer for it; and so would anybody that witnessed the astounded penitent spring up at my throat when he found that he had been disclosing his sinister secrets to Patrick Conway. I had not supposed he had so much vitality left in him. Be hanged if he did not knock the Absolution clean out of my head; just as, in the joy of my heart, I was about to give it him with-

out reserve, restriction, the seven penitential psalms, or any bother whatever."

"Your witless, insolent persiflage, Mr. Patrick Conway, merely excites my pity and contempt. I can scarcely imagine it possible that you are a son of the pious lady whose eyes it was my sad privilege to close."

"Forgive me! forgive me!" exclaimed the young man, with instant revulsion of feeling. "I prate of I know not what. The only excuse is, that I am transported out of myself by the blessed certainty that my sister's happiness is assured—my friend, Robert Bernard's life redeemed from despair, by Lord Riverton's confession."

The medical gentleman in attendance upon Lord Riverton, looked in to say that his lordship, who was much better, wished to see me directly.

"Tell that artful young villain, Conway or Massey," said Lord Riverton, after an impatient, querulous reply to my inquiry as to how he felt—"Tell that artful young villain that if he will give me his word of honour not to betray the—the confidences he has filched from me (I do not mind his telling you—I may do so myself before long), I will write to Robert, giving him full permission to espouse Geraldine: of course furnishing my own explanation of what I formerly told him. Add that my late brother's *intention*

shall be carried out, and something more. Patrick Conway—Conway was his mother's maiden name—Patrick Conway must feel, upon reflection, that the future Lady Riverton would derive no honour from scandal attaching to my name."

The disclosures which Patrick Conway had elicited from Lord Riverton were that his brother, the second lord, a few weeks before his death had obtained a solemn pledge, sealed by an oath on the Gospels, from him, then the Honourable James Bernard, that the personals, about twenty thousand pounds, which were at the disposal of Lord Riverton, should be vested in trustees for Mrs. Massey, with remainder to her children, should she have any, and they survive her. The greed of gold induced the violation of that solemn pledge, though James, Lord Riverton, solemnly declared that he had always intended to bequeath quite the amount to Patrick and Geraldine. The other, and more important disclosure was, that finding his son Robert perversely bent upon marrying Geraldine Conway, his lordship had falsely declared that the young lady was his own natural daughter—his son Robert's sister. "I have never felt peace of mind since then," added his lordship, "and it is a vast relief to be freed, no matter much by what means, of the stifling weight of such a cruel falsehood."

Not many weeks had passed away when the

Honourable Robert Bernard and Geraldine, his wife, took up their abode at Riverton Hall, Lord Riverton having previously determined to reside permanently in London. There he sank into a mere club-man, passing his days and a large portion of his nights in reading newspapers, babbling of politics, and playing whist.

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

No. 7.—ONE CHRISTMAS EVE.

A WORTHY priest and very old friend was with me when the post brought the printer's proof of a portion of "The Scarsdale Family." This naturally led to a conversation on the propriety, or impropriety, of giving the experiences of a Catholic clergyman to the world. I was rejoiced to find that his opinion coincided with mine. Such a work, he remarked, could only be deserving of censure if it afforded the reader the slightest clue to the recognition of the real persons who, concealed by fictitious names and other masks, figured in its pages. "An offence so grave as that you will, of course, scrupulously avoid. I never heard," he added, "that the Reverend Mr. Price did wrong in publishing his 'Sick Calls,' and what, I

should like to know, are 'Sick Calls' but 'Revelations by a Catholic Priest' ? I am also pleased to hear that your little work is not to be in the slightest degree controversial. *Can* anything be more transparently absurd than an attempt to teach doctrine by invented, and for the most part clumsily-invented dialogues, in which, of course, the Protestant, or Papist writer takes excellent care to give himself—no difficult task—a for ever crushing victory. For my part, I so entirely approve the idea of the book, as you have conceived it, that if your space is not filled up, I shan't mind furnishing you with a curious story, that in its later scenes fell immediately within my own observation, and for the truth of all the material incidents of which, I think I can vouch."

I eagerly embraced my kind friend's offer, and upon receipt of the manuscript, despatched it without alteration to the printer. Here it is; the heading only, "One Christmas Eve," not a very felicitous one, I fear, being mine.

"This story, which in rash-hour I promised to write out from almost illegible notes, and fast-vanishing memories, properly dates from many years before I intimately knew one individual that plays his trifling, or important, part therein. The curtain rises upon Singapore; though, of course, it was not Singapore upon which the curtain really rose, nor was the name of two Englishmen, brothers, who

had not long since arrived there, Hargrave. To us, however, the locality shall be Singapore; the two brothers, Thomas and Benjamin Hargrave. (There can be no harm in giving the right baptismal names). They were Roman Catholics, after a fashion, and, which much more concerned them, merchants possessed of sufficient capital, with bright prospects before them. Their respective ages were thirty and twenty-six, Thomas being the oldest, far more in mental solidity and firmness than in years. They were the children of one father, but two mothers, all three of whom were dead. There was a third brother married and settled quietly in England—in the borough of Southwark, we will say, as a draper and haberdasher, in rather an extensive way.

“The business of Messrs. Hargrave Brothers prospered amazingly, chiefly, if not entirely, through the iron energy of Thomas Hargrave. Benjamin was a weak, facile creature, anxious for the enjoyment, far more than the creation of, wealth. (Putting his sickle into the harvest at seed-time, to use a blundering, but intelligible metaphor). To crown his follies he must needs fall in love, as the phrase goes, with a French creole’s bright eyes and face, and marry her, too, notwithstanding his brother’s warnings—shading into menaces—that her reputation was blown upon, and that she had not a sixpenny piece to bless herself with. They had one child, baptized Fanny, as a sort of propitiation to Thomas Hargrave, who

had known a Fanny in his youth, and in manhood dreamed oftener than he wished of the grave which held all of her that earth could claim. (You and I, Maurice, well know that the coldest, sternest fellows have places in their memory which unseen tears keep green.)

“Except through Christ’s redeeming grace, that which is innately evil cannot come to good. Thomas Hargrave, who loved his weak brother the more, perhaps, for his weakness (A contrast so flattering to his own self-love! It’s of no use denying it; the trail of the serpent is over all our purest affections),—Thomas Hargrave, I say, who loved his weak brother, and was himself proud—as whom shall I say?—well, proud as an Englishman of unstained reputation who has money in both pockets, and in the way of making an immense fortune—he, Thomas Hargrave, watched warily the vain woman in whose loose keeping the honour of her husband, Thomas Hargrave’s brother, was placed. A discovery took place. Thomas Hargrave, who did not patronize the orthodox duello, so sincerely cudgelled the man, threatening to repeat the dose *ad libitum*, that he, after recovery, deemed it prudent to leave the place. Poor Benjamin Hargrave died of shame, regret, and old rum, which, though never before an intemperate man, he took to desperately after revelation of his dishonour. Mrs. Benjamin Hargraves soon afterwards vanished from our supposed Singapore; and when, in her fifth

year, and strong enough to bear the voyage, Fanny was sent by uncle Thomas to his brother Charles, the draper in the Borough, with a handsome remittance, and an intimation that Fanny was his adopted, beloved daughter. As that gentleman rarely made a promise, and never broke one, it was considered safe as the Bank of England that Fanny would be a fabulously rich heiress. Uncle Thomas wrote that he could never have parted with Fanny had he not been warned by competent judges that a tropical climate would, inevitably, prove fatal to her.

"Leaving Uncle Thomas to his commercial speculations,—to his eager hunt, through foul, through fair, after riches,—an utterly demoralizing pursuit in itself, but in his case humanized, we may be sure, by recollections of Fanny, and her sweet odd sayings, which he delights to repeat to himself, as a sort of charm against the fever of worldly strife, that hangs, in gathering intensity upon the beatings of his heart,—I turn to Brother Charles the draper's domesticity, in the Borough.

"Brother Charles had always been what is called a lucky man: in one great instance quite undeservedly. Unless marriages are made in heaven, upon which point I, and you too, have uncomfortable doubts. He certainly married one of the best girls in the world. Looked at by the light of common experience, it was the rashest act of his life. He was struck by a sweet face at a theatre, followed

its owner home, found that she was a needy sempstress, and without enquiring whether or not the slime and slough of poverty had soiled her inner life, made Anne Riddet his wife !

“A fortunate marriage for him ! As soon as his girl-wife could feel her feet, as it were, after being so suddenly lifted up to such a bewildering height. (Had she not herself worked for people who humbly received *their* orders from the great shop ; and did not Mrs. Sims, who had cheated her out of a few pence in a bargain about shirt-making, well-nigh faint away, when ushered by an obsequious shopman into the presence of Mrs. Hargrave, who would in future conduct that particular department of the business ! Talk of that, for a time, prince of successful swindlers, who, having been an extra London policeman, perjured himself into the throne of France !—I don’t think this last sentence is good English, by the way. Why, the change, the difference, was comparatively nothing.)

“I am becoming parenthetical as Gladstone, without the excuse of his eloquence ; and I think, my dear Maurice, it would be wiser to burn than to send this manuscript to the printer’s. That, however, is your affair.

“I was about saying, or writing, before I went off at a tangent, that as soon as Mrs. Charles Hargrave felt her feet, she, influenced by gratitude to her husband, and inspired by her own strong common-sense, quietly

effected a great reform in the management of the business ; and so successful was she, that there was every prospect that their three sons, Charles, Thomas and Benjamin, would be amply provided for.

The arrival of Fanny was a veritable godsend to the boys. They longed, with dim, confused consciousness, for some object upon which to lavish the love with which God's breath, in a greater or less degree, inspires us all. Fanny became their idol. They would often be off at early dawn, each rising and departing stealthily, to Covent Garden, or other market, in quest of choicest, earliest strawberries, cherries, raspberries ; and wasn't he pleased who got back first and awakened Fanny by placing the strawberry, raspberry or cherry between her lips : then sunned himself in the smile of her sweet blue eyes ! Excuse this garrulous gossip ; I knew Fanny and the boys so well.

"Thanks chiefly to his admirable wife, there could scarcely be a more fortunately-circumstanced man than Charles Hargrave. Yes, but the devil looks now with as fiendish a malignity at an Eden in the Borough-road, as he did at the inmates of the primeval garden. There can, I suppose, be no doubt of that ; and I hope it's not controversy to say so." Business, in fact, went too well with the prosperous draper and haberdasher. The balance at the banker's was a highly-respectable and increasing one. Tho

name of Charles Hargrave written across a bill of exchange, was considered to be equivalent, interest deducted, to a promise to pay by the Governor and Company of the Bank of England.

"This very satisfactory state of affairs would, there is little doubt, have continued till Charles Hargrave had been respectfully gathered to his fathers, but for one unhappy folly, sin—call it what you will—that beset him; and which, according to his wont, the Father of Evil aroused into destructive activity. (Does not *he* know his own, detect its presence through the stiffest *Gros de Naples*,—the most unquestionable broad-cloth,—and, with unerring skill, give it scope and opportunity?) The germ of that folly, sin, crime, with Charles Hargrave, was an absolute faith in his own skill in horse-flesh; his knowledge of the qualities and capacities of horses. In fact, he had been right in respect of several races,—won a heap of money upon "Running Rein,"—or at least, in connection with "Running Rein," for I am not posted up in sporting matters. Be the exact fact as it may, his gains on the "Running Rein" race thoroughly demoralized him. From that time he was no longer a draper and haberdasher, but a betting-book maker. The natural results ensued—slowly, but surely; and only by being pitched out of a gig when returning from Epsom in a mad drunken condition,—by which lucky accident his neck was broken,—was Charles Hargrave saved from

making a disgraceful appearance in the Bankruptcy Court.

“To think that Fanny—sweet, sympathizing Fanny—(whom eighteen summers had ripened into the original of the portrait in my study, which you *will* always insist is one of Raffaele’s Madonnas, only absurdly young)—to think that sweet, sympathizing Fanny, who loved Mrs. Charles Hargrave with such a *gushing* love, who was so attached to, so proud of her brothers, as she would have her cousins to be, (Thomas and Charles only of late; Benjamin, foolish lad! was terribly vexed that Fanny had ceased to say to him, “Now, Ben, brother mine, come for a walk;”)—to think, I say, that Fanny—(I am parenthesizing again with a vengeance! You remember that old Square-toes at Stonyhurst used to say I should never be able to compose an intelligible sermon if I did not break myself of that unfortunate habit.) To think, I once more say, that Fanny, sweet, sympathizing Fanny, should, when all was gone to wreck,—the stock sold off, the house to be let, and the family turned into the street within a month at farthest—suddenly become gayer, merrier, than ever! Nay, the utter heartlessness of the hussy, and the priest (myself) who took tea with the disconsolate family that evening—to laugh as they did till their sides shook again, when a lawyer’s clerk gave the widow formal notice, that unless eight hundred pounds were forthcoming within three months, Springfield Villa, near Wood-

ford, in the Epping Forest, would be sold, by order of the mortgagees. Springfield Villa—every tree, shrub, flower, about which, were household treasures!

“‘Eight hundred pounds!’ exclaimed Fanny, as distinctly as her cruel, mocking mirth permitted,—‘why, good gracious, the man must suppose we are the Bank of England! I am not clever in such matters, to be sure, but it strikes me that there can’t be so much money in the country!’ And didn’t she laugh again—(a kind of bubbling honey—I use queer similitudes—was Fanny’s laugh. I once told her, the Aunt present, of course, that if I was only thirty years younger, and not a priest, I might be tempted, but for the recollection that it was Eve who lost Adam his paradise, to make her Mrs. ——.) Didn’t Fanny, I was saying, laugh—(I don’t mean at my post-facto hypothetical offer of marriage, but at her smart speech about eight hundred pounds and the Bank of England),—and keep on laughing too, till tears welled up into the widow’s eyes. Then the laughing ceased at once, and Fanny hastily extracting a letter from her bosom, asked me to read it aloud.

“ ‘*Singapore*,—

“ ‘MY BELOVED FANNY,—

“ ‘I have but this moment received your letter, and the mail leaves in less than half an hour. I was deeply grieved to hear of poor Charles’s death, and if I could blame you for anything, it would be for not

having before informed me of the disastrous state of his affairs. Bid the widow take comfort as far as money-matters are concerned. By next mail I will send bills on the Bank of England for three thousand pounds, payable to her order. I shall send that amount because I fear you may have understated her liabilities. My health not being so good as it was, I am winding-up, and hope, with the blessing of God, to see dear old England again in less than six months after you receive this letter.

“ ‘Your most affectionate Uncle,

“ ‘THOMAS HARGRAVE.

“ ‘P.S.—If there is any immediate pressure, show this letter to Messrs. W——, Mincing Lane, who will, upon my responsibility, advance Mrs. Charles Hargrave any sum she may require.’

“Wasn’t there crying, weeping, laughing, after I had read that letter! Didn’t Fanny kiss the widow as if she was bent upon eating her up! And didn’t she—not, of course, at all in that extravagant way—but didn’t she kiss Thomas, and Charles, and ME. (It’s a fact, as I’m alive; and Dr. Cumming may write a book about it, for what I care. He may be able to prove that it was a sign and symptom of the Great Tribulation coming upon the earth. I can, however, solemnly declare I did not think so at the time,—far from it.) In fact, the only person present whom Fanny did *not* kiss, was Benjamin; and very sulky

and savage was he, at being made such an aggravating exception. Those were his *salad* days.

“Unskilled narrator that I am, it is, I find, necessary to go back some dozen years, or the story will be unintelligible. A long way back;—and see, now that we have retraced our steps so far, what a miserable, dirty place we have arrived at—Wapping, namely, on a dark, sleeky, December night. A foreign vessel has arrived, and amongst the few passengers she lands is a woman, so closely muffled up, so chary of her words, that the chambermaid who lights her to her chamber can only report that she believes her to be a foreigner, with about as bright a pair of black eyes as she ever clapped her own upon.

“The next day this woman found me out, and I heard her sad story. You and I know, though many do not, that as long ago as 1822 a convent of the sisterhood of Mercy was established in London. With my sanction, and upon my recommendation, as soon as the ordeal of time had proved the sincerity of her contrition, Sister Agnes, as we may call her, was enrolled in the lists of that holy sisterhood. About a year afterwards, Fanny sickened with scarlet fever, or scarlatina; and although she quickly recovered from that malady, a secondary disorder, resembling dropsy, which ensued, caused great anxiety, and necessitated vigilant and skilful nursing. My own opinion was, that the child would die. Mrs. Charles Hargrave was herself in an ailing state; and acting,

as I cannot but think, in a spirit of Christian charity, I advised that the services of one of the Sisters of Mercy should be secured. That advice was at once agreed to, and without delay I obtained an interview with the mother-superior. She was a mild, gracious woman, (which, by the way, all mother-superiors are not,) and consented, without much demur, to permit Sister Agnes and Sister Martha, (the statutes of the order peremptorily requiring, except under very especial circumstances, that the sisterhood should act in couples,) to visit and nurse the suffering child. Sister Agnes swooned with joy. She was, as the reader has doubtless already divined, Fanny's sinful, repentant mother. A pledge was required that she should, under no circumstances whatever, reveal her relationship to the child.

"That pledge was faithfully kept; yet Fanny, when, in after years, ill, or indisposed, would never—(Fanny was a little spoiled, I must tell you)—would never be nursed or tended, save by her aunt or Sister Agnes. No doubt a mother's tenderness would make itself felt in a thousand ways. Ever in the after time, when Sister Agnes was out on an errand of mercy, she would, if possible, contrive to pass the house where dwelt her child—(It was to breathe the air she breathed that the unhappy woman came to England);—and I myself, many times, saw the poor creature wrench herself away, as it were, with sobs of unutterable agony, from the

charmed spot. She had grievously sinned, but the expiation was terrible.

"All the foregoing, since the reading of Uncle Thomas's brief note, the intelligent reader need not be told is one long parenthesis, which, if I possessed constructive skill in narration, would have been avoided. I now go back to the delicious evening, when we suddenly found ourselves in confident expectation of three thousand pounds, and actual presence of love, kisses, tears, and smiles; Benjamin Hargrave being the only unenchanted or disenchanted person there.

"He grew worse and worse, did Benjamin, as the evening wore on, and we canvassed various schemes for setting Thomas and Charles up in business (uncle Thomas aiding), whilst not one word respecting the future of Benjamin passed our lips. In that no one appeared to take the slightest interest. Seeing this, he himself announced with great heat that he would go for a soldier; a declaration which set Fanny laughing till the house rang again. "You silly boy!" said his mother, with her usual pleasant smile, as she glanced from him to Fanny. The words or the glance turned Benjamin's face to the colour of the coat he had threatened to assume; but which light was not, it seemed to me, expressive of military or of martial ardour. Benjamin was certainly the handsomest of the three brothers, but not for that—not

chiefly for that—was he his mother's and Fanny's favourite. He was gentle as Mercy—tender and trustful as Infancy and Faith. Brave, too, as a lion!

“The three thousand pounds arrived in due course, together with a kind letter from Uncle Thomas, written, it saddened us to observe, with a feeble, trembling hand. His health, he said, was rapidly failing, and he intended coming *home* without any avoidable delay. By the same mail he had transmitted the bulk of his wealth to England for investment in consols. He had also forwarded his will to Mr. Woodruffe, Solicitor, New Square, Lincoln's Inn. Dear Fanny was sole heiress.

“The Hargraves left London for their pretty place near Woodford, not far from Snaresbrook; and on the 12th of the following December I received a note from Mrs. Hargrave, requesting to see me, and briefly stating that Mr. Thomas Hargrave had arrived two days previously, that is, on the 10th. The 10th of December is now one of the devil's days in my private calendar, but it could not then have been for that reason Mrs. Hargrave's note excited an uncomfortable feeling. Why hadn't she written Uncle Thomas, instead of Mr. Thomas Hargrave? which was wrong in itself. He being the head of the family was of course Mr. Hargrave. The baptismal Thomas was out of place.

"I was undefinably annoyed, but how much more so when I was personally introduced to Mr. Hargrave. How utterly different was he from the Uncle Thomas which my imagination had pictured! Fanny too—all the Hargraves were dreadfully disappointed. Uncle Thomas was not at all ill. The sea-voyage, as he said, had worked a miracle in regard to his health. A fine, portly gentleman, to be sure, very polite, very well-informed, but hard, cold as stone. I didn't like him at all.

"And how much less did I like him when Mrs. Charles Hargrave informed me, with tearful emotion, that he had brought a youthful *protégé* with him, one Henry Somers, whose father, not very long since deceased, had been his, Mr. Hargrave's, managing clerk for many years; and that Uncle Thomas insisted upon Fanny's acceptance of Henry Somers for her husband. The young gentleman had fallen in love with her at first sight; and knowing his fine qualities, and what an admirable husband he would make, he, Mr. Hargrave, was fully determined that Fanny should be Mrs. Somers. If she refused, he would revoke the will which had been forwarded to Mr. Woodruffe. More than that, Uncle Thomas, finding that Fanny would not listen to his proposition, bluntly told Mrs. Hargrave that the three thousand pounds he had sent her was a loan; and that he should immediately take proceedings to recoup himself, so far as the place at Woodford would

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recoup him, if he were thwarted in respect of the marriage he had set his heart upon.

"Here was a pretty business! Fanny and Benjamin were distracted, Mrs. Hargrave piteously distressed; but what, after all, was to be done? You might as well have appealed to the locks and bolts of a dungeon-door, begging them to slip back and let you quietly out, as seek to turn Mr. Hargrave from his purpose. He was inexorable, peremptory. Fanny should be the wife of Henry Somers, and that, too, without delay, or a beggar;—beggary rendered more afflictive by the consciousness that her obstinacy had made paupers of her aunt and cousins.

"Now, Henry Somers was far from being a repulsive, unpresentable person. He was, in fact, a well-educated, good-looking, well-mannered young man, and I did not doubt was deeply smitten with Fanny. What advice, therefore, could I give under such circumstances, except to comply with the stern uncle's behest? I did so, and, after an infinity of tears and trouble, it was decided that the marriage should take place on Christmas Day. No longer delay than that would absolute Mr. Hargrave permit.

"The conflict in Fanny's mind between duty and inclination, aggravated by the sight of poor Benjamin's silent, utter misery, threw her on a bed of sickness. It then occurred to me that not only was it right to inform Sister Agnes of all the circum-

stances, but that it would be wise to obtain her attendance upon the suffering girl, whom she might strengthen and console, possessing, as she did, great influence with her. Sister Agnes was terribly afflicted by the intelligence, and could not at all comprehend how so just, so good a man as Mr. Hargrave could act so cruel a part. She, however, finally agreed with me that it was Fanny's duty to yield obedience; and, with the Mother Superior's willing assent, she set off for Springfield Villa, alone. One condition Sister Agnes insisted upon was, that she should not see Mr. Hargrave. He, no doubt, believed her to be dead, and she was desirous he should continue in that belief. The discovery that her sinful mother still lived would not, she feared, dispose him to act with more kindness towards Fanny—the reverse rather. I agreed with her, and explained that there was no danger of Mr. Hargrave seeing her, as he and Henry Somers had taken up their quarters at the Union Hotel, Cockspur Street, and it had been agreed should not revisit Springfield Villa till Christmas Eve, when the settlements would be ready for signature. This part of the contract had been insisted upon by the reluctant bride, and readily assented to by Mr. Hargrave, who, though he would not be turned from his purpose by his niece's distress, had a strong aversion to witness it. Henry Somers had, of course, no say in the matter.

“After a few days, I heard from Sister Agnes that

Fanny was much better in bodily health, but far as ever from being reconciled to the marriage, which would, nevertheless, take place on the day named, now immediately at hand. Sister Agnes would leave Springfield Villa early on Christmas Eve; and it was Fanny's request, joined in by her broken-hearted mother, that I would be present when the settlements were to be signed, and make one last effort to dissuade her uncle from his tyrant purpose. I knew there was not the faintest hope that he would do so. I, however, agreed to be present, and make the attempt.

"I was early at Springfield Villa, and found the family in a state of yet greater distress and confusion than I had anticipated. Benjamin Hargrave had been foolishly permitted to take final farewell of Fanny. A terrible scene took place, the result of which was, that he left the house in a state almost of frenzy, and that she fell into a succession of fainting fits, rendering it impossible for Sister Agnes to leave her. The sweet child's anguish of mind and growing aversion to the marriage caused both me and her deeply-grieving mother to mentally review the whole matter, and ask ourselves if we were justified in urging her to consummate so cruel, if not sinful, an act of self-sacrifice.

"The upshot was, that I agreed to make another appeal to the generosity, the manliness, of the ogre

of an uncle, and his precious *protégé*. Sister Agnes would remain concealed in Fanny's bed-room to hear the result.

"About noon, Mr. Hargrave and Henry Somers arrived, accompanied by Mr. Woodruffe, solicitor, and his clerk. Hargrave was looking his sternest; nevertheless, I demanded a private conference, which he, with grim reluctance, acceded to; and we passed into an adjoining apartment, where Fanny, weeping and trembling, awaited us, with her equally-agitated aunt. The man was deaf as stone to all I could urge, to his niece's choking grief—her piteous prayers, as she knelt at his feet for mercy.

"‘Make your choice,’ he angrily exclaimed, ‘between marriage with Henry Somers, and beggary for yourself, and your aunt, and cousins. Nothing

I was facing him, with my back towards the door of the apartment. There was a light step behind me, and at the same instant of time he ceased to speak, the colour in his face changed to a chalky whiteness, and his eyes glared with sudden terror, as if a gorgon confronted him. Turning round, I saw that Sister Agnes had entered the room, and was attentively regarding the astounded caitiff.

"‘I thought I knew that voice,’ said she. ‘This man is not Mr. Hargrave. He was that gentleman’s confidential clerk. His name is Somers.’

"As she spoke, the impostor so far recovered the use

of his faculties as to bolt, with a fierce curse, out of the room, in the wild hope of effecting his escape. That, however, he did not succeed in doing. I ran after, shouting 'stop, thief!' with all my power of voice, and Mr. Woodruffe, aided by his clerk, caught my gentleman in an outer passage. His son and co-conspirator was also easily secured.

"The two scoundrels were cowed into making the fullest confession of their guilt. Mr. Hargrave died a few days only before he proposed to embark for England, having previously confided his intentions and wishes to Somers, to whose care he also entrusted his private correspondence and most important papers. The idea of personating the deceased was conceived during the passage home; the calculation being, that Henry Somers once married to the heiress, the matter would be hushed up, and the successful conspirators permitted to enjoy the fruits of their audacious villany.

"Mr. Woodruffe would not, at first, hear of allowing the fellows to go at large. It was, however, ultimately agreed, that upon delivering up every document of importance, and subscribing a full admission of their guilt, they should be left to the chastisement—a bitter one, we may be sure, which the failure of their plot could not fail to inflict.

"When the tumult of joyous gratulations had to some extent subsided, I sought out Fanny. Gently opening the door of an apartment from which came the sound of sobbing voices, I saw her embraced in

her mother's arms. In the sudden outburst of her joy at Fanny's deliverance, and her own share in bringing it about, Sister Agnes had made herself known to her child. Such a scene was sacred from intrusion, and I noiselessly withdrew, unobserved.

"Meanwhile, Thomas and Charles sped off to find, and quickly found, their brother Benjamin. I awoke the next morning with a slight headache; and no wonder, for a happier, noisier party never, I am sure, met together, even on a Christmas Eve."

Revelations of a Catholic Priest.

No. 8.—MARGERIE LAWSON.

I WAS about twenty-eight years old,—at which period of life a man is generally supposed to have cut his wisdom-teeth, supposing his head to have been originally screwed on right,—when I got, and allowed others to get me, into a pretty scrape ; or rather a succession of scrapes.

I occupied at that time a first floor in Mount Street, Grosvenor Square. My landlord's name was Adam Black. He was a sturdy Presbyterian, and though an Englishman himself,—that is, he was born in London,—was wonderfully proud of the Highland or Lowland blood—I forget which—that flowed in his veins. He had some scruples of conscience about letting his first floor to a Popish priest, but finally

reconciled himself to the desecration, by adding ten per cent. to the rental,—which, I have no doubt, he held to be a righteous spoiling of the Amalekites. A very decent man, nevertheless, was Adam Black, and played backgammon uncommonly well. This was a bond of friendship between us. Another inducement not merely to tolerate, but look with compassionate benignity upon his lodger, was, that a relative had left me a really handsome solid silver breakfast and tea service, worth, perhaps, two hundred pounds. There could be no anxiety anent payment of rent by the most papistical individual,—the Man of Sin, himself,—who possessed such a security as that. Besides, I was frequently absent from London, and the silver set at such times was at Mrs. Black's command. That, to a lady of her somewhat numerous acquaintance, was a consideration.

The point of popish practice to which Adam Black was most inveterately hostile was the celibacy of the clergy. I explained that clerical celibacy was merely a disciplinary rule of the Church, not a point of doctrine. Mr. Black thereupon observed, that he had been told so before; and he had, moreover, heard from reliable authority, that great numbers of Catholic priests in England, (how it might be in Popish countries, where they might come under the lash of the law, he could not say,) that great numbers of Catholic priests in England were privately married, for which he highly commended them. One might as

well have argued with a mile-stone, as attempt to convince Adam Black against his will; and as the topic did not interest me, I laughed it lightly off. This, I afterwards knew, he took to be implied acquiescence in his monstrous assertion.

The winter that year was a wretchedly cold, alesty, rainy one. "The rain, it raineth every day!" I exclaimed tartly, aloud, quoting the Fool in "Lear," as I found myself caught in a pelting shower, whilst at a considerable distance from my lodgings. I had no umbrella, and no hack coach or cab was to be seen. My exclamation had, however, caught the ear of a young woman, just before me, who was provided with an umbrella of capacious dimensions. Turning round, she looked abruptly in my face, as I did in hers. The recognition was instantaneous and mutual. "The Reverend Morton Maurice!" cried she. "Margery Lawson!" exclaimed I. Margery Lawson extended her hand in a friendly manner; I could not, of course, refuse to clasp it. A few old-acquaintanceship remarks passed, and before I could decide upon the propriety or impropriety of the thing, I found myself under the large umbrella, walking arm-in-arm with Margery Lawson, whose way home, I found, was through Mount Street, Grosvenor Square. Now there can be nothing very objectionable in the acceptance, even by a priest, of the shelter of an umbrella, and the arm of a young country-woman, whom he had not seen for years, in a drenching storm of

rain, and in broad daylight. For all that, I started like a guilty thing, and coloured to the hue of fire, upon encountering the sardonic smile of Adam Black, who was standing for shelter within a porch by which we had to pass. At that particular moment, too, Margery Lawson, who was a very good-looking girl, was laughing and blushing at some jocular remark I made concerning old times. My jocularities were instantly at an end, and I hastened along at a very ungallant pace, not uttering another syllable till I reached Adam Black's door. "Oh, you live here," said the young woman. I gruffly answered that I did, said I was obliged for the shelter of her umbrella, bade her good-bye, and darted into the house.

I must here explain who Margery Lawson was, and the origin and extent of my acquaintance with her. She was the daughter of a small farmer, whose place was about a mile distant from Stonyhurst. When I first saw her, she was a pretty, vain coquette, though not more than sixteen years old. My age was seventeen. I had sometimes, when out for a stroll, called at her father's for a glass of milk or ale, upon which occasions we had a little lively chat together. I also once went somewhat out of my way to open a gate for her; and meeting her upon another occasion escorted her through a field, she being, or affecting to be, in fear of a vicious bull there, though the animal seemed to be a quiet bull enough. These boyish gallantries, innocent and trifling as they were, gave rise to some

gossiping remarks, which, being destined for the Church, it were better that I should afford no grounds for, and I thenceforth carefully shunned Margery Lawson. Not very long afterwards, her father was sold up for rent, and they left the neighbourhood. Since then I had not seen or heard of her, till we chanced to meet, as I have described, in Piccadilly.

A cup of tea sufficed to calm the momentary irritation excited by the incident, and even the facetious inuendoes which Adam Black indulged in during our game at backgammon did not in the least revive it. It was not likely I should hear any more of Margery Lawson.

I was very much mistaken. The very next evening I found her quietly seated in my room, her bonnet and shawl off, and evidently intending to oblige me with her company to tea, which was being got ready in gala-day style by Mrs. Black, who had set out the silver set to the very best advantage, and was bustling about with a smiling officiousness most provoking. The assurance of the impudent hussy—Margery Lawson, not Mrs. Black—staggered, confounded me; and before I could find my tongue, she had me by the hand, and was saying, with her sweetest smile, "I have such lots of things to tell you, Morton, about the old place. I received a letter from an acquaintance of yours and mine only this morning."

Morton, too! Was the woman mad?

"Permit me to say, Miss Lawson——"

"Miss Lawson, indeed!" she interrupted.—(Mrs. Black came in at the same moment, with the silver urn, which she placed upon the table, and instantly left the room.)—"Miss Lawson, indeed! Bless me, how distant we are! Why not Margery?"

"Permit me to say, Miss Lawson," I angrily resumed, "that this is a most unwarrantable intrusion."

"Intrusion! Why, surely, you do not begrudge a cup of tea to an old acquaintance?"

"It's not that, but——"

"Well, well, never mind. Don't be cross, and I won't intrude again. You can't, I am sure, be so churlish as to refuse me a cup of tea, now I *am* here."

In short, except by sending for a policeman, or turning her forcibly out of the room myself, there was no getting rid of her; so I e'en resigned myself to the infliction,—which I would take excellent care should not be repeated. I should, however, have left her to take tea by herself, but that I did not like her marked appreciation of my plate.

"May my brother call?" she asked. "He would much like to see you."

"I never had the honour of your brother's acquaintance, and I must beg to decline making it. Besides, I leave in a few days for Salisbury, and shall be at least three months absent."

At last Margery Lawson was obliging enough to go away, and a few minutes afterwards Mrs. Black

came in to clear away the things, a duty usually performed by the servant.

"I shall leave for the country in a few days," I remarked; "and shall be away for a considerable time."

"Yes, for three months. So the lady told me. I am sure I wish you may have pleasanter weather than it's likely to be. The country is very desolate in winter. But there, you won't mind that," she added, with a good-humoured smile, which rather surprised me, as I thought she might be vexed at the shortness of the notice. Her words did not, however, make any distinct impression upon my mind, which was unpleasantly pre-occupied by a growing conviction, all the circumstances being closely looked at, that Margery Lawson must have fallen into the ever-yawning and widening abyss of vice, into which comeliness and vanity thrust yearly so many thousand girls of the humbler classes. It might be that my suspicions wronged her. Her dress, I remembered, was of good quality, but plainly fashioned; and certainly the colour of her cheeks owed nothing to the rouge-pot. Still, I would have given something not to have accepted her arm and umbrella in Piccadilly, and entertained her at tea at my lodgings.

Reverting, before Mrs. Black had cleared away, to my intention of leaving London, for how long I could hardly say, I observed that I would pack up the silver things and leave them in her care. If my stay at

Salisbury should be prolonged, I would advise her husband, by letter, how and to what address the chest should be forwarded. Mrs. Black perfectly understood; and with another peculiar smile remarked, that of course I should send for the plate when I was settled, and had time to remember such things. An oddly-talking woman, it struck me, was Mrs. Black, though I had not observed any peculiarity of the sort before.

I booked myself in a day coach for Salisbury, and returned to sleep for the last time at Mount Street. Adam Black and I played a few farewell games of backgammon, and he bade me good night, with a kind of solemnity. "I wish you every happiness, sir; and that you are acting morally right, must be the opinion of all unprejudiced men."

What the mischief could the man mean? Surely that abominable Margery Lawson had not put it into his or his wife's head that I was leaving London for the purpose of contracting a clandestine marriage with her! It really looked like it. The notion was so comically absurd, that it threw me into a fit of laughter, which burst of hilarity was suddenly checked, as my eye lit upon a glove, a violet-coloured lady's glove, lying on the carpet. I was perfectly sure the glove was Margery Lawson's, and that it could not have been dropped during her former visit; the room being, of course, swept every day. The impudent baggage had been there, no doubt, during my

afternoon absence, and likely enough had a gossip with Mrs. Black, who had more than once slyly hinted her high appreciation of the "lady." My hand was on the bell-rope, but after a moment's thought I forbore to ring. *Cui bono?* It was best, most prudent, to take no notice.

My business at Salisbury, more correctly at a grand mansion in the vicinity of Salisbury, was to further, and to a certain extent superintend the erection of a chapel, a site for which had been purchased by a recent lady convert, and meanwhile celebrate mass in her house, for which the bishop's licence had been obtained.

She was a most amiable, bountiful person, and all the more zealous in religious matters, that life with her, though she was still in the mature morning thereof, was waning fast. Much faster, it proved, than was anticipated. Five weeks after my arrival she breathed her last. A large jointure, which died with her, was her only wealth; she had saved nothing: and as her successor in the mansion was a sound Anglican, I had no choice but to adjourn the building of the chapel to a more propitious period, and decamp.

I wrote a few lines to Adam Black, briefly stating that I should be in London the next day but one, and if my old lodging was still vacant I should be glad if he would have a fire lighted and tea ready

by seven o'clock in the evening. It was and is the custom of Catholic priests to use a distinctive seal, each priest having one peculiar to himself. I had not had occasion to use mine since I left London, and when looking for it to seal the note to Adam Black, could not find it. I must have left it at the Black's; though it was odd that the morocco case, in which it was kept with three or four trifles in jewellery, was safe enough in my desk. Possibly, however, I might have left it on a table or the mantel-piece: I hoped so, as it was of considerable value.

My lodgings in Mount Street had not been let; and I found a blazing fire, tea ready set, and a hearty welcome. As soon as the inner man was renovated, and I felt thoroughly warm through, the weather without being terrible, I rang the bell, and sent Mr. Black word that I should like a game at back-gammon. We played, be it understood, upon credit, at the rate of a farthing a game, and no account being kept, a settlement could never be come to. I mention this, lest it should be said that gambling is a favourite pastime with Romish priests.

Mr. Black was in high good-humour, which was complimentary; but more than ever persisted in boring me during the pauses of the game with eulogia upon the excellence of marriage, especially for clergymen.

"I am not, as you know, sir," he added, confidentially, "one to babble indiscreetly, especially under the peculiar circumstances, but I *may* say that I feel confident you will now admit that Saint Paul was right when he wrote that it was better to marry than " —

"We won't talk of St. Paul just now," I interrupted. "It's your turn to throw. By the bye, here are the keys of the plate-chest. Mrs. Black will be wanting them to-morrow."

"Oh, ay, to be sure. I am a little surprized, though. I had stepped out for a few minutes when the luggage was brought in."

"What has the luggage to do with it? Well-remembered! Have you or Mrs. Black found my sealing?"

"The priest-seal?"

"Yes, I have no other."

"You suppose you have dropped it in the passage or on the stairs?"

"No, no, I did not take it with me. It must be here somewhere. The letter you received yesterday was sealed with the end of a pencil-case. You must have noticed that."

"I did, sir. But the letter you sent from Salisbury two days after you arrived there was stamped with the priest-seal, I'll take my oath."

"What are you talking about? I have written you but one letter; that which you received yesterday."

“What ’s that you say ?” exclaimed Adam Black, jumping up from his chair, and turning very pale ; “What ’s that you say ? Do you mean to deny that ‘a certain person,’ these were the very words, your bride, of course, this was easily understood, your bride, who called here an hour after you left, and remarked, which was natural, that she should like to have the silver things and would get you to write for them, and whom I and Mrs. Black accompanied to the Salisbury night coach that very evening ? that in compliance ‘I say,’ with ‘a certain person’s’ wish, the plate-chest was to be forwarded to you at once, and that an esteemed friend of yours, Mr. Bertie, who was about to join you at Salisbury, would call, shortly after I received your letter, at Mount Street for the same and give me a receipt which you had sent him by same post ? and didn’t your esteemed friend, Mr. Bertie, come and take away the plate-chest, leaving us the receipt ? and didn’t I hurry off to the silversmith in Oxford Street, who had the pint-mug, of which the handle was damaged, to repair, and get it for your esteemed friend, paying him, the silversmith, eleven shillings and sixpence for the same, for which I have his bill and receipt ? and didn’t I myself place the chest in the cab which your esteemed friend had in waiting ? Do you mean to say I’ve been a dreaming all that ? Come now.”

This was delivered almost in a breath, with intense volubility ; a horrifying suspicion of the truth gather-

ing force in Black's mind, I could see, as it proceeded.

"My dear sir," said I, with as much calmness as I could command, "you have been deceived, swindled. I have no wife, never thought of having one; never wrote you a letter authorizing the delivery of the plate-chest to Mr. Bertie, whose name I have never before heard."

Sudden and extreme emotion sometimes manifests itself in the oddest way. Upon that occasion Adam Black, feeling that he had been thoroughly done, and believing that he, an inordinate grasper after money, was legally liable for the loss, whirled round and round as if seized by vertigo, gesticulating wildly and stamping, screaming, shouting, "Devils! Thieves! Robbers! Mrs. Black! We are swindled, robbed, ruined!" till the poor woman, astounded at the uproar, came up and looked timidly in at the door.

"Come in, woman," screamed Black. "Did not that artful Jezebel tell you that the Reverend Mr. Maurice was going to marry her according to Saint Paul, and that she would insist upon his making her a present of the plate? answer me that!"

"Miss Lawson, that was, if you mean her, as I suppose, you do," replied Mrs. Black, with recovering spirit, "Miss Lawson that was, if you mean her, told me in the strictest confidence that the Reverend gentleman was going to marry her at Salisbury, but I was on no account to hint a suspicion of what

was going to his Reverence, who had even forbidden her to visit him lest any intention of their project should get abroad. Of course, they *are* married, and right too, I say."

"Married be ———," shouted Adam Black, breaking through all bounds in the extremity of fury and dismay. "You are just a fool, an idiot; she a swindler, forger! She stole the priest's seal, and has done us out of the plate! Two hundred pounds! O Lord!" And down he dropped into a chair, overcome and almost foaming at the mouth with mortification and rage.

The loss was a grievous one, not merely or chiefly in money value, though that to me in my circumstances was a cruel one, but because the costly gift was hallowed to me by mournful memories of the giver. Still, raving and gnashing of teeth would do nothing towards recovering the property. Holding myself, which I could not help doing, as chiefly to blame in the matter, for permitting the woman to thrust her society for one moment upon me, I could not in conscience hold Adam Black responsible for the loss, if he were legally so, which I doubted. I hinted as much to him, the effect of which was immediately and marvellously sedative; and at my suggestion he forthwith started off to place one or more of the famous Bow-Street runners of that period in possession of the facts.

Upon his return, Adam Black reported that the "runners" he had spoken with gave no hope of recovering the stolen property, nor even of apprehending the thieves, whose persons, as described by Black, were unknown to the officers. The plate had, no doubt, been sold and melted down long since. Nevertheless, a detailed description of the articles, as well as printed portraits of Margery Lawson and Mr. Bertie—after Adam Black—would be published in the next number of the *Hue and Cry*. Nothing more could be done, unless some lucky chance (likely enough by means of the seal-ring, which might not have been broken and melted up) should furnish a clue to the discovery of the depredators.

The reasoning of the officers was conclusive; yet, recalling to mind that my having casually and carelessly remarked, in reply to some expression by Margery Lawson, that the plate was valued by me at ten times its intrinsic worth, might have suggested to the wily woman that it would be well to wait for a time before melting down the articles, in the expectation that finding their recovery hopeless by other means I might, by public advertisement, offer the full value for them, and pledge myself, upon obtaining them upon those terms, not to prosecute the plunderers.

I finally determined to do so, wording the advertisement, under advice, in such a manner, that whilst my good faith would not be doubted by the robbers,

I should not render myself liable to a prosecution for compromising felony.

A note, written in a feeble, trembling hand, and a contrite broken spirit, reached me by post on the fifth day after the advertisement appeared, from Margery Lawson. The poor wretch was dying, miserably. Abscess on the brain, caused by a terrific blow, inflicted by her brutal husband, was swiftly developing itself, and in a very short time, a few days probably, she should be in her grave. The Lord, she wrote, had made haste to smite her for her wickedness. She had manifold sins to repent of. Having heard my advertisement read, and feeling well assured that I would keep my word, she had ventured to put me in the way of recovering the property I so greatly valued. Not one of the articles had been broken up or damaged, though a large sum of money had been obtained upon them. They were in one person's possession, and if I myself would be at No. 8, Triangle, Hackney Road, a little before dark the next evening, she would furnish me with all the information necessary to obtain my property; of course on the advertised terms.

I at once determined to accept the woman's offer. The locality indicated was, I knew, a very respectable one; I was to be there before dark. I need not, therefore, apprehend personal danger to myself.

No. 8, Triangle, Hackney, was a highly respectable-

looking house ; the small garden in front was trimly kept, and blinds, closely drawn down, were fitted to every window. I knocked without hesitation, and was admitted by a neatly-clad elderly woman, in whose face honest simplicity was written with a very legible hand. She had evidently expected me, at once led the way up the well-carpeted stairs, pushed open a bedroom door, announced in a hushed voice to the patient in bed, "that the gentleman was come," and retired.

The room was darkened, and the heavy curtains of the bed which faced the windows, were drawn ; but there was sufficient light to show me that I was in the presence of Margery Lawson (she had not mentioned her husband's name in the note). Her head was bandaged ; her face cadaverously white, and she was evidently suffering acutely.

I shall omit all that passed at the distressing interview, except that which relates to the business which brought me there. The chest of plate was to be there on the next evening, about the same hour, earlier if I wished it, and would be delivered up to me upon payment of two hundred pounds. I was again obliged to promise, upon my honour as a gentleman, that I would act strictly in accordance with the promise made in the advertisement. She and her husband had lodged there, she incidentally remarked, for a considerable time, and just then the family were out of town for a few days, which was fortunate.

The woman who let me in was left in charge of the house, and, of course, no hint of my business there must be given her. The articles would be counted out, in my presence, directly the money was paid; her husband would then go for a hackney-coach,—I was not to bring one with me,—and the chest would be taken out and placed in it. This all seemed straightforward enough. Still a vague suspicion prompted me to remark that I should like to bring a friend with me.

“Oh, no; that will never do; he may afterwards betray us: of little consequence that to me. To one in my condition the law has no terror. Still, brutally as my husband has treated me, I will not place him in its cruel gripe.”

“I will answer for it that Mr. Adam Black will sacredly respect his word not to betray you, which, of course, I shall insist upon his giving me.”

“Mr. Adam Black! If you are determined upon the point, why it must be so. Let him come.”

“At what hour must we be here?” I asked.

“At any hour you please to name. Only be punctual. Say nine in the morning.”

“Eleven will suit me better, as I shall have to borrow part of the money. Shall you require the money to be handed over in sovereigns?”

“Not if it will be inconvenient,” the woman replied. “At eleven precisely, then.”

The affair thus settled, I took the opportunity of

reminding her of the unspeakable importance of preparing herself for the dread eternity, upon the brink of which she confessedly stood. She listened with sobs and groans for about five minutes; then said she would be happy to see me at another time, when she was suffering less excruciating pain. With that I took leave, and was quietly let out by the woman-servant.

Adam Black readily consented to accompany me, and not to give his wife even the slightest hint upon what errand we were bound, or whither we were going. He, however, took the precaution to put a life-preserver in his pocket.

I made up the two hundred pounds without much difficulty, and just upon the stroke of eleven we knocked at the door of No. 3, Triangle, Hackney. It was promptly opened—by a man—and in we went. The man, a stout, sinewy fellow, something about my own age, fastened the door, and motioned us to follow him.

“Not Bertie,” whispered Black, with slight tremor in his tone. “I didn’t understand there were to be two of them. Still, in broad daylight, it isn’t likely that——”

“This way, gentlemen,” said the man, civilly. “The chest is here,” he added, opening the door of a small pantry-like room. Sure enough there *was* the plate chest, in apparently the same state as when it left Mount Street.

"You have the money with you, I suppose?" said the fellow.

I replied that I had, but wished to see that the articles were all right before handing it over.

"That is only reasonable," he replied. "Here are the keys. Examine for yourselves."

The chest was secured by two broad iron straps,—each of which was fitted with a patent lock. Black snatched one of the keys, I the other. Bending eagerly down, we inserted and turned the keys, and pushed up the lid. The chest was empty! At the same moment there was a shuffle of feet behind us, and, before I could turn round, I received a tremendous blow on the back of my head. Fire flashed in my eyes, and I fell senseless upon the floor. The same thing happened, in precisely the same way, to my friend Adam Black.

When we revived to a knowledge of our position, we found ourselves in a large empty coal-hole, the door of which opened from a dark, under-ground cellar. Both of us were strongly pinioned and handcuffed; and the first words I heard was a strong assurance that if either of us made the least outcry it would be the last we should ever utter. There were two men present, and—heaven and earth! could I believe my eyes?—one woman—Margery Lawson! the cadaverous white washed off her face, and looking as well as ever she did in her infamous life!

"Don't be alarmed. Nobody shall hurt you, I'll take care," she exclaimed; "if you'll only be quiet. What can't be cured must be endured, you know," she continued, with her old unabashed volubility. This man is my husband——"

"Bertie!" interjected Adam Black, with a groan.

"And this one who let you in is my brother. Neither of us is what you take us for. I am an industrious married woman, and neither of *them* ever made free with other people's property before. The fact is, we have been unfortunate in business, and are going to emigrate. When I called at your house, Reverend Mr. Maurice, I meant to ask you for a little help for old acquaintance sake. The sight of the plate, however, and your savageness to a woman whom you once courted, not exactly in words, but in dumb-show,—O, you need not shake your head, reverend sir, I know better,—the sight of the plate, I say, and your savageness, put me upon another tack; particularly when that stupid old Mother Black—excuse a slip of the tongue, mister,—when Mrs. Black, I was saying, let me see, whilst letting me out, that she was positive you, Reverend Maurice, were a courting me slyly for a wife. Then, of course, I took her into my confidence;"—and the brazen hussy laughed obstreperously, chorused by her equally vile relatives.

"I have told you all this," she resumed, "that you may see that, in this instance, the devil is not so black

as you thought him; and because I wish to stand as well as possible in the opinion of my old sweetheart. Now take, both of you, a good draught of this wine. It will do you a world of good; and then my husband will go into business matters, as we have no time to spare. After all,"—she continued, as she filled two large tumblers with port wine,—“after all, there will not be much harm done. What’s money? Filthy lucre, of course; and what does a priest, I should like to know, want with silver plate, when china, or even delf, will answer the purpose as well, and not tempt needy folks to commit crime?”

Mr. Bertie (I never knew what his real name was), Mr. Bertie next took up the ball, and in a civil, business-like way, explained the inevitable necessities of the case. The notes I had brought would have to be changed, and it was essential the changers should have a twenty-four hours’ start. That secured, pursuit, they were quite satisfied, would be hopeless. Well, how was that twenty-four hours’ start to be obtained? Only, it was too clear, by taking rigorous precautions to prevent the Reverend Mr. Maurice and Mr. Adam Black from communicating with mankind during that period. That was the problem to be solved, and Mr. Bertie flattered himself it had been solved in such a manner, that whilst it assured the success of their plans, would inflict the least possible amount of inconvenience upon the Reverend Mr. Maurice and Mr. Adam Black.

"That *is* right," said the brother; "and now to work. Minutes are hours just now."

The three were instantly busy as bees; a rude table and two stools were lugged into the coal-cellar. Mrs. Bertie, as she chose to call herself, produced a chicken, and slices of roast beef, all of which she carved into small pieces; mugs were filled, some with wine, some with water, and the whole was arranged neatly upon the table. Whilst that was going on, the husband and brother were busy experimenting with Mr. Black and myself. We were placed upon, and fastened to the heavy stools, opposite each other, the table between, and the exact easement of the pinioning cords which would enable us to convey the eatables and drinkable to our mouths, with fettered hands, was determined after several trials. The next process was to ascertain whether when the coal-hole and cellar doors were shut any shouting on our part could be heard in the street; the adjoining houses on each side being empty. Fortunately they were satisfied upon that point, and gags were not resorted to. At length, everything being settled to their satisfaction, our friends prepared to depart.

"One word more, gentlemen," said Margery. "Don't torment yourselves with the fear that you may not be released at the expiration of the twenty-four hours. I take upon myself to write to Mrs. Black, stating exactly where and in what condition

you may be found. I shall make two extra copies of that letter, and get them posted by a sure hand, in different offices, lest one delivery should fail, after eight o'clock this evening. She will receive one or all the letters to-morrow about ten o'clock, half past nine, perhaps, so that about twelve to-morrow you will be certainly at liberty. Farewell, keep your spirits up as well as you can !”

They were gone ; the thick heavy doors of the coal and adjoining cellars were shut, securely fastened, and we were alone in the dark silence. During the scene which I have attempted to describe Adam Black and I were mute, dumb, paralyzed by incredulous amazement, so to speak. That which was going on could not be real ; we were the sport of some frightful illusion ; but when the black door shut us in, and we looked into each other's dimly-visible white faces, the sense of a cruel reality came upon us with overwhelming force.

“I say, Mr. Priest,” cried Adam Black, after a fierce but vain struggle to shake off his bonds, “I say, Mr. Priest, if this is not an infernal dream, we have made a sweet mess of it. And why, now I think of it,” he added, “why, in the name of Satan and all his angels, did you entice *me* into this den of darkness and devils ?”

This was unreasonable. I pointed out that I had myself been wickedly deceived and entrapped. “Besides,” I added, “twenty-four hours will soon have passed.”

Adam Black was not to be pacified or reasoned with, and went raging on at a terrible rate, especially against Popish priests, to whose compelled celibacy he would have it the horrors of our actual position were to be wholly attributed. I did not reply to his railing.

It was the more easy to abstain from doing so, poor Adam Black's ireful energy suddenly taking an unexpected direction. He was an inveterate snuff-taker, but the terrible excitement of the previous half-hour had caused him to forego the habit. Suddenly his nose gave poignant warning that it would be no longer deprived of its precious pabulum, and then the poor fellow remembered that his snuff-box was in one of the tails of his coat pocket, access to which was clearly impossible. Vainly, desperately did he twist, strain, struggle, in the effort to get his manacled hands within reach of the box. It was not to be done, and the torture he suffered must have been terrible, judging from the torrent of malediction he poured forth, the violent twitching of his nose, he could not reach even *that*, and the contortions of his blood-shot face. It was almost impossible, frightfully circumstanced as we were, to avoid laughing outright, though to have done so would have quite maddened him. At last strength and breath to struggle and curse failed, and a succession of irregular lulls ensued, broken by gusts of fury, when the itching titillation took fresh starts, as it were, of renewed poignancy.

Slowly, lingeringly passed the long, gloomy hours. One ghastly fear possessed us both, and would not be shaken off. Not the faintest sound of carriage or cart-wheels, the galloping of horses, the bellowing of cattle, which we remembered were passing that night along the Hackney Road, reached our ears. No shouting or screaming on our part would therefore have a chance of being heard without! If, then, that Jezebel Lawson should neglect or decline to write to Mrs. Black, or if the agent to which she was to entrust the letters should neglect to post them, we should perish by piece-meal, fettered in that black prison-house! One circumstance suggested hope. Might not the woman who admitted me on the day before pay a visit to the house, of which I was told she had been left in charge? That, however, might have been an invention. I afterwards knew it was. Lawson herself had been left in charge of the house, and the woman had been hired for a day or two, Lawson pretending to be dangerously ill. The purpose for which she had been hired accomplished, the woman was told to come no more. I may add, that every portable article of value in the house, the removal of which could not be observed by the neighbours, was carried off by the confederates.

Time and the hour run through the roughest day, and darkest night. At about one o'clock the next

day police officers, accompanied by Mrs. Black, arrived,—forced their way into the house through a window, found, and set us free. It was full time, especially for Adam Black, who was not himself again for many months afterwards.

I never again saw or heard of Margery Lawson, of her husband, brother, or the stolen plate.

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