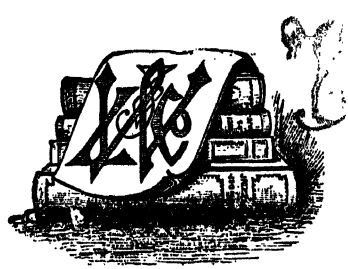
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# HARD CASH.

A Matter-of-Fact Romance.

By CHARLES READE.



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# PREFACE.

"HARD CASH," like "The Cloister and the Hearth," is a matter-of-fact Romance; that is, a fiction built on truths; and these truths have been gathered by long, severe, systematic, labour, from a multitude of volumes, pamphlets, journals, reports, blue-books, manuscript narratives, letters, and living people, whom I have sought out, examined, and cross-examined, to get at the truth on each main topic I have striven to handle.

The madhouse scenes have been picked out by certain disinterested gentlemen who keep private asylums, and periodicals to puff them; and have been met with bold denials of public facts and with timid personalities, and a little easy cant about Sensation* Novelists; but in reality

* This slang term is not quite accurate as applied to me. Without sensation there can be no interest: but my plan is to mix a little character and a little philosophy with the sensational element.

those passages have been written on the same system as the nautical, legal, and other scenes: the best evidence has been ransacked; and a large portion of this evidence I shall be happy to show at my house to any brother writer who is disinterested, and really cares enough for truth and humanity to walk or ride a mile in pursuit of them.

CHARLES READE.

6, Bolton Row, Mayfair,

*December* 5, 1868

# CORRESPONDENCE ELICITED BY FIRST EDITION OF "HARD CA

## PRIVATE ASYLUMS.

*To the Editor of the Daily News.*

SIR,—When a writer of sensation romances makes a heroine push a superfluous husband into a well, or set a house on fire in order to get rid of disagreeable testimony, we smile over the highly-seasoned dish, but do not think it necessary to apply the warning to ourselves, and for the future avoid sitting on the edge of a draw-well, or having any but fireproof libraries. But when we read, as in the novel "Very Hard Cash," now publishing in *All the Year Round*, that any man may, at any moment, be consigned to a fate which to a sane man would be worse than death, and that not by the single act of any of our Lady Audleys, or other interesting criminals, but as part of a regular organised system, in all compliance with the laws of the land—when we read this, a thrill of terror goes through the public mind. If what Mr. Charles Reade says be possible, who is safe?

Allow me, as one thoroughly conversant with the working of the law of lunacy, to reassure the minds of your readers by informing them that it is not possible. So many are the checks and securities with which the legislature has most properly surrounded the person of an alleged lunatic; so vigilant, patient, and so zealous in the discharge of their duties are the Commissioners in Lunacy and the officially-appointed visitors of asylums, that any one (not a sensation writer)

imagining that these checks and securities could be evaded, these visitors hoodwinked in the way the author describes, would himself be a fit subject for a commission "de lunatico inquirendo."

So far from commissioners and visitors being put off with any "formula," such as the author quotes, and believing anybody rather than the patient himself, the exact contrary is the fact, and very properly so.

In my own case Earl Nelson, Viscount Folkestone, General Buckley, M.P., the Rev. Charles Grove, and Mr. Martin Coats, and in other asylums magistrates of equal intelligence and high standing, fill the office of visitors; and never in any case do they refuse a private interview to any patient asking it. In these interviews no interference of any doctors or attendants, or any "formula," is possible, and the visitors will listen even to the most incoherent ravings if there appears to be the slightest clue to be gathered from them to any real grievance.

I say nothing of the terrible slander cast upon a body of professional men to which I am proud to belong. There is no redress for that. There are certain offences with which no court of law can deal; offences against decency, good taste, and truth, which can be brought before no tribunal but that of public opinion.

I would only challenge Mr. Reade, in conclusion, if he has the slightest grounds for any belief in the possibility of the incidents he has put in print, to state those grounds. Let him quote his case, and openly and fearlessly declare when and where such atrocities occurred. I do not ask for one in all points resembling that which he has published; but one that furnishes even the slightest excuse for such a libellous attack upon those medical men who, like myself, practise in lunacy.

I am, &c.,

J. S. Bushnan, M.D.

Laverstock House Asylum, Salisbury.

## PRIVATE ASYLUMS.

*To the Editor of the Daily News.*

SIR,—My attention is drawn to a letter written to you by J. S. Bushnan, M.D., to vent a little natural irritation on the author of "Very Hard Cash," and lull the public back into the false security from which that work is calculated to rouse them.

I pass by his personalities in silence; but, when he tells you, in the roundabout style of his tribe, that "Very Hard Cash" rests on no basis of fact; that sane persons cannot possibly be incarcerated or detained under our Lunacy Acts; that the gentlemen, who pay an asylum four flying visits a year, know all that passes in it the odd 361 days, and are never outwitted and humbugged on the spot; that no interference of doctors or attendants between visitor and patient, and no formulæ of cant and deception, are possible within the walls of a madhouse—this is to play too hard upon the credulity of the public and the forgetfulness of the press. I beg to contradict all and every one of his *general* statements, more courteously, I trust, than he has contradicted me, but quite as seriously and positively.

Dr. Bushnan knows neither the subject he is writing of, nor the man he is writing at. In matters of lunacy I am not only a novelist; I am also that humble citizen, who not long ago, with the aid of the press, protected a sane man who had been falsely imprisoned in a private lunatic asylum; hindered his recapture, showed him his legal remedy, fed, clothed, and kept him for twelve months with the aid of one true-hearted friend, during all which time a great functionary, though paid many thousands a year to do what I was doing at my own expense—justice—did all he could to defeat justice, and break the poor suitor's back and perpetuate his stigma, by tyrannically postponing, and postponing, and postponing, and postponing his trial to please the defendant. At last this great procrastinator retired, and so that worst enemy of justice, "the postpone-

ment swindle," died, and by its death trial by jury rose again from the dead, even for an alleged lunatic. Well, sir, no sooner did we get him before thirteen honest men in the light of day, than this youth—whom the mad doctors had declared and still declared insane, whom two homuncules, commissioners in lunacy, had twice visited in the asylum, and conversed with, and done nothing whatever towards his liberation —stood up eight hours in the witness-box, was examined, cross-examined, badgered; yet calm, self-possessed, and so manifestly sane, that the defendant resigned the contest, and compounded the inevitable damages, giving us a verdict, the costs, 50*l.* cash, and an annuity of 100*l.* a year.

All this, says Dr. Bushnan, is impossible.

I closely examined this youth as to his fellow-patients, and, as he could minutely describe the illusions of the insane ones, I find it hard to doubt his positive statement that two patients in that same house were perfectly sane.

Of course the main event I have related made some noise: real and alleged lunatics heard there was a Quixotic ass in this island, who would, in his unguarded moments, give away justice at his own expense, instead of selling it for so many thousands a year and not delivering the article; and I was inundated with letters and petitions, and opened a vein of private research by which the readers of "Hard Cash" will profit, all except Dr. Bushnan. A lady called on me and asked me to get her sister out of a private asylum, assuring me she was sane, and giving me proofs. Having observed that to get out of an asylum you must first be out of it, I cudgelled my brains, and split this prisoner in half; I drew up a little document authorising a certain sharp attorney to proceed in law or equity for her relief; and sent her sister into the asylum to get it signed by the prisoner. She did sign it, and thus armed, her other self the attorney, being outside the asylum, was listened to, though a deaf ear had always been turned to her. After a correspondence, which has served me as a model in the current number of "Hard Cash," after in vain suggesting her discharge to the parties pecuniarily interested in detaining her, the board actually plucked up courage

and discharged her themselves. We all saw her often after this, and were hours in her company. She was perfectly sane, as sane as I am, and much saner than some of the mad doctors are at this hour, as time will show. This case opened another vein of research, and my detective staff was swelled by a respectable ex-attendant (female), who gave me the names of two or three sane ladies at that time in durance vilest to her knowledge.

Three years after the supposed date of Alfred Hardie's impossible incarceration came the flagrant case of "Mathew *v.* Harty," some of whose delicious incidents have been used in "Hard Cash," and will be contradicted by humbugs and condemned as improbable by gulls; at least I venture to hope so. The defendant was one of that immaculate class, to criticise some of whom, if I understand Dr. Bushnan aright, is to libel the whole body; and the plaintiff was a distinguished young scholar in Dublin. Defendant enticed him into a madhouse, and there left him in a common flagged cell; but to amuse his irrational mind, lent him what? Peter Parley, or Dr. Littlewit's conjectures about the intellect of Hamlet? Oh dear no; "Stack's Optics," "Lloyd's Mechanical Philosophy," "Brinkley's Astronomy," "Cicero de Officiis," and "Stock's Lucian."

Enter the official inspector; is appealed to, admits his sanity, promises to liberate him, and with that promise dismisses the matter from his official mind, and goes his way contented. This was sworn to afterwards and not contradicted. Then comes Dr. Harty and urges him to confession in these memorable words, sworn to, and not contradicted: "Your safety will consist in acknowledging you are insane, and your sanity will appear by admitting your insanity." Mathew saw the hook, and declined the bait. Now there was in this asylum a boy called Hoolahan, whose young mind had not been poisoned, and whose naked eye was as yet undimmed by the spectacles of cant and prejudice. So he saw at a glance Mathew was sane, and, not being paid a thousand a year to pity him—pitied him. Hoolahan took a letter to Mathew's college chum. In that letter Mathew poured out his wrongs and his distress. But suppose it should be intercepted!

Mathew provided against this contingency; he couched his letter in Ciceronian Latin, humbly conceiving that this language would puzzle the doctors as much as the Latin in their prescriptions would puzzle Cicero. Mr. Hall got the letter, and, not being paid to protect alleged lunatics, took the matter up in earnest, and so frightened Dr. Harty that he discharged Mathew at once; and said, "Now, don't you be induced to bother me about this trifle; I'm an old man, and going to die almost immediately." On this Mathew took the alarm, and served a writ on him without loss of time. The cause came on, and was urged and defended with equal forensic ability. But evidence decides cases, and the plaintiff's evidence was overpowering. Then the defendant, despairing of a verdict, bethought him how he might lower the inevitable damages: he instructed his counsel to reveal that "the young man who was now prosecuting him to the death was his own illegitimate son." At this revelation, ably and feelingly introduced by Counsellor Martly, the sensation was, of course, immense, and being in Ireland, a gallery came down just then and the *coup de théâtre* was perfect. Many tears were shed; the public was moved; the plaintiff still more so. For it is not often that a man, who has passed for an orphan all his life, can plant a writ and reap a parent. "Japhet in search of a Father," should have wandered about serving writs. The jury either saw that the relationship was irrelevant in a question so broad and civic, or else they were fathers of another stamp, and disapproved of tender parents who disown their offspring for 24 years, and then lock them up for mad, and only claim kindred in court to mitigate damages. At all events, they found for Mr. Mathew, with damages one thousand pounds. All this, says Dr. Bushnan, was utterly impossible. Well, the impossibility in question disguised itself as fact, and went through the hollow form of taking place, upon the 11th, 12th, and 13th December, 1851, and the myth is recorded in the journals, and the authorized report by Elrington, jun., and W. P. Carr, barristers-at-law, is published in what may be an air-bubble, but looks like a pamphlet, by M'Glashan, 50, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin.

But I rely mainly on the private cases, which a large corre-

spondence with strangers, and searching inquiry amongst my acquaintances, have revealed to me; unfortunately these are nearly always accompanied with a stipulation of secrecy; so terrible, so ineradicable, is the stigma. "Hall *v.* Semple" clearly adds its mite of proof that certificates of insanity are still given recklessly; but to show you how strong I am, I do not rely at all on disputable cases like Nottidge, Ruck, and Leech; though in the two latter of these cases the press leaned strongly against the insanity of the prisoners, and surely the press is less open to prejudice in this matter than Dr. Bushnan is, who dates his confident conjectures from a madhouse. It seems I have related in "Hard Cash" that in one asylum (not Dr. Wycherley's), when Alfred Hardie went to complain to a visitor, a keeper interfered and said, "Take care, sir, he is dangerous." And this I then and there call a formula, one out of many. "Dreamer," says Dr. Bushnan; "there are no such things as formulæ in madhouses: and no interference between patient and inspector is possible, for there are none in my asylum, and therefore there can be none in any other." Oh, logic of psychologicals!

Mr. Drummond, in a debate on lunacy, testified as follows:—"Now the honourable gentleman had remarked that it was very easy for persons in those establishments who had a complaint to make, to make it. Was it really so? (Hear, hear.) He thought otherwise. He could only say that, whenever he had visited an asylum, and went up to a lunatic who had stated that he had a ground of complaint, some keeper immediately evinced an unusual interest in his personal welfare, and cautioned him, saying, 'Take care, sir, he is a very dangerous man.' (Hear.)"

The length of this letter, which after all but skims the matter, arises out of the importance of the subject, and the nature of all argument based on evidence. It takes but a few lines to make many bold assertions, and to challenge Mr. Reade to prove them false. But the Readian proofs cannot be so compressed. "Plus negabit in unâ horâ unus doctor, quam centum docti in centum annis probaverint." I conclude by begging you to find space for the following extract from a

respectable journal. I have many such extracts in my London house: this one is a fair representative of the press, and of its convictions and expressions at the time when it issued. Extract.—"Here are two cases [Mrs. Turner and Mr. Leech]: We have before us the particulars of a third, but we are not, unfortunately, in a condition to publish the names. Suffice it to say that an unfortunate gentleman who had been suffering from bodily disorder which finally affected his brain, but who was not mad, was incarcerated in one of those horrid dens which are called private lunatic asylums; and there confined for months. By his own account he was treated with the greatest cruelty, strapped down to a bed with broad bands of webbing, and kept there till it was supposed he was dying. The result we will state in the sufferer's own words:—'My back, from lying in one constrained posture, was a mass of ulcerated and sloughing sores; my right hand was swollen enormously, and useless; and two fingers of the left hand were permanently contracted, and the joints destroyed. I also lost several front teeth.' This poor man at last obtained his liberty, and applied to the commissioners for redress. Their letter in reply is now before us. The commissioners merely say that, although they do not in any degree impugn the integrity of the complainant's statements, they are not of opinion that inquiry would answer any good purpose. They add, however, that, 'in order to mark their opinion on the subject they have granted Mr. —— a licence provisionally for the limited period of four months only, and that the renewal will depend upon the condition and management of his establishment being entirely satisfactory in the meantime.' [As if any great criminal would not undertake to behave better or more cautiously if, after detecting him by a miracle, we were weak enough to bribe him to more skilful hypocrisy by the promise of impunity. G. R.] Poor consolation this for all the misery the wretched sufferer had undergone! Here, then, are three cases following one upon the other in rapid succession. How many remain behind of which we know nothing? The fact would appear to be that under existing arrangements any English man or woman may without much difficulty be incarcerated in a private lunatic

asylum when not deprived of reason. If actually deprived of reason when first confined, patients may be retained in duress when their cure is perfected, and they ought to be released."

I am, &c.,

THE AUTHOR OF "VERY HARD CASH."

Magdalen College, Oxford, Oct. 23, 1863.

To this letter I hear Dr. Bushnan has replied *down in the country*. By this, and by his not sending me a copy, may I not infer he prefers having it all his own way in the neighbourhood of his asylum to encountering me again before the nation?

The extract quoted above is, I believe, from the *Times*, and was accompanied by an admirable letter of three columns thus entitled—

LUNATIC ASYLUMS AND THE LUNACY LAWS.

(*By a Physician.*)

This honest inquirers should read, and also the newspaper reports of false imprisonment and cruelty, during the last twelve years, and the contemporaneous comments of the press —before deciding to overrate my imaginative powers, and underrate my sincerity, and my patient, laborious, industry.

In January, 1870, the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* drew attention to the fact that several lunatics had died of broken ribs in various asylums, and that the attendants had furnished no credible solution of the mystery. This elicited the following letter from the author of "Hard Cash."

## How Lunatics' Ribs get Broken.

*To the Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette.*

Sir,—The *Pall Mall Gazette*, January 15, deals with an important question, "the treatment of lunatics," and inquires, *inter alia*, how Santa Nistri came to have his breast-bone and eight ribs fractured at Hanwell; and how other patients have died at the same place of similar injuries; and how William Wilson came to have twelve ribs broken the other day at the Lancaster County Asylum. The question is grave; the more so, that, by every principle of statistics, scores of ribs must be broken, one or two at a time, and nobody the wiser, under a system which rises periodically to such high figures of pulverisation, and so lets in the faint light of an occasional inquest, conducted by credulity in a very atmosphere of mendacity. I have precise information, applicable to these recent cases, but not derived from them, and ask leave to relate the steps by which the truth came to me.

On the 2nd January, 1851, Barnes, a lunatic, died at Peckham House with an arm and four ribs broken. The people of the Asylum stuck manfully together, and agreed to know nothing about it; and justice would have been baffled entirely, but for Donnelly, an insane patient—he revealed that Hill, a keeper, had broken the man's bones. Hill was tried at the Central Criminal Court, and convicted of manslaughter on Donnelly's sole evidence, the people of the asylum maintaining an obdurate silence to the end. About 1858, I think, a lunatic patient died suddenly, with his breast-bone and eight ribs broken, which figures please compare with Santa Nistri's. As it had taken a keeper to break the five bones of Barnes, nobody believed that accident had broken the nine bones of Secker—that, I think, was the victim's name; but this time the people of the asylum had it all their own way; they stuck manfully together, stifled truth, and baffled justice. (See the Ninth Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy, p. 25.)

Late in July, 1858, there was a ball at Colney Hatch. The

press were invited, and came back singing the praises of that blest retreat. What order! What gaiety! What non-restraint!

> O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint
> Lunaticos.

Next week or so Owen Swift, one of the patients in that blest retreat, died of the following injuries: breast-bone and eleven ribs broken, liver ruptured.

Varney, a patient—whose evidence reads like that of a very clear-headed gentleman, if you compare it with the doctor's that follows it—deposed to this effect: Thursday at dinner-time Swift was in good health and spirits, and more voluble than Slater, one of the keepers, approved. Slater said, "Hold your noise." Swift babbled on. Slater threw the poor man down, and dragged him into the padded room, which room then resounded for several minutes with "a great noise of knocking and bumping about" and with the sufferer's cries of agony, till these last were choked, and there was silence. Swift was not seen again till Saturday morning; and then, in presence of Varney, he accused Slater to his face of having maltreated him, and made his words good by dying that night or the very next morning.

This evidence was borne out by the state of the body (fractured sternum, and eleven fractured ribs), and not rebutted by any direct, or, indeed, rational testimony. Yet the accused was set free. But the press and the country took this decision ill. A Middlesex magistrate wrote to the *Times*, August 21, 1860, to remonstrate, and drew attention to a previous idiotic verdict in a similar case. And whereas the medical man of the establishment had assisted to clear the homicide by his own ignorance of how bones can be broken wholesale without proportionate bruises or flesh wounds, a correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* enlightened his professional ignorance on that head, and gave the public the only adequate solution of Owen Swift's death, which had been either spoken or written up to that day.

That one adequate solution was the true one.—*Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 9, 1860.

Time, 1862. Place, Hanwell. Matthew Geoghegan, a patient, refused to go to bed. Jones, a keeper, threw him

down, and kicked him several times; then got a stick and beat him; then got a fire-shovel and beat him; then jumped on his body; then walked up and down his body; of which various injuries the man died, not immediately, but yet so speedily that the cuts and bruises were still there to show what had killed him.

Bone, a bricklayer, and eye-witness of the homicide, swore to the above facts. Linch, Bone's labourer, another eye-witness, swore to the same facts. The resident engineer swore that Bone and Linch were both true men. Dr. Jephson had found the man with bruises, one of which, on his abdomen, had been caused by the heel of a boot. Per contra, a doctor was found to swear as follows: "I swear that I *think* he died of pleuro-pneumonia. I swear that I *don't know* whether his external injuries contributed to his death."

And upon this, though no pleuro-pneumonia could be shown in the mutilated body, though Bone and Linch, disinterested witnesses, deposed to plain facts, and the doctor merely delivered a wild and improbable conjecture, and then swore to his own ignorance on the point in doubt, if doubt there could be—yet this jury, with their eyes to confirm what their ears heard sworn, and their ears to confirm what their eyes saw written on the mangled corpse, actually delivered the following verdict:—"Deceased died after receiving certain injuries from external violence; but whether the death was occasioned by natural causes, or by such violence, there was not sufficient evidence to show." They then relieved their consciences in the drollest way. They turned round on Bone and Linch, and reprimanded them severely for not having interfered to prevent the cruelty, which they themselves were shielding in the present and fostering in the future by as direct a lie as ever twelve honest men delivered. Suppose the bricklayer and his man had replied, "Why, look ye, gentlemen, we came into the madhouse to lay bricks, not to do justice. But you came into the madhouse to do justice. We should have lost our bread if we had interfered; but you could have afforded to play the men—and didn't."

I enclose herewith the evidence of the bricklayers, and the sworn conjectures of the doctor, *in re* Geoghegan; also the

evidence of the doctor, and of the comparatively clear-headed lunatic, *in re* Swift.

About this time my researches into the abuses of private asyla (which abuses are quite distinct from the subject in hand) brought me into contact with multifarious facts, and with a higher class of evidence than the official inquirers permit themselves to hear. They rely too much on medical attendants and other servants of an asylum, whose interest it is to veil ugly truths and sprinkle hells with rose-water. I, on the contrary, examined a number of ex-patients who had never been too mad to observe, and ex-attendants, male and female, who had gone into other lines of life, and could now afford to reveal the secrets of those dark places.

The ex-keepers were all agreed in this—that the keepers know how to break a patient's bones without bruising the skin; and that the doctors have been duped again and again by them. To put it in my own words, the bent knees, big bluntish bones, and clothed, can be applied with terrible force, yet not leave their mark upon the skin of the victim. The refractory patient is thrown down, and the keeper walks up and down him on his knees, and even jumps on his body knees downwards, until he is completely cowed. Should a bone or two be broken in this process, it does not much matter to the keeper: a lunatic complaining of internal injury is not listened to. He is a being so full of illusions that nobody believes in any unseen injury he prates about.

In these words, Sir, you have the key to the death of Barnes, of Secker, if that was the man's name; and of other victims recorded by the Commissioners, of Nistri, and of William Wilson, at Lancaster.

I hope this last inquiry has not been weakly abandoned. It is a very shocking thing that both brute force and traditional cunning should be employed against persons of weak understanding, and that they should be so often massacred, so seldom avenged.

Something might be done if the people in Lancashire would take the matter seriously.

The first thing they should do is to inquire whether the keeper who killed a stunted imbecile by internal injuries in

the Lancaster Asylum, May, 1863, is still in that asylum. See *Public Opinion*, Nov. 19, 1863.

The next step is to realize and act upon the two following maxims:

First, it is the sure sign of a fool to accept an inadequate solution of undeniable facts.

Secondly, to advance an inadequate solution of facts so indisputable as twelve broken ribs is a sign either of guilt or guilty connivance.

Honest men in Lancashire should inquire who first put forward some stupid, impudent falsehood to account for the twelve broken ribs of Wilson. The *first liar* was probably the homicide, or an accomplice.

Just to prove the importance I attach to this inquiry, permit me, through your columns, to offer a reward of 100*l.* to any person or persons who will give such evidence as may lead to the conviction of the person or persons who have killed William Wilson by kneeling on him, by walking knees downwards upon him, and jumping knees downwards upon him.

It is interest that closes men's mouths in these dark places. We must employ the same instrument to open them: it is our only chance.

I am, sir, yours very faithfully,

CHARLES READE.

2, Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge, Jan. 17, 1870.

## NOTICE, 1863.

I request all those persons in various ranks of life,—who by letter or *vivâ voce* have during the last five years told me of sane persons incarcerated or detained in private asylums, and of other abuses—to communicate with me by letter. I also invite fresh communications: and desire it to be known that this great question did not begin with me in the pages of a novel, neither shall it end there: for, where Justice and Humanity are both concerned, there—

**Dict sans faict**
**A Dieu deplait.**

# HARD CASH.

## PROLOGUE.

In a snowy villa, with a sloping lawn, just outside the great commercial seaport, Barkington, there lived a few years ago a happy family. A lady, middle aged, but still charming; two young friends of hers; and a periodical visitor.

The lady was Mrs. Dodd; her occasional visitor was her husband; her friends were her son Edward, aged twenty, and her daughter Julia, nineteen; the fruit of a misalliance.

Mrs. Dodd was originally Miss Fountain, a young lady well born, high bred, and a denizen of the fashionable world. Under a strange concurrence of circumstances she coolly married the captain of an East Indiaman. The deed done, and with her eyes open, for she was not, to say, in love with him, she took a judicious line; and kept it; no hankering after Mayfair, no talking about Lord "This" and Lady "That," to commercial gentlewomen; no amphibiousness. She accepted her place in society, reserving the right to embellish it with the graces she had gathered in a higher sphere. In her home, and in her person, she was little less elegant than a countess; yet nothing more than a merchant-captain's wife: and she reared that commander's children, in a suburban villa, with the manners which adorn a palace. When they happen to be there. She had a bugbear; Slang. Could not endure the smart technicalities current; their multitude did not overpower her distaste; she called them "jargon;" "slang" was too coarse a word for her to apply to slang: she excluded many a good "racy idiom" along with the real offenders; and monosyllables in general ran some risk of having to show their passports. If this was pedantry, it went no further; she was open, free, and youthful with her young pupils; and had the art to put herself on their level: often, when they were quite young, she would feign infantine ignorance, in order to hunt trite truth in couples with them, and detect, by joint experiment, that rainbows cannot, or else will not, be walked into, nor Jack-o'-lantern be gathered like a cowslip; and that, dissect we the vocal dog—whose hair is so like a lamb's—never so skilfully, no fragment of palpable bark, no sediment of tangible squeak, remains inside him to bless the inquisitive little operator, &c. &c. When they advanced from these elementary branches to Languages, History, Tapestry, and "What Not," she managed still to keep by their side, learning with them, not just hearing them lessons down from the top of

a high tower of maternity. She never checked their curiosity; but made herself share it; never gave them, as so many parents do, a white-lying answer; wooed their affections with subtle though innocent art; thawed their reserve, obtained their love, and retained their respect. Briefly, a female Chesterfield; her husband's lover after marriage, though not before; and the mild monitress, the elder sister, the favourite companion and bosom friend of both her children.

They were remarkably dissimilar; and, perhaps I may be allowed to preface the narrative of their adventures by a delineation; as in country churches an individual pipes the key-note, and the tune comes raging after.

Edward, then, had a great calm eye, that was always looking folk full in the face, mildly; his countenance comely and manly, but no more; too square for Apollo; but sufficed for John Bull. His figure it was that charmed the curious observer of male beauty. He was five feet ten; had square shoulders, a deep chest, masculine flank, small foot, high instep. To crown all this, a head, overflowed by ripples of dark brown hair, sat with heroic grace upon his solid white throat, like some glossy falcon new lighted on a Parian column.

This young gentleman had decided qualities, positive and negative. He could walk up to a five-barred gate, and clear it, alighting on the other side like a fallen feather; could row all day, and then dance all night; could fling a cricket-ball a hundred and six yards; had a lathe and a tool-box, and would make you in a trice a chair, a table, a doll, a nutcracker, or any other moveable, useful, or the very reverse. And could not learn his lessons, to save his life.

His sister Julia was not so easy to describe. Her figure was tall, lithe, and serpentine; her hair the colour of a horse-chesnut fresh from its pod; her ears tiny and shell-like, her eyelashes long and silky; her mouth small when grave, large when smiling; her eyes pure hazel by day, and tinged with a little violet by night. But in jotting down these details, true as they are, I seem to myself to be painting fire, with a little snow and saffron mixed on a marble pallet. There is a beauty too spiritual to be chained in a string of items; and Julia's fair features were but the china vessel that brimmed over with the higher loveliness of her soul. Her essential charm was, what shall I say? Transparence.

"You would have said her very body thought."

Modesty, Intelligence, and, above all, Enthusiasm, shone through her, and out of her, and made her an airy, fiery, household joy. Briefly, an incarnate sunbeam.

This one could learn her lessons with unreasonable rapidity, and until Edward went to Eton, would insist upon learning his into the bargain, partly with the fond notion of coaxing him on; as the company of a swift horse incites a slow one; partly because she was determined to share his every trouble, if she could not remove it. A little choleric, and indeed downright prone to that more generous indignation which fires at the wrongs of others. When heated with emotion, or sentiment, she lowered her voice, instead of raising it like the rest of us; she called her mother "Lady Placid," and her brother "Sir Imperturbable." And so much for outlines.

Mrs. Dodd laid aside her personal ambition with her maiden name; but she looked high for her children. Perhaps she was all the more ambitious for them, that they had no rival aspirant in Mrs. Dodd. She educated Julia herself from first to last: but with true feminine distrust of her power to mould a lordling of creation, she sent Edward to Eton, at nine. This was slackening her tortoise; for at Eton is no female master, to coax dry knowledge into a slow head. However, he made good progress in two branches—aquatics and cricket.

After Eton came the choice of a profession. His mother recognized but four; and these her discreet ambition speedily sifted down to two. For military heroes are shot now and then, however pacific the century; and naval ones drowned. She would never expose her Edward to this class of accidents. Glory by all means; glory by the pail; but safe glory, please; of she would none of it. Remained the church and the bar: and, within these reasonable limits, she left her dear boy free as air; and not even hurried; there was plenty of time to choose: he must pass through the university to either. This last essential had been settled about a twelvemonth, and the very day for his going to Oxford was at hand, when one morning Mr. Edward formally cleared his throat: it was an unusual act, and drew the ladies' eyes upon him. He followed the solemnity up by delivering calmly and ponderously a connected discourse, which astonished them by its length and purport. "Mamma, dear, let us look the thing in the face." (This was his favourite expression, as well as habit.) "I have been thinking it quietly over for the last six months. Why send me to the university? I shall be out of place there. It will cost you a lot of money, and no good. Now, you take a fool's advice; don't you waste your money and papa's, sending a dull fellow like me to Oxford. I did bad enough at *Eton*. Make me an engineer, or something. If you were not so fond of me, and I of you, I'd say send me to Canada, with a pickaxe; you know I have got no headpiece."

Mrs. Dodd had sat aghast, casting Edward deprecating looks at the close of each ponderous sentence, but too polite to interrupt a soul, even a son talking nonsense. She now assured him she could afford very well to send him to Oxford, and begged leave to remind him that he was too good and too sensible to run up bills there, like the young men who did not really love their parents. "Then, as for learning, why we must be reasonable in our turn. Do the best you can, love. We know you have no great turn for the classics; we do not expect you to take high honours like young Mr. Hardie; besides, that might make your head ache: he has sad headaches, his sister told Julia. But, my dear, an university education is indispensable; do but see how the signs of it follow a gentleman through life, to say nothing of the valuable acquaintances and lasting friendships he makes there: even those few distinguished persons who have risen in the world without it, have openly regretted the want, and have sent their children: and *that* says volumes to me."

"Why, Edward, it is the hall-mark of a gentleman," said Julia, eagerly. Mrs. Dodd caught a flash of her daughter: "And my silver shall never be without it," said she warmly. She added presently, in her usual placid tone, "I beg your pardon, my dears, I ought to have said my gold." With this she kissed Edward tenderly on the brow,

and drew an embrace and a little grunt of resignation from him. "Take the dear boy and show him our purchases, love!" said Mrs. Dodd, with a little gentle accent of half reproach, scarce perceptible to a male ear.

"Oh, yes:" and Julia rose and tripped to the door. There she stood a moment, half turned, with arching neck, colouring with innocent pleasure. "Come, darling. Oh, you good-for-nothing thing."

The pair found a little room hard by, paved with china, crockery, glass, baths, kettles, &c.

"There, sir. Look them in the face; and us, if you can."

"Well, you know, I had no idea you had been and bought a cart-load of things for Oxford." His eye brightened; he whipped out a two-foot rule, and began to calculate the cubic contents. "I'll turn to and make the cases, Ju."

The ladies had their way; the cases were made and despatched; and one morning the Bus came for Edward, and stopped at the gate of Albion Villa. At this sight mother and daughter both turned their heads quickly away by one independent impulse, and set a bad example. Apparently neither of them had calculated on this paltry little detail; they were game for theoretical departures; to impalpable universities: and "an air-drawn Bus, a Bus of the mind," would not have dejected for a moment their lofty Spartan souls on glory bent; safe glory. But here was a Bus of wood, and Edward going bodily away inside it. The victim kissed them, threw up his portmanteau and bag, and departed serene as Italian skies; the victors watched the pitiless Bus quite out of sight; then went up to his bedroom, all disordered by packing, and, on the very face of it, vacant; and sat down on his little bed intertwining and weeping.

Edward was received at Exeter College, as young gentlemen are received at college; and nowhere else, I hope, for the credit of Christendom. They showed him a hole in the roof, and called it an "Attic;" grim pleasantry! being a puncture in the modern Athens. They inserted him; told him what hour at the top of the morning he must be in chapel; and left him to find out his other ills. His cases were welcomed like Christians, by the whole staircase. These undergraduates abused one another's crockery as their own: the joint stock of breakables had just dwindled very low, and Mrs. Dodd's bountiful contribution was a godsend.

The new comer soon found that his views of a learned university had been narrow. Out of place in it? why, he could not have taken his wares to a better market; the modern Athens, like the ancient, cultivates muscle as well as mind. The captain of the university eleven saw a cricket-ball thrown all across the ground; he instantly sent a professional bowler to find out who that was; through the same ambassador the thrower was invited to play on club days; and proving himself an infallible catch and long stop, a mighty thrower, a swift runner, and a steady, though not very brilliant, bat, he was, after one or two repulses, actually adopted into the university eleven. He communicated this ray of glory by letter to his mother and sister with genuine delight, coldly and clumsily expressed; they replied with feigned and fluent rapture.

Advancing steadily in that line of academic study, towards which his genius lay, he won a hurdle race, and sent home a little silver hurdle: and soon after brought a pewter pot, with a Latin inscription recording the victory at "Fives" of Edward Dodd: but not too arrogantly; for in the centre of the pot was this device, "**The Lord is my illumination.**" The Curate of Sandford, who pulled number six in the Exeter boat, left Sandford for Witney: on this he felt he could no longer do his college justice by water, and his parish by land, nor escape the charge of pluralism, preaching at Witney and rowing at Oxford. He fluctuated, sighed, kept his Witney, and laid down his oar. Then Edward was solemnly weighed in his Jersey and flannel trousers, and proving only eleven stone eight, whereas he had been ungenerously suspected of twelve stone,* was elected to the vacant oar by acclamation. He was a picture in a boat; and oh!!! well pulled, six!! was a hearty ejaculation constantly hurled at him from the bank by many men of other colleges, and even by the more genial among the cads, as the Exeter glided at ease down the river, or shot up it in a race.

He was now as much talked of in the university as any man of his college, except one. Singularly enough that one was his townsman; but no friend of his; he was much Edward's senior in standing, though not in age; and this is a barrier the junior must not step over—without direct encouragement—at Oxford. Moreover, the college was a large one, and some of "the sets" very exclusive: young Hardie was Doge of a studious clique; and careful to make it understood that he was a reading man who boated and cricketed, to avoid the fatigue of lounging; not a boatman or cricketer who strayed into Aristotle in the intervals of Perspiration.

His public running since he left Harrow was as follows; the prize poem in his fourth term; the sculls in his sixth; the Ireland scholarship in his eighth (he pulled second for it the year before); Stroke of the Exeter in his tenth; and reckoned sure of a first class to consummate his twofold career.

To this young Apollo, crowned with variegated laurel, Edward looked up from a distance. The brilliant creature never bestowed a word on him by land; and by water only such observations as the following; "Time, Six!" "Well pulled, Six!" "Very well pulled, Six!" Except, by-the-by, one race; when he swore at him like a trooper for not being quicker at starting. The excitement of nearly being bumped by Brasenose in the first hundred yards was an excuse; however, Hardie apologized as they were dressing in the barge after the race: but the apology was so stiff, it did not pave the way to an acquaintance.

Young Hardie, rising twenty-one, thought nothing human worthy of reverence, but Intellect. Invited to dinner, on the same day, with the Emperor of Russia, and with Voltaire, and with meek St. John, he would certainly have told the coachman to put him down at Voltaire.

His quick eye detected Edward's character; but was not attracted by it: says he to one of his adherents, "What a good-natured spoon that Dodd is; Phœbus, what a name!" Edward, on the other hand, praised this brilliant in all his letters, and recorded his triumphs and such of

* There was at this time a prejudice against weight, which has yielded to experience.

his witty sayings as leaked through his own set, to reinvigorate mankind. This roused Julia's ire. It smouldered through three letters: but burst out when there was no letter, but Mrs. Dodd, meaning, Heaven knows, no harm, happened to say meekly, à propos of Edward, "You know, love, we cannot all be young Hardies." "No, and thank Heaven," said Julia, defiantly. "Yes, mamma," she continued, in answer to Mrs. Dodd's eyebrow, which had curved; "your mild glance reads my soul; I detest that boy." Mrs. Dodd smiled. "Are you sure you know what the word 'detest' means? and what has young Mr. Hardie done, that you should bestow so violent a sentiment on him?"

"Mamma, I am Edward's sister," was the tragic reply; then, kicking off the buskin pretty nimbly, "there! he beats our boy at everything, and ours sits quietly down and admires him for it: oh! how can a man let anybody or anything beat him! I wouldn't; without a desperate struggle." She clenched her white teeth and imagined the struggle. To be sure, she owned she had never seen this Mr. Hardie, but after all it was only Jane Hardie's brother, as Edward was hers; "and would I sit down and let Jane beat me at Things? never! never! never! I couldn't."

"Your friend to the death, dear; was not that your expression?"

"Oh, that was a slip of the tongue, dear mamma; I was off my guard. I generally am, by the way. But now I am on it, and propose an amendment. Now I second it. Now I carry it."

"And now let me hear it."

"She is my friend till death—or Eclipse; and that means until she eclipses me, of course." But she added softly, and with sudden gravity: "Ah! Jane Hardie has a fault which will always prevent her from eclipsing your humble servant in this wicked world."

"What is that?"

"She is too good. Much."

"Par exemple!"

"Too religious."

"Oh, that is another matter."

"For shame, mamma! I am glad to hear it: for, I scorn a life of frivolity; but then, again, I should not like to give up everthing, you know." Mrs. Dodd looked a little staggered too, at so vast a scheme of capitulation. But "everything" was soon explained to mean balls, concerts, dinner-parties in general, tea-parties without exposition of Scripture, races, and operas, cards, charades, and whatever else amuses society without perceptibly sanctifying it. All these, by Julia's account, Miss Hardie had renounced, and was now denouncing (with the young the latter verb treads on the very heels of the former). "And, you know, she is a district visitor."

This climax delivered, Julia stopped short, and awaited the result.

Mrs. Dodd heard it all with quiet disapproval and cool incredulity. She had seen so many young ladies healed of so many young enthusiasms, by a wedding ring. But, while she was searching diligently in her mine of ladylike English—mine with plenty of water in it, begging her pardon—for expressions to convey inoffensively, and roundabout, her conviction that Miss Hardie was a little, furious, simpleton, the post came and swept the subject away in a moment.

Two letters; one from Calcutta, one from Oxford.

They came quietly in upon one salver, and were opened and read with pleasurable interest, but without surprise, or misgiving; and without the slightest foretaste of their grave and singular consequences.

Rivers deep and broad start from such little springs.

David's letter was of unusual length for him. The main topics were, first, the date and manner of his return home. His ship, a very old one, had been condemned in port: and he was to sail a fine new teak-built vessel, the 'Agra,' as far as the Cape; where her captain, just recovered from a severe illness, would come on board, and convey her and him to England. In future, Dodd was to command one of the Company's large steamers to Alexandria and back.

"It is rather a come-down for a sailor, to go straight ahead like a wheel-barrow, in all weathers, with a steam-pot and a crew of coalheavers. But then I shall not be parted from my sweetheart such long dreary spells as I have been this twenty years, my dear love: so is it for me to complain?"

The second topic was pecuniary; the transfer of their savings from India, where interest was higher than at home, but the capital not so secure.

And the third was ardent and tender expressions of affection for the wife and children he adored. These effusions of the heart had no separate place, except in my somewhat arbitrary analysis of the honest sailor's letter; they were the under-current.

Mrs. Dodd read part of it out to Julia; in fact all but the money matter: that concerned the heads of the family more immediately; and Cash was a topic her daughter did not understand, nor care about. And when Mrs. Dodd had read it with glistening eyes, she kissed it tenderly, and read it all over again to herself, and then put it into her bosom as naïvely as a milkmaid in love.

Edward's letter was short enough, and Mrs. Dodd allowed Julia to read it to her, which she did with panting breath, and glowing cheeks, and a running fire of comments.

"'Dear Mamma, I hope you and Ju are quite well——'"

"Ju," murmured Mrs. Dodd, plaintively.

"'And that there is good news about papa coming home. As for me, I have plenty on my hands just now; all this term I have been ('training' scratched out, and another word put in: c - r—oh, I know) 'cramming.'"

"Cramming, love?"

"Yes, that is the Oxfordish for studying."

"'—For smalls.'"

Mrs. Dodd contrived to sigh interrogatively. Julia, who understood her every accent, reminded her that "smalls" was the new word for "little go."

"'—Cramming for smalls; and now I am in two races at Henley, and that rather puts the snaffle on reading and gooseberry pie (Goodness me), 'and adds to my chance of being ploughed for smalls.'"

"What does it all mean?" inquired mamma, "'gooseberry pie?' and 'the snaffle?' and 'ploughed?'"

"Well, the gooseberry pie is really too deep for me: but ploughed is the new Oxfordish for 'plucked.' O mamma, have you forgotten that? Plucked was vulgar, so now they are ploughed. 'For smalls; but I hope I shall not be, to vex you and Puss.'"

"Heaven forbid he should be so disgraced! But what has the cat to do with it?"

"Nothing on earth. Puss? that is me. How dare he? Did I not forbid all these nicknames and all this Oxfordish, by proclamation, last Long."

"Last Long?"

"Hem! last protracted vacation."

"'—Dear mamma, sometimes I cannot help being down in the mouth (why, it is a string of pearls) 'to think you have not got a son like Hardie.'" At this unfortunate reflection it was Julia's turn to suffer. She deposited the letter in her lap, and fired up. "Now, have not I cause to hate, and scorn, and despise, le petit Hardie?"

"Julia!"

"I mean to dislike with propriety, and gently to abominate—Mr. Hardie, junior.

"'—Dear mamma, do come to Henley on the tenth, you and Ju. The university eights will not be there, but the head boats of the Oxford and Cambridge river will; and the Oxford head boat is Exeter, you know; and I pull Six.'"

"Then I am truly sorry to hear it; my poor boy will overtask his strength; and how unfair of the other young gentlemen; it seems ungenerous; unreasonable; my poor child against so many."

"'—And I am entered for the sculls as well, and if you and "the Impetuosity'" (Vengeance!) 'were looking on from the bank, I do think I should be lucky this time. Henley is a long way from Barkington, but it is a pretty place; all the ladies admire it, and like to see both the universities out and a stunning race.' "Oh, well, there *is* an epithet. One would think thunder was going to race lightning, instead of Oxford Cambridge."

"'—If you can come, please write, and I will get you nice lodgings; I will not let you go to a noisy inn. Love to Julia and no end of kisses to my pretty mamma.

"'From your affectionate Son,

"'EDWARD DODD.'"

They wrote off a cordial assent, and reached Henley in time to see the dullest town in Europe; and also to see it turn one of the gayest in an hour or two; so impetuously came both the universities pouring into it —in all known vehicles that could go *their* pace—by land and water.

## CHAPTER I.

It was a bright hot day in June. Mrs. Dodd and Julia sat half reclining, with their parasols up, in an open carriage, by the brink of the Thames at one of its loveliest bends.

About a furlong up stream a silvery stone bridge, just mellowed by time, spanned the river with many fair arches. Through these the coming river peeped sparkling a long way above, then came meandering and shining down; loitered cool and sombre under the dark vaults, then glistened on again crookedly to the spot where sat its two fairest visitors that day; but at that very point flung off its serpentine habits, and shot straight away in a broad stream of scintillating water a mile long, down to an island in mid-stream; a little fairy island with old trees, and a white temple. To curl round this fairy isle the broad current parted, and both silver streams turned purple in the shade of the grove; then winded and melted from the sight.

This noble and rare passage of the silvery Thames was the Henley race-course. The starting place was down at the island, and the goal was up at a point in the river below the bridge, but above the bend where Mrs. Dodd and Julia sat, unruffled by the racing, and enjoying luxuriously the glorious stream, the mellow bridge crowded with carriages—whose fair occupants stretched a broad band of bright colour above the dark figures clustering on the battlements—and the green meadows opposite with the motley crowd streaming up and down.

Nor was that sense, which seems especially keen and delicate in women, left unregaled in the general bounty of the time. The green meadows on the opposite bank, and the gardens at the back of our fair friends, flung their sweet fresh odours at their liquid benefactor gliding by; and the sun himself seemed to burn perfumes, and the air to scatter them, over the motley merry crowd, that bright, hot, smiling, airy day in June.

Thus tuned to gentle enjoyment, the fair mother and her lovely daughter leaned back in a delicious languor proper to their sex, and eyed with unflagging though demure, interest, and furtive curiosity, the wealth of youth, beauty, stature, agility, gaiety, and good temper, the two great universities had poured out upon those obscure banks; all dressed in neat but easy-fitting clothes, cut in the height of the fashion; or else in Jerseys white or striped, and flannel trousers, and straw hats, or cloth caps of bright and various hues; betting, strolling, laughing, chaffing, larking, and whirling stunted bludgeons at Aunt Sally.

But as for the sport itself they were there to see, the centre of all these bright accessories, "The Racing," my ladies did not understand it, nor try, nor care a hook-and-eye about it. But this mild dignified indifference to the main event received a shock at two P.M.: for then the first heat for the cup came on, and Edward was in it. So then Racing became all in a moment a most interesting pastime; an appendage to Loving. He left to join his crew. And, soon after, the Exeter glided down the river before their eyes, with the beloved one rowing quietly in

it: his Jersey revealed not only the working power of his arms, as sunburnt below the elbow as a gipsy's, and as corded above as a blacksmith's, but also the play of the great muscles across his broad and deeply indented chest: his oar entered the water smoothly, gripped it severely, then came out clean, and feathered clear and tunably on the ringing rowlock: the boat jumped and then glided, at each neat, easy, powerful stroke. "Oh, how beautiful and strong he is!" cried Julia. "I had no idea."

Presently the competitor for this heat came down, the Cambridge boat, rowed by a fine crew in broad-striped Jerseys. "Oh, dear!" said Julia, "they are odious and strong in this boat too. I wish I was in it —with a gimlet; he *should* win, poor boy."

Which corkscrew staircase to Honour being inaccessible, the race had to be decided by two unfeminine trifles called "Speed" and "Bottom."

Few things in this vale of tears are more worthy a pen of fire than an English boat-race is, as seen by the runners; of whom I have often been one. But this race I am bound to indicate, not describe; I mean, to shew how it appeared to two ladies seated on the Henley side of the Thames, nearly opposite the winning-post. These fair novices then looked all down the river, and could just discern two whitish streaks on the water, one on each side the little fairy isle; and a great black patch on the Berkshire bank. The threatening streaks were the two racing boats: the black patch was about a hundred Cambridge and Oxford men, ready to run and hallo with the boats all the way, or at least till the last puff of wind should be run plus halloed out of their young bodies. Others less fleet and enduring, but equally clamorous, stood in knots at various distances, ripe for a shorter yell and run when the boats should come up to them. Of the natives and country visitors, those, who were not nailed down by bounteous Fate, ebbed and flowed up and down the bank with no settled idea, but of getting in the way as much as possible, and of getting knocked into the Thames as little as might be.

There was a long uneasy suspense.

At last a puff of smoke issued from a pistol down at the island; two oars seemed to splash into the water from each white streak; and the black patch was moving; so were the threatening streaks. Presently was heard a faint, continuous, distant murmur, and the streaks began to get larger, and larger, and larger; and the eight splashing oars looked four instead of two.

Every head was now turned down the river. Groups hung craning over it like nodding bulrushes.

Next the runners were swelled by the stragglers they picked up; so were their voices; and on came the splashing oars and roaring lungs.

Now the colours of the racing Jerseys peeped distinct. The oarsmen's heads and bodies came swinging back like one, and the oars seemed to lash the water savagely, like a connected row of swords, and the spray squirted at each vicious stroke. The boats leaped and darted side by side, and, looking at them in front, Julia could not say which was ahead. On they came nearer and nearer, with hundreds of voices vociferating, "Go it, Cambridge!" "Well pulled, Oxford!" "You are gaining, hurrah!"

"Well pulled, Trinity!" "Hurrah!" "Oxford!" "Cambridge!" "Now is your time, Hardie; pick her up!" "Oh, well pulled, Six!" "Well pulled, Stroke!" "Up, up! lift her a bit!" "Cambridge!" "Oxford!" "Hurrah!"

At this Julia turned red and pale by turns. "Oh, mamma!" said she, clasping her hands and colouring high, "would it be very wrong if I was to *pray* for Oxford to win?"

Mrs. Dodd had a monitory finger; it was on her left hand she raised it; and, that moment, as if she had given a signal, the boats, foreshortened no longer, shot out to treble the length they had looked hitherto, and came broadside past our palpitating fair, the elastic rowers stretched like greyhounds in a chase, darting forward at each stroke so boldly they seemed flying out of the boats, and surging back as superbly, an eightfold human wave: their nostrils all open, the lips of some pale and glutinous; their white teeth all clenched grimly, their young eyes all glowing, their supple bodies swelling, the muscles writhing beneath their Jerseys, and the sinews starting on each bare brown arm; their little shrill coxswains shouting imperiously at the young giants, and working to and fro with them, like jockeys at a finish; nine souls and bodies flung whole into each magnificent effort; water foaming and flying, rowlocks ringing, crowd running, tumbling, and howling like mad; and Cambridge a boat's nose ahead.

They had scarcely passed our two spectators, when Oxford put on a furious spurt, and got fully even with the leading boat. There was a louder roar than ever from the bank. Cambridge spurted desperately in turn, and stole those few feet back; and so they went fighting every inch of water. Bang! A cannon on the bank sent its smoke over both competitors; it dispersed in a moment, and the boats were seen pulling slowly towards the bridge, Cambridge with four oars, Oxford with six, as if that gun had winged them both.

The race was over.

But who had won our party could not see, and must wait to learn.

A youth, adorned with a blue and yellow rosette, cried out, in the hearing of Mrs. Dodd, "I say, they are properly pumped, both crews are:" then, jumping on to a spoke of her carriage-wheel, with a slight apology, he announced that two or three were shut up in the Exeter.

The exact meaning of these two verbs passive was not clear to Mrs. Dodd; but their intensity was: she fluttered, and wanted to go to her boy and nurse him, and turned two most imploring eyes on Julia, and Julia straightway kissed her with gentle vehemence, and offered to run and see.

"What, amongst all those young gentlemen, love? I fear that would not be proper. See, all the ladies remain apart." So they kept quiet and miserable, after the manner of females.

Meantime the Cantab's quick eye had not deceived him; in each racing boat were two young gentlemen leaning collapsed over their oars; and two more, who were in a cloud, and not at all clear whether they were in this world still, or in their zeal had pulled into a better.

But their malady was not a rare one in racing boats, and the remedy always at hand; it combined the rival systems; Thames was sprinkled in their faces—Homœopathy: and brandy in a teaspoon trickled down their throats—Allopathy: youth and spirits soon did the rest; and, the moment their eyes opened, their mouths opened; and, the moment their mouths opened, they fell a chaffing.

Mrs. Dodd's anxiety and Julia's were relieved by the appearance of Mr. Edward, in a tweed shooting-jacket, sauntering down to them, hands in his pocket, and a cigar in his mouth, placidly unconscious of their solicitude on his account. He was received with a little guttural cry of *delight*; the *misery* they had been in about him was duly concealed from him by both, and Julia asked him warmly who had won?

"Oh, Cambridge."

"Cambridge! Why, then you are beaten?"

"Rather." (Puff.)

"And you can come here with that horrible calm, and cigar, owning defeat, and puffing tranquillity, with the same mouth. Mamma, we are beaten. Beaten! actually."

"Never mind," said Edward, kindly; "you have seen a capital race, the closest ever known on this river; and one side or other must lose."

"And if they did not quite win, they very nearly did," observed Mrs. Dodd, composedly; then, with heartfelt content, "he is not hurt, and that is the main thing."

"Well, my Lady Placid, and Mr. Imperturbable, I am glad neither of your equanimities is disturbed; but defeat is a Bitter Pill to me."

Julia said this in her earnest voice, and drawing her scarf suddenly round her, so as almost to make it speak, digested her Bitter Pill in silence. During which process several Exeter men caught sight of Edward, and came round him, and an animated discussion took place. They began with asking him how it had happened, and, as he never spoke in a hurry, supplied him with the answers. A stretcher had broken in the Exeter. No, but the Cambridge was a much better-built boat, and her bottom cleaner. The bow oar of the Exeter was ill, and not fit for work. Each of these solutions was advanced and combated in turn, and then all together. At last the Babel lulled, and Edward was once more appealed to.

"Well, I will tell you the real truth," said he, "how it happened." (Puff.)

There was a pause of expectation, for the young man's tone was that of conviction, knowledge, and authority.

"The Cambridge men pulled faster than we did." (Puff.)

The hearers stared and then laughed.

"Come, old fellows," said Edward, "never win a boat-race on dry land! That is such a *plain* thing to do: gives the other side the laugh as well as the race. I have heard a stretcher or two told, but I saw none broken. (Puff.) Their boat is the worst I ever saw, it dips every stroke. (Puff.) Their strength lies in the crew. It was a good race and a fair one. Cambridge got a lead and kept it. (Puff.) They beat us a yard or two at rowing; but hang it all, don't let them beat us at telling the truth, not by an inch." (Puff.)

"All right, old fellow!" was now the cry. One observed, however,

that Stroke did not take the matter so coolly as Six, for he had shed a tear getting out of the boat.

"Shed a fiddlestick!" squeaked a little sceptic.

"No," said another, "he didn't quite shed it; his pride wouldn't let him."

"So he decanted it, and put it by for supper," suggested Edward, and puffed.

"None of your chaff, Six. He had a gulp or two, and swallowed the rest by main force."

"Don't you talk: you can swallow anything, it seems." (Puff.)

"Well, I believe it," said one of Hardie's own set. "Dodd doesn't know him as we do. Taff Hardie can't bear to be beat."

When they were gone, Mrs. Dodd observed, "Dear me! what if the young gentleman did cry a little, it was very excusable; after such great exertions it *was* disappointing, mortifying. I pity him for one, and wish he had his mother alive and here, to dry them."*

"Mamma, it is you for reading us," cried Edward, slapping his thigh. "Well, then, since you can feel for a fellow, Hardie *was* a good deal cut up. You know the university was in a manner beaten, and he took the blame. He never cried; that was a cracker of those fellows. But he did give one great sob, that was all, and hung his head on one side a moment. But then he fought out of it directly, like a man, and there was an end of it, or ought to have been. Hang chatterboxes!"

"And what did you say to console him, Edward?" inquired Julia warmly.

"What me? Console my senior, and my Stroke? No thank you."

At this thunderbolt of etiquette both ladies kept their countenances —this was *their* muscular feat that day—and the racing for the sculls came on: six competitors—two Cambridge, three Oxford, one London. The three heats furnished but one good race, a sharp contest between a Cambridge man and Hardie, ending in favour of the latter; the Londoner walked away from his opponent. Sir Imperturbable's competitor was impetuous, and ran into him in the first hundred yards; Sir I. consenting calmly. The umpire, appealed to on the spot, decided that it was a foul, Mr. Dodd being in his own water. He walked over the course, and explained the matter to his sister, who delivered her mind thus:

"Oh! if races are to be won by going slower than the other, we may shine yet: *only*, I call it Cheating, not Racing."

He smiled unmoved; she gave her scarf the irony twist, and they all went to dinner. The business recommenced with a race between a London boat and the winner of yesterday's heat, Cambridge. Here the truth of Edward's remark appeared. The Cambridge boat was too light for the men, and kept burying her nose; the London craft, under a heavy crew, floated like a cork. The Londoners soon found out their advantage, and, overrating it, steered into their opponents' water prematurely, in spite of a warning voice from the bank. Cambridge saw, and cracked on for a foul; and for about a minute it was anybody's race. But the Londoners pulled gallantly, and just scraped clear

* Oh where, *and* oh where, *was* her Lindley Murray gone?

ahead. This peril escaped, they kept their backs straight and a clear lead to the finish; Cambridge followed a few feet in their wake, pulling wonderfully fast to the end, but a trifle out of form, and much distressed.

At this both universities looked blue, their humble aspiration being, first to beat off all the external world, and then tackle each other for the prize.

Just before Edward left his friends for "the sculls," the final heat, a note was brought to him. He ran his eye over it, and threw it over into his sister's lap. The ladies read it. Its writer had won a prize poem, and so now is our time to get a hint for composition:

"DEAR SIR,

"Oxford must win something. Suppose we go in for these sculls. You are a horse that can stay; Silcock is hot for the lead at starting, I hear; so I mean to work him out of wind; then you can wait on us, and pick up the race. My head is not well enough to-day to win, but I am good to pump the cockney; he is quick, but a little stale.

"Yours truly,

"ALFRED HARDIE."

Mrs. Dodd remarked that the language was sadly figurative; but she hoped Edward might be successful in spite of his correspondent's style.

Julia said she did not dare hope it. "The race is not always to the slowest and the dearest." This was in allusion to yesterday's "foul."

The skiffs started down at the island, and, as they were longer coming up than the eight-oars, she was in a fever for nearly ten minutes; at last, near the opposite bank, up came the two leading skiffs struggling, both men visibly exhausted; Silcock ahead, but his rudder overlapped by Hardie's bow; each in his own water.

"We are third," sighed Julia, and turned her head away from the river sorrowfully; but only for a moment, for she felt Mrs. Dodd start and press her arm; and lo! Edward's skiff was shooting swiftly across from their side of the river. He was pulling just within himself, in beautiful form, and with far more elasticity than the other two had got left. As he passed his mother and sister, his eyes seemed to strike fire, and he laid out all his powers, and went at the leading skiffs hand over head. There was a yell of astonishment and delight from both sides of the Thames. He passed Hardie, who upon that relaxed his speed. In thirty seconds more he was even with Silcock; then came a keen struggle: but the new comer was "the horse that could stay:" he drew steadily ahead, and the stern of his boat was in a line with Silcock's person, when the gun fired, and a fearful roar from the bridge, the river, and the banks, announced that the favourite university had picked up the sculls in the person of Dodd of Exeter.

In due course he brought the little silver sculls, and pinned them on his mother.

While she and Julia were telling him how proud they were, and how happy they should be, but for their fears that he would hurt himself beating gentlemen ever so much older than himself, came two Exeter

men with wild looks hunting for him. "Oh, Dodd! Hardie wants you directly."

"Don't you go, Edward," whispered Julia: "why should you be at Mr. Hardie's beck and call? I never heard of such a thing. That youth *will* make me hate him."

"Oh, I think I had better just go and see what it is about," replied Edward: "I shall be back directly." And on this understanding he went off with the men.

Half an hour passed; an hour: two hours; and he did not return. Mrs. Dodd and Julia sat wondering what had become of him, and were looking all around, and getting uneasy: when at last they did hear something about him, but indirectly, and from an unexpected quarter. A tall young man in a Jersey and flannel trousers, and a little straw hat, with a purple rosette, came away from the bustle to the more secluded part where they sat, and made eagerly for the Thames as if he was a duck, and going in. But at the brink he flung himself into a sitting posture, and dipped his white handkerchief into the stream, then tied it viciously round his brow, doubled himself up with his head in his hands, and rocked himself like an old woman—minus the patience, of course.

Mrs. Dodd and Julia, sitting but a few paces behind him, interchanged a look of intelligence. The young gentleman was a stranger: but they had recognized a faithful old acquaintance at the bottom of his pantomime. They discovered, too, that the afflicted one was a personage: for he had not sat there long when quite a little band of men came after him. Observing his semicircularity and general condition, they hesitated a moment: and then one of them remonstrated eagerly. "For Heaven's sake come back to the boat! there is a crowd of all the colleges come round us; and they all say Oxford is being sold; we had a chance for the four-oared race, and you are throwing it away."

"What do I care what they all say?" was the answer, delivered with a kind of plaintive snarl.

"But we care."

"Care then! I pity you." And he turned his back fiercely on them; and then groaned by way of half apology. Another tried him, "Come, give us a civil answer, please."

"People that intrude upon a man's privacy, racked with pain, have no right to demand civility," replied the sufferer more gently, but sullenly enough.

"Do you call this privacy?"

"It was, a minute ago. Do you think I left the boat, and came here among the natives, for company? and noise? With my head splitting.

Here Julia gave Mrs. Dodd a soft pinch, to which Mrs. Dodd replied by a smile. And so they settled who this petulant young invalid must be.

"There, it is no use," observed one, sotto voce, "the bloke really has awful headaches, like a girl, and then he always shuts up this way. You will only rile him, and get the rough side of his tongue."

Here, then, the conference drew towards a close. But a Wadham man, who was one of the ambassadors, interposed. "Stop a minute,"

said he. "Mr. Hardie, I have not the honour to be acquainted with you, and I am not here to annoy you, nor to be affronted by you. But the university has a stake in this race, and the university expostulates through us; through me if you like."

"Who have I the honour," inquired Hardie, assuming politeness sudden and vast.

"Badham, of Wadham."

"Badham o' Wadham? Hear that, ye tuneful nine! Well Badham o' Wadham, you are no acquaintance of mine; so you may possibly not be a fool. Let us assume by way of hypothesis that you are a man of sense, a man of reason as well as of rhyme. Then follow my logic. Hardie of Exeter is a good man in a boat when he has not got a headache.

"When he has got a headache, Hardie of Exeter is not worth a straw in a boat.

"Hardie of Exeter has a headache now.

"Ergo, the university would put the said Hardie into a race, headache and all, and reduce defeat to a certainty.

"And, ergo, on the same premises, I, not being an egotist, nor an ass, have taken Hardie of Exeter and his headache out of the boat, as I should have done any other cripple.

"Secondly, I have put the best man on the river into this cripple's place.

"Total, I have given the university the benefit of my brains; and the university, not having brains enough to see what it gains by the exchange, turns again and rends me, like an animal frequently mentioned in Scripture; but, nota bene, never once with approbation."

And the afflicted Rhetorician attempted a diabolical grin, but failed signally; and groaned instead.

"Is this your answer to the university, sir?"

At this query, delivered in a somewhat threatening tone, the invalid sat up all in a moment, like a poked lion. "Oh, if Badham o' Wadham thinks to crush me auctoritate suâ et totius universitatis, Badham o' Wadham may just tell the whole university to go and be d——d, from the Chancellor down to the junior cook at Skimmery Hall, with my compliments."

"Ill-conditioned brute!" muttered Badham of Wadham. "Serve you right if the university were to chuck you into the Thames." And with this comment they left him to his ill temper. One remained; sat quietly down a little way off, struck a sweetly aromatic lucifer, and blew a noisome cloud; but the only one which betokens calm.

As for Hardie, he held his aching head over his knees, absorbed in pain, and quite unconscious that sacred pity was poisoning the air beside him, and two pair of dovelike eyes resting on him with womanly concern.

Mrs. Dodd and Julia had heard the greatest part of this colloquy. They had terribly quick ears; and nothing better to do with them just then. Indeed, their interest was excited.

Julia went so far as to put her salts into Mrs. Dodd's hand with a little earnest look. But Mrs. Dodd did not act upon the hint; she had learned who the young man was; had his very name been strange to

her, she would have been more at her ease with him. Moreover, his rudeness to the other men repelled her a little; above all, he had uttered a monosyllable; and a stinger; a thorn of speech not in her vocabulary, nor even in society's. Those might be his manners, even when not aching. Still, it seems, a feather would have turned the scale in his favour, for she whispered, "I have a great mind; if I could but catch his eye."

While feminine pity and social reserve were holding the balance so nicely, and nonsensically, about half a split straw, one of the racing four-oars went down close under the Berkshire bank. "London!" observed Hardie's adherent.

"What, are you there, old fellow?" murmured Hardie, in a faint voice. "Now, that is like a friend, a real friend, to sit by me, and not make a row. Thank you! thank you!"

Presently the Cambridge four-oar passed: it was speedily followed by the Oxford; the last came down in mid-stream, and Hardie eyed it keenly as it passed. "There," he cried, "was I wrong? There is a swing for you; there is a stroke. I did not know what a treasure I had got sitting behind me."

The ladies looked, and lo! the lauded Stroke of the four-oar was their Edward.

"Sing out and tell him it is not like the sculls. He must fight for the lead, at starting, and hold it with his eyelids when he has got it."

The adherent bawled this at Edward, and Edward's reply came ringing back in a clear cheerful voice, "We mean to try all we know."

"What is the odds?" inquired the invalid, faintly.

"Even on London; two to one against Cambridge; three to one against us."

"Take all my tin and lay it on," sighed the sufferer.

"Fork it out, then. Hallo! eighteen pounds? Fancy having eighteen pounds at the end of term; I'll get the odds up at the bridge directly. Here's a lady offering you her smelling-bottle."

Hardie rose and turned round, and sure enough there were two ladies seated in their carriage at some distance; one of whom was holding him out three pretty little things enough, a little smile, a little blush, and a little cut-glass bottle with a gold cork. The last panegyric on Edward had turned the scale.

Hardie went slowly up to the side of the carriage, and took off his hat to them with a half-bewildered air. Now that he was so near, his face showed very pale; the more so that his neck was a good deal tanned: his eyelids were rather swollen, and his young eyes troubled and almost filmy with the pain. The ladies saw, and their gentle bosoms were touched; they had heard of him as a victorious young Apollo trampling on all difficulties of mind and body; and they saw him wan, and worn, with feminine suffering: the contrast made him doubly interesting.

Arrived at the side of the carriage, he almost started at Julia's beauty. It was sun-like, and so were her two lovely earnest eyes, beaming soft pity on him with an eloquence he had never seen in human eyes before; for Julia's were mirrors of herself: they did nothing by halves.

He looked at her and her mother, and blushed, and stood irresolute.

awaiting their commands. This sudden contrast to his petulance with his own sex paved the way. "You have a sad headache, sir," said Mrs. Dodd; "oblige me by trying my salts."

He thanked her in a low voice.

"And mamma," inquired Julia, "ought he to sit in the sun?"

"Certainly not. You had better sit there, sir, and profit by our shade and our parasols."

"Yes, mamma, but you know the real place where he ought to be, is Bed."

"Oh, pray don't say that," implored the patient.

But Julia continued, with unabated severity,

"And that is where he would go this minute, if I was his mamma."

"Instead of his junior, and a stranger," said Mrs. Dodd, somewhat coldly, dwelling with a very slight monitory emphasis on the "stranger."

Julia said nothing, but drew in perceptibly, and was dead silent ever after.

"Oh, madam!" said Hardie, eagerly, "I do not dispute her authority; nor yours. You have a right to send me where you please, after your kindness in noticing my infernal head, and doing me the honour to speak to me, and lending me this. But if I go to bed, my head will be my master. Besides, I shall throw away what little chance I have of making your acquaintance; and the race just coming off!"

"We will not usurp authority, sir," said Mrs. Dodd, quietly; "but we know what a severe headache is, and should be glad to see you sit still in the shade, and excite yourself as little as possible."

"Yes, madam," said the youth, humbly, and sat down like a lamb. He glanced now and then at the island, and now and then peered up at the radiant young mute beside him.

The silence continued till it was broken by—a fish out of water. An under-graduate in spectacles came mooning along, all out of his element. It was Mr. Kennet, who used to rise at four every morning to his Plato, and walk up Shotover-hill every afternoon, wet or dry, to cool his eyes for his evening work. With what view he deviated to Henley has not yet been ascertained; he was blind as a bat, and did not care a button about any earthly boat-race, except the one in the Æneid, even if he could have seen one. However, nearly all the men of his college went to Henley, and perhaps some branch, hitherto unexplored, of animal magnetisim drew him after. At any rate, there was his body; and his mind at Oxford and Athens, and other venerable but irrelevant cities. He brightened at sight of his doge, and asked him warmly if he had heard the news.

"No; what? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Why two of our men are ploughed; that is all," said Kennet, affecting with withering irony to undervalue his intelligence.

"Confound it, Kennet, how you frightened me! I was afraid there was some screw loose with the crew."

At this very instant, the smoke of the pistol was seen to puff out from the island, and Hardie rose to his feet. "They are off!" cried he to the ladies, and after first putting his palms together with a hypocritical look of apology, he laid one hand on an old barge that was drawn up ashore,

and sprang like a mountain goat on to the bow, lighting on the very gunwale. The position was not tenable an instant, but he extended one foot very nimbly and boldly, and planted it on the other gunwale; and there he was in a moment, headache and all, in an attitude as large and inspired as the boldest gesture antiquity has committed to marble; he had even the advantage in stature over most of the sculptured forms of Greece. But a double opera-glass at his eye "spoiled the lot," as Mr. Punch says.

I am not to repeat the particulars of a distant race coming nearer and nearer. The main features are always the same, only this time it was more exciting to our fair friends, on account of Edward's high stake in it. And then their grateful though refractory patient, an authority in their eyes, indeed all but a river-god, stood poised in air, and in excited whispers interpreted each distant and unintelligible feature down to them:

"Cambridge was off quickest."

"But not much."

"Anybody's race at present, madam."

"If this lasts long we may win. None of them can stay like us."

"Come, the favourite is not so very dangerous."

"Cambridge looks best."

"I wouldn't change with either, so far."

"Now, in forty seconds more, I shall be able to pick out the winner."

Julia went up this ladder of thrills to a high state of excitement; and, indeed, they were all so tuned to racing pitch, that some metal nerve or other seemed to jar inside all three, when the piercing grating voice of Kennet broke in suddenly with,

"How do you construe γαστρμαργος?"

The wretch had burrowed in the intellectual ruins of Greece the moment the pistol went off, and college chat ceased. Hardie raised his opera-glass, and his first impulse was to brain the judicious Kennet, gazing up to him for an answer, with spectacles goggling like supernatural eyes of dead sophists in the sun.

"How do you construe 'Hoc age?' you incongruous dog. Hold your tongue, and mind the race."

"There, I thought so. Where's your three to one, now? The Cockneys are out of this event, any way. Go on, Universities, and order their suppers!"

"But, which is first, sir?" asked Julia, imploringly. "Oh, which is first of all?"

"Neither. Never mind; it looks well. London is pumped; and if Cambridge can't lead him before this turn in the river, the race will be ours. Now, look out! By Jove, we are *ahead!*"

The leading boats came on, Oxford pulling a long, lofty, sturdy stroke, that seemed as if it never could compete with the quick action of its competitor. Yet it was undeniably ahead, and gaining at every swing.

Young Hardie writhed on his perch. He screeched at them across the Thames "Well pulled, Stroke! Well pulled all! Splendidly pulled, Dodd! You are walking away from them altogether. Hurrah! Oxford for ever, hurrah!" The gun went off over the heads of the Oxford crew in advance, and even Mrs. Dodd and Julia could see the race was theirs.

"We have won at last," cried Julia, all on fire, "and fairly; only think of that!"

Hardie turned round, grateful to beauty for siding with his university. "Yes, and the fools may thank me; or rather my man Dodd, Dodd for ever! Hurrah!"

At this climax even Mrs. Dodd took a gentle share in the youthful enthusiasm that was boiling around her, and her soft eyes sparkled, and she returned the fervid pressure of her daughter's hand; and both their faces were flushed with gratified pride and affection.

"Dodd!" broke in "the incongruous dog," with a voice just like a saw's; "Dodd? Ah, that's the man who is just ploughed for smalls."

Ice has its thunderbolts.

## CHAPTER II.

WINNING boat-races was all very fine; but a hundred such victories could not compensate Mr. Kennet's female hearers for one such defeat as he had announced, a defeat that, to their minds, carried disgrace. Their Edward plucked! At first they were benumbed, and sat chilled, with red cheeks, bewildered between present triumph and mortification at hand. Then the colour ebbed out of their faces, and they encouraged each other feebly in whispers, "Might it not be a mistake?"

But unconscious Kennet robbed them of this timid hope. He was now in his element, knew all about it, rushed into details, and sawed away all doubt from their minds. The sum was this. Dodd's general performance was mediocre, but passable; he was plucked for his Logic. Hardie said he was very sorry for it. "What does it matter?" answered Kennet; "he is a boating-man."

"Well, and I am a boating-man. Why you told me yourself, the other day, poor Dodd was anxious about it on account of his friends. And, by-the-by, that reminds me they say he has got two pretty sisters here."

Says Kennet, briskly, "I'll go and tell him; I know him just to speak to."

"What, doesn't he know?"

"How can he know?" said Kennet, jealously; "the testamurs were only just out as I came away." And with this he started on his congenial errand.

Hardie took two or three of his long strides, and fairly collared him. "You will do nothing of the kind."

"What, not tell a man when he's ploughed? That is a good joke."

"No. There's time enough. Tell him after chapel to-morrow, or *in* chapel if you must: but why poison his triumphal cup? And his sisters,

too, why spoil their pleasure? Hang it all, not a word about 'ploughing,' to any living soul to-day."

To his surprise, Kennet's face expressed no sympathy, nor even bare assent. At this, Hardie lost patience, and burst out impetuously, "Take care how you refuse me; take care how you thwart me in this. He is the best-natured fellow in college. It doesn't matter to you, and it does to him; and if you *do*, then take my name off the list of your acquaintance, for I'll never speak a word to you again in this world; no, not on my death-bed, by Heaven!"

The threat was extravagant; but Youth's glowing cheek, and eye, and imperious lip, and simple generosity, made it almost beautiful.

Kennet whined, "Oh, if you talk like that, there is an end to fair argument."

"End it then, and promise me; upon your honour!"

"Why not? What bosh! There I promise. Now, how do you construe *κυμινοπριστης*?"

The incongruous dog ("I thank thee, Taff, for teaching me that word") put this query with the severity of an inquisitor bringing back a garrulous prisoner to the point. Hardie replied gaily, "Any way you like, now you are a good fellow again."

"Come, that is evasive. My tutor says it cannot be rendered by any one English word; no more can *γαστριμαργος*."

"Why, what on earth can he know about English? *γαστριμαργος* is a Cormorant: *κυμινοπριστης* is a Skinflint; and your tutor is a Duffer. Hush! Keep dark now! here he comes." And he went hastily to meet Edward Dodd: and by that means intercepted him on his way to the carriage. "Give me your hand, Dodd," he cried; "you have saved the university. You must be stroke of the eight-oar after me. Let me see more of you than I have, old fellow."

"With all my heart," replied Edward, calmly, but taking the offered hand cordially; though he rather wanted to get away to his mother and sister. "We will pull together, and read together into the bargain," continued Hardie.

"Read together? You and I? What do you mean?"

"Well, you see I am pretty well up in the higher books; what I have got to rub up is my Divinity and my Logic; especially my Logic. Will you grind Logic with me? Say 'Yes,' for I know you will keep your word."

"It is too good an offer to refuse, Hardie; but now I look at you, you are excited: wonderfully excited: with the race, eh? Now, just—you—wait—quietly—till next week, and then, if you are so soft as to ask me in cool blood——"

"Wait a week?" cried the impetuous youth. "No, not a minute. It is settled. There, we cram Logic together next term."

And he shook Edward's hand again with glistening eyes and an emotion that was quite unintelligible to Edward; but not to the quick, sensitive spirits, who sat but fifteen yards off.

"You really must excuse me just now," said Edward, and ran to the carriage, and put out both hands to the fair occupants. They kissed him eagerly, with little tender sighs; and it cost them no slight effort not to cry publicly over "the beloved," "the victorious," "the ploughed."

Young Hardie stood petrified. What? These ladies Dodd's sisters: Why, one of them had called the other mamma. Good Heavens, all his talk in their hearing had been of Dodd; and Kennet and he between them had let out the very thing he wanted to conceal, especially from Dodd's relations. He gazed at them, and turned hot to the very forehead. Then, not knowing what to do or say, and being after all but a clever boy, not a cool "never unready" man of the world, he slipped away, blushing. Kennet followed, goggling.

Left to herself, Mrs. Dodd would have broken the bad news to Edward at once, and taken the line of consoling him under her own vexation: it would not have been the first time that she had played that card. But young Mr. Hardie had said it would be unkind to poison Edward's day: and it is sweet woman's nature to follow suit; so she and Julia put bright faces on, and Edward passed a right jocund afternoon with them; he was not allowed to surprise one of the looks they interchanged to relieve their secret mortification. But, after dinner, as the time drew near for him to go back to Oxford, Mrs. Dodd became silent, and a little distraite; and at last drew her chair away to a small table, and wrote a letter.

In directing it she turned it purposely, so that Julia could catch the address: "*Edward Dodd, Esq., Exeter College, Oxford.*'

Julia was naturally startled at first, and her eye roved almost comically to and fro the letter and its Destination seated calm and unconscious of woman's beneficent wiles. But her heart soon divined the mystery; it was to reach him the first thing in the morning, and spare him the pain of writing the news to them; and, doubtless, so worded as not to leave him a day in doubt of their forgiveness and sympathy.

Julia took the missive unobserved by the Destination, and glided out of the room to get it quietly posted.

The servant-girl was waiting on the second-floor lodgers, and told her so, with a significant addition, viz., that the post was in this street, and only a few doors off. Julia was a little surprised at her coolness, but took the hint with perfect good temper, and just put on her shawl and bonnet, and went with it herself. The post-office was not quite so near as represented; but she was soon there, for she was eager till she had posted it; but she came back slowly and thoughtfully; here in the street, lighted only by the moon, and an occasional gaslight, there was no need for self-restraint, and soon her mortification betrayed itself in her speaking countenance. And to think that her mother, on whom she doted, should have to write to her son, there present, and post the letter! This made her eyes fill, and before she reached the door of the lodging, they were brimming over.

As she put her foot on the step, a timid voice addressed her in a low tone of supplication. "May I venture to speak one word to you, Miss Dodd?—one single word?"

She looked up surprised; and it was young Mr. Hardie.

His tall figure was bending towards her submissively, and his face, as well as his utterance, betrayed considerable agitation.

And what led to so unusual a rencontre between a young gentleman and lady who had never been introduced?

"The Tender Passion," says a reader of many novels.
Why, yes; the tenderest in all our nature:
Wounded Vanity.

Naturally proud and sensitive, and inflated by success and flattery, Alfred Hardie had been torturing himself ever since he fled Edward's female relations. He was mortified to the core. He confounded "the fools" (his favourite synonym for his acquaintance) for going and calling Dodd's mother an elder sister, and so not giving him a chance to divine her. And then that he, who prided himself on his discrimination, should take them for ladies of rank, or, at all events, of the highest fashion; and, climax of humiliation, that so great a man as he should go and seem to court them by praising Dodd of Exeter, by enlarging upon Dodd of Exeter, by offering to grind Logic with Dodd of Exeter. Who would believe that this was a coincidence, a mere coincidence? They could not be expected to believe it; female vanity would not let them. He tingled, and was not far from hating the whole family; so bitter a thing is that which I have ventured to dub "the Tenderest Passion." He itched to soothe his irritation by explaining to Edward. Dodd was a frank, good-hearted fellow; he would listen to facts, and convince the ladies in turn. Hardie learned where Dodd's party lodged, and waited about the door to catch him alone; Dodd must be in college by twelve, and would leave Henley before ten. He waited till he was tired of waiting. But at last the door opened; he stepped forward, and out tripped Miss Dodd. "Confound it!" muttered Hardie, and drew back. However, he stood and admired her graceful figure and action, her ladylike speed without bustling. Had she come back at the same pace, he would never have ventured to stop her: on such a thread do things hang: but she returned very slowly, hanging her head; her look at him and his headache recurred to him, a look brimful of goodness. She would do as well as Edward, better perhaps. He yielded to impulse, and addressed her, but with all the trepidation of a youth defying the giant Etiquette for the first time in his life.

Julia was a little surprised and fluttered, but did not betray it; she had been taught self-command by example, if not by precept.

"Certainly, Mr. Hardie," said she, with a modest composure a young coquette might have envied under the circumstances.

Hardie had now only to explain himself: but instead of that, he stood looking at her with silent concern; the fair face she raised to him was wet with tears; so were her eyes, and even the glorious eyelashes were fringed with that tender spray; and it glistened in the moonlight.

This sad and pretty sight drove the vain but generous youth's calamity clean out of his head. "Why, you are crying! Miss Dodd, what is the matter? I hope nothing has happened."

Julia turned her head away a little fretfully, with a "No, no!" But soon her natural candour and simplicity prevailed; a simplicity not without dignity; she turned round to him and looked him in the face. "Why should I deny it to you, sir, who have been good enough to sympathize with us? We *are* mortified, sadly mortified, at dear Edward's disgrace; and it has cost us a struggle not to disobey you, and *poison his triumphal cup* with sad looks. And mamma had to write to him, and console him against to-morrow: but I hope he will not feel

it so severely as she does: and I have just posted it myself, and, when I thought of our dear mamma being driven to such expedients, I——Oh!" And the pure young heart, having opened itself by words, must flow a little more.

"Oh, pray don't cry," said young Hardie, tenderly; "don't take such a trifle to heart so; you crying makes me feel guilty for letting it happen. It shall never occur again. If I had only known, it should never have happened at all."

"Once is enough," sighed Julia.

"Indeed you take it too much to heart; it is only out of Oxford a plough is thought much of; especially a single one; that is so very common. You see, Miss Dodd, an university examination consists of several items: neglect but one, and Crichton himself would be ploughed: because brilliancy in your other papers is not allowed to count; that is how the most distinguished man of our day got ploughed for Smalls; I had a narrow escape, I know, for one. But, Miss Dodd, if you knew how far your brother's performance on the river outweighs a mere slip in the schools, in all university men's eyes, the dons' and all, you would not make this bright day end sadly to Oxford by crying. Why, I could find you a thousand men who would be ploughed to-morrow with glory and delight to win one such race as your brother has won two."

Julia sighed again. But it sounded now half like a sigh of relief; the final sigh, with which the fair consent to be consoled.

And indeed this improvement in the music did not escape Hardie; he felt he was on the right tack: he enumerated fluently, and by name, many good men, besides Dean Swift, who had been ploughed, yet had cultivated the field of letters in their turn; and, in short, he was so earnest and plausible, that something like a smile hovered about his hearer's lips, and she glanced askant at him with furtive gratitude from under her silky lashes. But it soon recurred to her that this was rather a long interview to accord to "a stranger," and under the moon; so she said a little stiffly, "And was this what you were good enough to wish to say to me, Mr. Hardie?"

"No, Miss Dodd, to be frank, it was not. My motive in addressing you, without the right to take such a freedom, was egotistical. I came here to clear myself; I—I was afraid you must think me a humbug, you know."

"I do not understand you, indeed."

"Well, I feared you and Mrs. Dodd might think I praised Dodd so, and did what little I did for him, knowing who you were, and wishing to curry favour with you by all that; and that is so underhand and paltry a way of going to work, I should despise myself."

"Oh, Mr. Hardie," said the young lady, smiling, "how foolish: why, of course we knew you had no idea."

"Indeed I had not; but how could you know it?"

"Why, we saw it. Do you think we have no eyes? ah, and much keener ones than gentlemen have. It is mamma and I who are to blame, if anybody; we ought to have declared ourselves: it would have been more generous, more—manly. But we cannot all be gentlemen, you know. It was so sweet to hear Edward praised by one who did not know us; it was like stolen fruit; and by one whom others

praise: so, if you can forgive us our slyness, there is an end of the matter."

"Forgive you? you have taken a thorn out of my soul."

"Then I am so glad you summoned courage to speak to me without ceremony. Mamma would have done better though; but after all, do not I know her? my mamma is all goodness and intelligence; and be assured, sir, she does you justice; and is quite sensible of your *disinterested* kindness to dear Edward." With this she was about to retire.

"Ah! But you, Miss Dodd? with whom I have taken this unwarrantable liberty?" said Hardie, imploringly.

"Me, Mr. Hardie? you do me the honour to require my opinion of your performances: including of course this self-introduction?"

Hardie hung his head; there was a touch of satire in the lady's voice, he thought.

Her soft eyes rested demurely on him a moment; she saw he was a little abashed.

"My opinion of it all is that you have been very kind to us; in being most kind to our poor Edward. I never saw, nor read of anything more generous, more manly. And then *so* thoughtful, *so* considerate, *so* delicate! So instead of criticising you, as you seem to expect, his sister only blesses you, and thanks you from the very bottom of her heart."

She had begun with a polite composure borrowed from mamma; but, once launched, her ardent nature got the better: her colour rose and rose, and her voice sank and sank, and the last words came almost in a whisper; and such a lovely whisper; a gurgle from the heart: and, as she concluded, her delicate hand came sweeping out with a heaven-taught gesture of large and sovereign cordiality, that made even the honest words and the divine tones more eloquent. It was too much: the young man, ardent as herself, and not, in reality, half so timorous, caught fire; and seeing a white, eloquent hand rather near him, caught it, and pressed his warm lips on it in mute adoration and gratitude.

At this she was scared and offended. "Oh! keep that for the Queen!" cried she, turning scarlet, and tossing her fair head into the air, like a startled stag, and she drew her hand away quickly and decidedly, though not roughly. He stammered a lowly apology; in the very middle of it she said quietly, "Good-bye, Mr. Hardie," and swept, with a gracious little curtsey through the doorway, leaving him spell-bound.

And so the virginal instinct of self-defence carried her off swiftly and cleverly. But none too soon; for, on entering the house, that external composure her two mothers Mesdames Dodd and Nature had taught her, fell from her like a veil, and she fluttered up the stairs to her own room with hot cheeks, and panted there like some wild thing that has been grasped at and grazed. She felt young Hardie's lips upon the palm of her hand plainly; they seemed to linger there still; it was like light but live velvet. This, and the ardent look he had poured into her eyes, set the young creature quivering. Nobody had looked at her so before, and no young gentleman had imprinted living velvet on her hand. She was alarmed, ashamed, and uneasy. What right had he to look at her like that? What shadow of a right to go and kiss her hand? He

could not pretend to think she had put it out to be kissed; ladies put forth the back of the hand for that, not the palm. The truth was he was an impudent fellow, and she hated him now, and herself too for being so simple as to let him talk to her: mamma would not have been so imprudent when she was a girl.

She would not go down, for she felt there must be something of this kind legibly branded on her face: "O! O! just look at this young lady! She has been letting a young gentleman kiss the palm of her hand; and the feel has not gone off yet: you may see that by her cheeks."

But, then, poor Edward! she must go down.

So she put a wet towel to her tell-tale cheeks, and dried them by artistic dabs, avoiding friction, and came down stairs like a mouse, and turned the door-handle noiselessly, and glided into the sitting-room looking so transparent, conscious, and all on fire with beauty and animation, that even Edward was startled, and, in a whisper, bade his mother observe what a pretty girl she was; "beats all the county girls in a caffter." Mrs. Dodd did look; and, consequently, as soon as ever Edward was gone to Oxford, she said to Julia, "You are feverish, love; you have been excited with all this. You had better go to bed."

Julia complied willingly; for she wanted to be alone and think. She retired to her own room, and went the whole day over again; and was happy and sorry, exalted and uneasy, by turns; and ended by excusing Mr. Hardie's escapade, and throwing the blame on herself. She ought to have been more distant; gentlemen were not expected, nor indeed much wanted, to be modest. A little assurance did not misbecome them. "Really I think it sets them off," said she to herself.

Grand total: "What *must* he think of me?"

Time gallops in reverie: the town clock struck twelve, and with its iron tongue remorse entered her youthful conscience. Was this obeying mamma? Mamma had said, "Go to bed:" not, "Go up-stairs and meditate: upon young gentlemen." She gave an expressive shake of her fair shoulders, like a swan flapping the water off its downy wings, and so dismissed the subject from her mind.

Then she said her prayers.

Then she rose from her knees, and in tones of honey said, "Puss! puss! pretty puss!" and awaited a result.

Thieves and ghosts she did not believe in, yet credited cats under beds, and thought them neither "harmless" nor "necessary" there.

After tenderly evoking the dreaded and chimerical quadruped, she proceeded none the less to careful research, especially of cupboards. The door of one resisted, and then yielded with a crack, and blew out the candle. "There now," said she.

It was her only light, except her beauty. They allotted each Hebe but one candle, in that ancient burgh. "Well," she thought, "there is moonlight enough to *un*dress by." She went to draw back one of the curtains; but in the act she started back with a little scream. There was a tall figure over the way watching the house.

The moon shone from her side of the street full on him, and in that instant her quick eye recognized Mr. Hardie.

"Well!" said she aloud, and with an indescribable inflexion; and hid herself swiftly in impenetrable gloom.

But, after a while, Eve's daughter must have a peep. She stole with infinite caution to one side of the curtain, and made an aperture just big enough for one bright eye. Yes, there he was, motionless. "I'll tell mamma," said she to him, malignantly, as if the sound could reach him.

Unconscious of the direful threat, he did not budge.

She was unaffectedly puzzled at this phenomenon; and, not being the least vain, fell to wondering whether he played the nightly sentinel opposite every lady's window, who exchanged civilities with him. "Because, if he does, he is a fool," said she, promptly. But on reflection, she felt sure he did nothing of the kind habitually, for he had too high an opinion of himself; she had noted that trait in him at a very early stage. She satisfied herself, by cautious examination, that he did not know her room. He was making a temple of the whole lodging. "How ridiculous of him!" Yet he appeared to be happy over it; there was an exalted look in his moonlit face; she seemed now first to see his soul there. She studied his countenance like an inscription, and deciphered each rapt expression that crossed it; and stored them in her memory.

Twice she left her ambuscade to go to bed: and twice Curiosity, or Something, drew her back. At last having looked, peered, and peeped, till her feet were cold, and her face the reverse, she informed herself that the foolish Thing had tired her out.

"Good-night, Mr. Policeman," said she, pretending to bawl to him. "And, O, do rain! As hard as ever you can." With this benevolent aspiration, a little too violent to be sincere, she laid her cheek on her pillow doughtily.

But her sentinel, when out of sight, had more power to disturb her. She lay and wondered whether he was still there, and what it all meant, and whatever mamma would say; and which of the two, she or he, was the head culprit in this strange performance, to which Earth, she conceived, had seen no parallel; and, above all, what he would do next. Her pulse galloped, and her sleep was broken; and she came down in the morning a little pale. Mrs. Dodd saw it at once, with the quick maternal eye; and moralized: "It is curious; youth is so fond of pleasure; yet pleasure seldom agrees with youth; this little excitement has done your mother good, who is no longer young: but it has been too much for you. I shall be glad to have you back to our quiet home."

Ah! Will that home be as tranquil now?

## CHAPTER III.

The long vacation commenced about a month afterwards, and Hardie came to his father's house, to read for honours, unimpeded by university races and college lectures; and the ploughed and penitent one packed up his Aldrich and his Whateley, the then authorities in Logic, and brought them home, together with a firm resolution to master that joyous science before the next examination for Smalls in October. But lo! ere he had been an hour at home, he found his things put neatly away in his drawers on the feminine or vertical system—deep strata of

waistcoats, strata of trousers, strata of coats, strata of papers—and his Logic gone.

In the course of the evening he taxed his sister good-humouredly, and asked "what earthly use that book was to her, not wearing curls."

"I intend to read it, and study it, and teach you it," replied Julia, rather languidly—considering the weight of the resolve.

"Oh, if you have boned it to read, I say no more; the crime will punish itself."

"Be serious, Edward, and think of mamma! I cannot sit with my hands before me, and let you be reploughed."

"I don't want. But—reploughed!—haw, haw! but you can't help me at Logic as you used at Syntax. Why, all the world knows a girl can't learn logic."

"A girl can learn anything she chooses to learn. What she can't learn is things other people set her down to." Before Edward could fully digest this revelation, she gave the argument a new turn, by adding fretfully, "And don't be so unkind, thwarting and teasing me!" and all in a moment she was crying.

"Halloa!" ejaculated Edward, taken quite by surprise. "What is the matter, dears?" inquired maternal vigilance from the other end of the room. "You did not speak brusquely to her, Edward?"

"No, no," said Julia, eagerly. "It is I that am turned so cross, and so peevish. I am quite a changed girl. Mamma, what *is* the matter with me?" And she laid her brow on her mother's bosom.

Mrs. Dodd caressed the lovely head soothingly with one hand, and made a sign over it to Edward to leave them alone. She waited quietly till Julia was composed: and then said, softly, "Come, tell me what it is; nothing that Edward said to you; for I heard almost every word, and I was just going to smile, or nearly, when you——And, my love, it is not the first time, you know; I would not tell Edward, but I have more than once seen your eyes with tears in them."

"Have you, mamma?" said Julia, scarcely above a whisper.

"Why, you know I have. But I said to myself it was no use forcing confidence. I thought I would be very patient, and wait till you came to me with it; so now, what is it, my darling? Why do you speak of one thing and think of another? and cry without any reason that your mother can see?"

"I don't know, mamma," said Julia, hiding her head. "I think it is because I sleep so badly. I rise in the morning hot and quivering, and more tired than I lay down."

Mrs. Dodd inquired how long this had been.

Julia did not answer this question; she went on, with her face still hidden, "Mamma, I do feel so depressed and hysterical, or else in violent spirits; but not nice and cheerful as you are, and I used to be; and I go from one thing to another, and can settle to nothing; even in church I attend by fits and starts: I forgot to water my very flowers last night: and I heard Mrs. Maxley out of my window tell Sarah I am losing my colour. Am I? But what does it matter? I am losing my sense; for I catch myself for ever looking in the glass, and that is a sure sign of a fool, you know; and I cannot pass the shops; I stand and look in, and long for the very dearest silks, and for diamonds in

my hair." A deep sigh followed the confession of these multiform imperfections; and the culprit half raised her head to watch their effect.

As for Mrs. Dodd, she opened her eyes wide with surprise; but at the end of the heterogeneous catalogue she smiled, and said, "I cannot believe *that*. If ever there was a young lady free from personal vanity it is my Julia. Why, your thoughts run by nature away from yourself; you were born for others."

Her daughter kissed her gratefully, and smiled: but, after a pause, said, sorrowfully, "Ah, that was the old Julia, as seen with your dear eyes. I have almost forgotten *her*. The new one is what I tell you, dear mamma, and that" (with sudden fervour) "is a dreamy, wandering, vain, egotistical, hysterical, abominable girl."

"Let me kiss this monster that I have brought into the world," said Mrs. Dodd. "And now let me think." She rested her eyes calm and penetrating upon her daughter; and at this mere look, but a very searching one, the colour mounted and mounted in Julia's cheek strangely.

"After all," said Mrs. Dodd, thoughtfully, "yours is a critical age; perhaps my child is turning to a woman; my rosebud to a rose." And she sighed. Mothers will sigh at things none other ever sighed at.

"To a weed, I fear," replied Julia. "What will you say when I own I felt no real joy at Edward's return this time? And yesterday I cried, 'Do get away, and don't pester me!'"

"To your brother? Oh!"

"Oh no, mamma, that was to poor Spot. He jumped on me in a reverie, all affection, poor thing."

"Well, for your comfort, dogs do not appreciate the niceties of our language."

"I am afraid they do; when we kick them."

Mrs. Dodd smiled at the admission implied here, and the deep penitence it was uttered with. But Julia remonstrated, "Oh no! no! don't laugh at me, but help me with your advice: you are so wise and so experienced: you must have been a girl before you were an angel. You *must* know what is the matter with me. O, do pray cure me; or else kill me, for I cannot go on like this, all my affections deadened, and my peace disturbed."

And now the mother looked serious and thoughtful enough; and the daughter watched her furtively. "Julia," said Mrs. Dodd, very gravely, "if it was not my child, reared under my eye, and never separated from me a single day, I should say, this young lady is either afflicted with some complaint, and it affects her nerves, and spirits; or else she has—she is—what inexperienced young people call 'in love.' You need not look so frightened, child; nobody in their senses suspects *you* of imprudence or indelicacy; and therefore I feel quite sure that your constitution is at a crisis, or your health has suffered some shock. pray Heaven it may not be a serious one. You will have the best advice, and without delay, I promise you."

That very evening, Mrs. Dodd sent a servant into the town with a note like a cocked-hat for Mr. Osmond, a consulting surgeon, who bore a high reputation in Barkington. He came; and proved too plump for

that complete elegance she would have desired in a medical attendant; but had a soft hand, a gentle touch, and a subdued manner. He spoke to the patient with a kindness which won the mother directly; had every hope of setting her right without any violent or disagreeable remedies; but, when she had retired, altered his tone; and told Mrs. Dodd seriously she had done well to send for him in time; it was a case of "Hyperæsthesia" (Mrs. Dodd clasped her hands in alarm), "or as unprofessional persons would say, 'excessive sensibility.'"

Mrs. Dodd was somewhat relieved. Translation blunts thunderbolts. She told him she had always feared for her child on that score. But was sensibility curable? Could a nature be changed?

He replied, that the Idiosyncrasy could not; but its morbid excess could, especially when taken in time. Advice was generally called in too late. However, here the only serious symptom was the Insomnia. "We must treat her for that," said he, writing a prescription; "but for the rest, active employment, long walks, or rides, and a change of scene and associations, will be all that will be required. In these cases," resumed Mr. Osmond, "connected as they are with Hyperæmia, some medical men consider moderate venesection to be indicated." He then put on his gloves, saying, "The diet, of course, must be Antiphlogistic. Let us say then, for breakfast, dry toast with very little butter—no coffee—cocoa (from the nibs), or weak tea: for luncheon, beef-tea or mutton-broth: for dinner, a slice of roast chicken, and tapioca, or semolina, pudding. I would give her one glass of sherry, but no more, and barley-water; it would be as well to avoid brown meats, at all events for the present. With these precautions, my dear madam, I think your anxiety will soon be happily removed."

Julia took her long walks and light diet; and became a little pale at times, and had fewer bursts of high spirits in the intervals of depression. Her mother went with her care to a female friend. The lady said she would not trust to surgeons and apothecaries; she would have a downright physician. "Why not go to the top of the tree at once, and call in Dr. Short? You have heard of him?"

"Oh yes; I have even met him in society; a most refined person: I will certainly follow your advice and consult him. Oh, thank you, Mrs. Bosanquet! A propos, do you consider him skilful?"

"Oh, immensely; he is a particular friend of my husband's."

This was so convincing, that off went another three-cocked note, and next day a dark-green carriage and pair dashed up to Mrs. Dodd's door, and Dr. Short bent himself in an arc, got out, and slowly mounted the stairs. He was six feet two, wonderfully thin, livid, and gentleman-like. Fine long head, keen eye, lantern jaws. At sight of him Mrs. Dodd rose and smiled, Julia started and sat trembling. He stepped across the room inaudibly, and after the usual civilities, glanced at the patient's tongue, and touched her wrist delicately. "Pulse is rapid," said he.

Mrs. Dodd detailed the symptoms. Dr. Short listened with the patient politeness of a gentleman, to whom all this was superfluous. He asked for a sheet of note paper, and divided it so gently, he seemed to be persuading one thing to be two; he wrote a pair of prescriptions, and whilst thus employed looked up every now and then and conversed with the ladies.

"You have a slight subscapular affection, Miss Dodd: I mean, a little pain under the shoulder-blade."

"No, sir," said Julia, quietly.

Dr. Short looked a little surprised; his female patients rarely contradicted him. Was it for them to disown things he was so good as to assign them?

"Ah!" said he, "you are not conscious of it: all the better; it must be slight; a mere uneasiness: no more." He then numbered the prescriptions 1, 2, and advised Mrs. Dodd to drop No. 1 after the eighth day, and substitute No. 2, to be continued until convalescence. He put on his gloves, to leave. Mrs. Dodd, then, with some hesitation, asked him humbly whether she might ask him what the disorder was. "Certainly, madam," said he, graciously; "your daughter is labouring under a slight torpidity of the liver. The first prescription is active, and is to clear the gland itself, and the biliary ducts, of the excretory accumulation; and the second is exhibited to promote a healthy normal habit in that important part of the vascular system."

"What, then, it is not Hyperæsthesia?"

"Hyperæsthesia? There is no such disorder in the books."

"You surprise me," said Mrs. Dodd. "Dr. Osmond certainly thought it was Hyperæsthesia." And she consulted her little ivory tablets whereon she had written the word.

But, meantime, Dr. Short's mind, to judge by his countenance, was away roaming distant space in search of Osmond. "Osmond? Osmond? I do not know that name in medicine."

"O, O, O!" cried Julia, "and they both live in the same street!" Mrs. Dodd held up her finger to this outspoken patient.

But a light seemed to break in on Dr. Short. "Ah! you mean Mr. Osmond: a surgeon. A very respectable man, a most respectable man. I do not know a more estimable person—in his grade of the profession—than my good friend Mr. Osmond. And so he gives opinions in medical cases, does he?" Dr. Short paused, apparently to realize this phenomenon in the world of Mind. He resumed in a different tone: "You may have misunderstood him. Hyperæsthesia exists, of course; since he says so. But Hyperæsthesia is not a Complaint; it is a Symptom. Of biliary derangement. My worthy friend looks at disorders from a mental point; very natural: his interest lies that way, perhaps you are aware: but profounder experience proves that mental sanity is merely one of the results of bodily health: and I am happy to assure you that, the biliary canal once cleared, and the secretions restored to the healthy habit, by these prescriptions, the Hyperæsthesia, and other concomitants of hepatic derangement, will disperse, and leave our interesting patient in the enjoyment of her natural intelligence, her friends' affectionate admiration, and above all, of a sound constitution. Ladies, I have the honour——" and the Doctor eked out this sentence by rising.

"Oh, thank you, Dr. Short," said Mrs. Dodd, rising with him; "you inspire me with confidence, and gratitude." As if under the influence of these feelings only, she took Dr. Short's palm, and pressed it. Of the two hands, which met for a moment then, one was soft and melting, the other a bunch of bones; but both were very white, and so equally

adroit, that a double fee passed without the possibility of a bystander suspecting it.

For the benefit of all young virgins afflicted like Julia Dodd, here are the Doctor's prescriptions:

FOR MISS DODD.

℞ Pil: Hydrarg: Chlor: Co:
singul: nocte sumend:
Decoc: Aloes Co: ℥j
omni mane.
——— viii. Sept. J. S.

FOR MISS DODD.

℞ Conf: Sennæ.
Potass: Bitartrat.
Extr: Tarax: ā ā ℥ss
Misft: Elect: Cujus sum: ℥j omni mane.
xviii. Sept. J. S.

———

Id:, Anglicè reddit: per me Carol: Arundin:

The same done into English by me C. R.

FOR MISS DODD.

1. O Jupiter aid us!! Plummer's pill to be taken every night. 1 oz. compound decoction of Aloes every morning.

8th Sept. J. S.

FOR MISS DODD.

2. O Jupiter aid us!! with Confection of Senna, Bitartrate of Potash, extract of Dandelion, of each half an ounce, let an electuary be mixed; of which let her take 1 drachm every morning.

——— 18th Sept. J. S.

"Quite the courtier," said Mrs. Dodd, delighted. Julia assented: she even added, with a listless yawn, "I had no idea that a skeleton was such a gentlemanlike thing; I never saw one before."

Mrs. Dodd admitted he was very thin.

"Oh no, mamma; 'thin' implies some little flesh. When he felt my pulse, a chill struck to my heart; Death in a black suit seemed to steal up to me, and lay a finger on my wrist: and mark me for his own."

Mrs. Dodd forbade her to give way to such gloomy ideas; and expostulated firmly with her for judging learned men by their bodies. "However," said she, "if the good, kind doctor's remedies do not answer his expectations and mine, I shall take you to London directly. I dŏ hope papa will soon be at home."

Poor Mrs. Dodd was herself slipping into a morbid state. A mother collecting Doctors! It is a most fascinating kind of connoisseurship; grows on one like Drink; like Polemics; like Melodrama; like the Millennium; like any Thing.

Sure enough the very next week she and Julia sat patiently at the morning levee of an eminent and titled London surgeon. Full forty

patients were before them: so they had to wait and wait. At last they were ushered into the presence-chamber, and Mrs. Dodd entered on the beaten ground of her daughter's symptoms. The noble surgeon stopped her civilly but promptly. "Auscultation will give us the clue," said he, and drew his stethoscope. Julia shrank and cast an appealing look at her mother; but the impassive chevalier reported on each organ in turn without moving his ear from the key-hole. "Lungs pretty sound," said he, a little plaintively: "so is the liver. Now for the——Hum? There is no kardiac insufficiency, I think, neither mitral nor tricuspid. If we find no tendency to hypertrophy we shall do very well. Ah, I have succeeded in diagnosing a slight diastolic murmur; very slight." He deposited the instrument, and said, not without a certain shade of satisfaction that his research had not been fruitless, "The heart is the peccant organ."

"Oh, sir! is it serious?" said poor Mrs. Dodd.

"By no means. Try this" (he scratched a prescription which would not have misbecome the tomb of Cheops); "and come again in a month." Ting! He struck a bell. That "ting" said, "Go, live Guinea; and let another come."

"Heart disease now!" said Mrs. Dodd, sinking back in her hired carriage, and the tears were in her patient eyes.

"My own, own mamma," said Julia, earnestly, "do not distress yourself. I have no disease in the world, but my old, old, old one, of being a naughty, wayward girl. As for you, mamma, you have resigned your own judgment to your inferiors, and that is both our misfortunes. Dear, dear mamma, do take me to a doctress next time, if you have not had enough."

"To a what, love?"

"A she-doctor, then."

"A female physician, child? There is no such thing. No; assurance is becoming a characteristic of our sex; but we have not yet intruded ourselves into the learned professions; thank Heaven."

"Excuse me, mamma, there are one or two; for the newspapers say so."

"Well, dear, there are none in this country; happily."

"What, not in London?"

"No."

"Then what *is* the use of such a great overgrown place, all smoke, if there is nothing in it you cannot find in the country? Let us go back to Barkington this very day, this minute, this instant; oh, pray, pray."

"And so you shall—to-morrow. But you must pity your poor mother's anxiety, and see Dr. Chalmers first."

"Oh, mamma, not another surgeon! He frightened me; he hurt me; I never heard of such a thing; oh, please not another surgeon."

"It is not a surgeon, dear; it is the Court Physician."

The Court Physician detected "a somewhat morbid condition of the great nervous centres." To an inquiry whether there was heart-disease, he replied, "Pooh!" On being told Sir William had announced heart-disease, he said, "Ah! *that alters the case entirely.*" He maintained, however, that it must be trifling, and would go no further, the nervous system once restored to its healthy tone. "O Jupiter, aid us! Blue pill and Seidlitz powder."

Dr. Kenyon found the mucous membrane was irritated and required nothing. "O, Jupiter, &c."

Mrs. Dodd returned home consoled and confused; Julia listless and apathetic. Tea was ordered, with two or three kinds of bread, thinnest slices of meat, and a little blanc mange, &c., their favourite repast after a journey; and whilst the tea was drawing, Mrs. Dodd looked over the card-tray and enumerated the visitors that had called during their absence: "Dr. Short—Mr. Osmond—Mrs. Hetherington—Mr. Alfred Hardie—Lady Dewry—Mrs. and Miss Bosanquet. What a pity Edward was not at home, dear; Mr. Alfred Hardie's visit must have been to him."

"Oh, of course, mamma."

"A very manly young gentleman."

"Oh yes. No. He is so rude."

"Is he? Ah, he was ill just then, and pain irritates gentlemen: they are not accustomed to it, poor Things."

"That is like you, dear mamma; making excuses for one." Julia added, faintly, "But he is so impetuous."

"I have a daughter who reconciles me to impetuosity. And he *must* have a good heart, he was so kind to my boy."

Julia looked down smiling; but presently seemed to be seized with a spirit of contradiction; she began to pick poor Alfred to pieces; he was this, that, and the other; and then so bold, she might say impudent.

Mrs. Dodd replied calmly that he was very kind to her boy.

"Oh, mamma, you cannot approve all the words he spoke."

"It is not worth while to remember all the words young gentlemen speak, now-a-days; he was very kind to my boy, I remember that."

The tea was now ready, and Mrs. Dodd sat down, and patted a chair, with a smile of invitation for Julia to come and sit beside her. But Julia said, "In one minute, dear," and left the room.

When she came back, she fluttered up to her mother and kissed her vehemently, then sat down radiant. "Ah!" said Mrs. Dodd, "why, you are looking yourself once more. How do you feel now? Better?"

"How do I feel? Let me see: the world seems one e-nor-mous flower-garden, and Me the butterfly it all belongs to." She spake, and to confirm her words the airy thing went waltzing, sailing, and fluttering round the room, and sipping mamma every now and then on the wing.

In this buoyancy she remained some twenty-four hours; and then came clouds and chills, which, in their turn, gave way to exultation, duly followed by depression. Her spirits were so uncertain, that things too minute to justify narration turned the scale either way: a word from Mrs. Dodd—a new face at St. Anne's Church looking devoutly her way—a piece of town gossip distilled in her ear by Mrs. Marley—and she was sprightly or languid, and both more than reason.

One drizzly afternoon they were sitting silent and saddish in the drawing-room, Mrs. Dodd correcting the mechanical errors in a drawing of Julia's, and admiring the rare dash and figure, and Julia doggedly studying Dr. Whately's Logic, with now and then a sigh, when suddenly a trumpet seemed to articulate in the little hall; "Mestress Doodd at nome?"

The lady rose from her seat, and said with a smile of pleasure, "I hear a voice."

"The door opened, and in darted a grey-headed man, with handsome but strongly marked features, laughing and shouting like a schoolboy broke loose. He cried out, "Aha! I've found y' out at last." Mrs. Dodd glided to meet him, and put out both her hands, the palms downwards, with the prettiest air of ladylike cordiality; he shook them heartily. "The vagabins said y' had left the town; but y' had only flitted from the quay to the subbubs; 'twas a pashint put me on the scint of ye. And how are y' all these years? an' how's Sawmill?"

"Sawmill. What is that?"

"It's just your husband. Isn't his name Sawmill?"

"Dear, no! Have you forgotten?—David."

"Ou, ay. I knew it was some Scripcher Petrarch or another, Daavid or Naathan, or Sawmill. And how is he, and where is he?"

Mrs. Dodd replied that he was on the seas, but expect——

"Then I wish him well off 'em, confound 'em oneannall! Halloa! why, this will be the little girl grown up int' a wumman while ye look round."

"Yes, my good friend; and her mother's darling."

"And she's a bonny lass, I can tell ye. But no freend to the Dockers, I see."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Dodd, sadly, "looks are deceitful; she is under medica advice at this very——"

"Well, that won't hurt her, unless she takes it." And he burst into a ringing laugh: but, in the middle of it, stopped dead short, and his face elongated. "Lordsake, mad'm," said he, impressively, "mind what y are at, though; Barkton's just a trap for fanciful femuls: there's a n'oily ass called Osmond, and a canting cut-throat called Stephenson, an a genteel, cadaveris old assassin called Short, as long as a may-pole they'd soon take the rose out of Miss Floree's cheek here. Why, they' starve Cupid, an' veneseck Venus, an' blister Pomonee, the vagabins."

Mrs. Dodd looked a little confused, and exchanged speaking glances with Julia. However, she said, calmly, "I *have* consulted Mr. Osmond and Dr. Short; but have not relied on them alone. I have taken her to Sir William Best. And to Dr. Chalmers. And to Dr. Kenyon." And she felt invulnerable behind her phalanx of learning and reputation.

"Good Hivens!" roared the visitor, "what a gauntlet o' gabies for one girl to run; and come out alive! And the picter of health. My faith, Miss Floree, y' are tougher than ye look."

"My daughter's name is Julia," observed Mrs. Dodd, a little haughtily; but instantly recovering herself, she said, "This is Dr. Sampson, love, an old friend of your mother's."

"And th' Author an' Invintor of th' great Chronothairmal Thercy o Midicine, th' Unity Perriodicity an' Remittency of all disease," put in the visitor, with such prodigious swiftness of elocution, that the words wen tumbling over one another like railway carriages out on pleasure, an the sentence was a pile of loud, indistinct syllables.

Julia's lovely eyes dilated at this clishmaclaver, and she bowed coldly. Dr. Sampson had revealed in this short interview nearly all the characteristics of voice, speech, and manner, she had been taught from infancy to shun: boisterous, gesticulatory, idiomatic; and had taken the dis-

course out of her mamma's mouth, twice; now Albion Villa was a Red Indian hut in one respect: here nobody interrupted.

Mrs. Dodd had little personal egotism, but she had a mother's, and could not spare this opportunity of adding another Doctor to her collection: so she said, hurriedly, "Will you permit me to show you what your learned confrères have prescribed her?" Julia sighed aloud, and deprecated the subject with earnest furtive signs; Mrs. Dodd would not see them. Now, Dr. Sampson was himself afflicted with what I shall venture to call a mental ailment; to wit, a furious intolerance of other men's opinions; he had not even patience to hear them. "Mai—dear—mad'm," said he, hastily, "when you've told me their names, that's enough. Short treats her for liver, Sir William goes in for lung disease or heart, Chalmers sis it's the nairves, and Kinyon the mookis membrin; and *I* say they are fools and lyres all four."

"Julia!" ejaculated Mrs. Dodd, "this is very extraordinary."

"No, it is not extraordinary," cried Dr. Sampson, defiantly: "nothing is extraordinary. D'ye think I've known these shallow men thirty years, and not plumbed 'um?"

"Shallow, my good friend? Excuse me! they are the ablest men in your own branch of your own learned profession."

"Th' ablest?! Oh, you mean the money-makingest: now listen me! our lairned Profession is a rascally one. It is like a barrel of beer. What rises to the top?" Here he paused for a moment, then answered himself furiously "THE SCUM!"

This blast blown, he moderated a little. "Look see!" said he, "up to three or four thousand a year, a Docker is often an honest man, and sometimes knows something of midicine; not much, because it is not taught anywhere; but, if he is making over five thousand, he must be a rogue or else a fool: either he has booed an' booed, and cript an' crawled, int' wholesale collusion with th' apothecary an' th' accoucheur—the two jockeys that drive John Bull's faemily coach—and they are sucking the pashint togithor, like a leash o' leeches: or else he has turned spicialist; has tacked his name to some poplar disorder, real or imaginary; it needn't exist to be poplar. Now, those four you have been to are spicialists, and that means monomaniucs—their buddies exspatiate in West-ind squares, but their souls dwell in a n'alley, ivery man Jack of 'em: Aberford's in Stomich Alley, Chalmers's in Nairve Court, Short's niver stirs out o' Liver Lane, Paul's is stuck fast in Kidney Close, Kinyon's in Mookis Membrin Mews, and Hibbard's in Lung Passage. Look see! nixt time y' are out of sorts, stid o'consulting three bats an' a n'owl at a guinea the piece, send direct to me, and I'll give y' all their opinions, and all their prescriptions, *gratis*. And deevilich dear ye'll find em at the price, if ye swallow 'm."

Mrs. Dodd thanked him coldly for the offer, but said she would be more grateful if he would show his superiority to persons of known ability, by just curing her daughter on the spot.

"Well, I will," said he, carelessly; and all his fire died out of him. "Put out your tongue!—Now your pulse!"

Mrs. Dodd knew her man (ladies are very apt to fathom their male acquaintance—too apt, *I* think); and, to pin him to the only medical

theme which interested her, seized the opportunity while he was in actual contact with Julia's wrist, and rapidly enumerated her symptoms, and also told him what Mr. Osmond had said about Hyperæsthesia.

"Goose Greece!" barked Sampson, loud, clear, and sharp as an irritated watch-dog; but this one bow-wow vented, he was silent as abruptly.

Mrs. Dodd smiled, and proceeded to Hyperæmia, and thence to the Antiphlogistic Regimen.

At that unhappy adjective, Sampson, jumped up, cast away his patient's hand, forgot her existence—she was but a charming individual—and galloped into his native region, Generalities.

"Antiphlogistic! Mai—dear—mad'm, that one long fragmint of ass's jaw has slain a million. Adapted to the weakness of human nature, which receives with rivirince ideas however childish, that come draped in long-tailed and exotic words, that aasinine polysyllable has ricon-ciled the modern mind to the chimeras of th' ancients, and outbutchered the guillotine, the musket, and the sword: ay, and but for me

Had barred the door
For cinturies more,

on the great coming sceince, the sceince of healing diseases instead of defining and dividing 'em and lengthening their names and their durashin, and shortening nothing but the pashint. Th' antiphlogistic Therey is this: That disease is fiery, and that any artificial exhaustion of vital force must cool the system, and reduce the morbid fire, called, in their donkey Latin, 'flamma,' and in their compound donkey Latin, 'inflammation,' and, in their Goose Greece, 'phlogosis,' 'phlegmon,' &c. And accordingly th' antiphlogistic Practice is, to cool the sick man by bleeding him, and, when blid, either to rebleed him with a change of instrument, bites and stabs instid of gashes, or else to rake the blid, and then blister the blid and raked, and then push mercury till the teeth of the blid, raked and blistered shake in their sockets, and to starve the blid, purged, salivated, blistered wretch from first to last. This is the Antiphlogistic system. It is seldom carried out entire, because the pashint at the first or second link in their rimedial chain, expires; or else gives such plain signs of sinking, that even these ass-ass-ins take fright, and try t' undo their own work, not disease's, by tonics an' turtle, and stimulants: which things given at the right time instead of the wrong, given when the pashint was merely weakened by his disorder, and not enfeebled by their didly rimedies, would have cut th' ailment down in a few hours."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Dodd; "and now, my good friend, with respect to *my daughter*——"

"N' list *me!*" clashed Sampson; "ye're goen to fathom th' antiphlogistics, since they still survive an' slay in holes and corners like Barkton and d'Itly; I've driven the vamperes out o' the cintres o' civilisation. Begin with their coolers! Exhaustion is not a cooler, it is a feverer, and they know it; the way parrots know sentences. Why are we all more or less feverish at night? because we are weaker. Starvation is no cooler, it is an inflamer, and they know it, as parrots know truths, but can't apply them: for they know that burning fever rages in ivery town, street, camp, where Famine is. As for bloodletting, their

*prime cooler, it is inflammatory; and they know it (parrot-wise), for the thumping heart, and bounding pulse, of pashints blid by butchers in* black, and bullocks blid by butchers in blue, prove it; and they have recorded this in all their books: yet stabbed, and bit, and starved, and mercuried, and murdered, on. But mind ye, all their sham coolers are real weakeners (I wonder they didn't inventory Satin and his brimstin lake among their refrijrators), and this is the point whence t' appreciate their imbecility, and the sairvice I have rendered mankind in been the first t' attack their banded school, at a time it seemed impregnable."

"Ah, this promises to be very interesting," sighed Mrs. Dodd; "and before you enter on so large a field, perhaps it would be as well to dispose of a little matter which lies at my heart. Here is *my poor daughter*——"

"NLISSMEE! A human Bean is in a constant state of flux and reflux; his component particles move, change, disappear, and are renewed; his life is a round of exhaustion and repair. Of this repair the brain is the sovereign ajint by night and day; and the blood the great living material; and digestible food th' indispensible supply. And this balance of exhaustion and repair is too nice to tamper with: disn't a single sleepless night, or dinnerless day, write some pallor on the face, and tell against the buddy? So does a single excessive perspiration, a trifling diary, or a cut finger, though it takes but half an ounce of blood out of the system. And what is the cause of that rare ivint—which occurs only to pashints that can't afford docking—Dith from old age? Think ye the man really succumms under years, or is mowed down by Time? Nay, yon's just Potty an' Bosh. Nashins have been thinned by the lancet, but niver by the scythe; and years are not forces, but misures of events. No, Centenarius decays and dies, bekase his bodil' expinditure goes on, and his bodil' income falls off by failure of the reparative and reproductive forces. And now suppose bodil' exhaustion and repair were a mere matter of peeuniary, instead of vital, economy; what would you say to the steward or housekeeper, who, to balance your accounts and keep you solvent, should open every known channel of expinse with one hand, and with the other—stop the supplies? Yet this is how the Dockers for thirty cinturies have burned th' human candle at both ends, yet wondered the light of life expired under their hands."

"It seems irrational. Then in *my daughter's* case you would——"

"Looksee! A pashint falls sick. What haps directly? Why the balance is troubled, and exhaustion exceeds repair. For proof, obsairve the buddy when Disease is fresh!

And you will always find a loss of flesh.

To put it economikly, and then you must understand it, bein a housekeeper—

Whativer the Disease, its form or essence,
Expinditure goes on, and income lessens.

But to this sick and therefore weak man, comes a Docker purblind with cinturies of Cant, Pricidint, Blood and Goose Greece; imagines him a fiery pervalid, though the common sense of mankind through its interpreter common language, pronounces him an 'invalid,' gashes him with a lancet, spills out the great liquid material of all repair by the gallon,

and fells this weak man, wounded now, and pale, and fainting, with Dith stamped on his face, to th' earth, like a bayoneted soldier or a slaughtered ox. If the weak man, wounded thus, and weakened, survives, then the chartered Thugs who have drained him by the bung-hole, turn to and drain him by the spigot; they blister him, and then calomel him: and lest Nature should have the ghost of a chance to counterbalance these frightful outgoings, they keep strong meat and drink out of his system emptied by their stabs, bites, purges, mercury, and blisters; damdijjits! And that, Asia excipted, was profissional Midicine from Hippocrates to Sampsin; Antiphlogistic is but a modern name for an ass-ass-inating routine which has niver varied a hair since scholastic midicine, the silliest and didliest of all the hundred forms of Quackery, first rose—unlike Sceince, Art, Religion, and all true Suns—in the West; to wound the sick; to weaken the weak; and mutilate the hurt; and thin mankind."

The voluble impugner of his own profession delivered these two last words in thunder so sudden and effective as to strike Julia's work out of her hands. But here, as in Nature, a moment's pause followed the thunderclap; so Mrs. Dodd, who had long been patiently watching her opportunity, smothered a shriek, and edged in a word: "This is irresistible; you have confuted everybody; to their heart's content: and now the question is, what course shall we substitute?" She meant, "in the great case, which occupies me." But Sampson attached a nobler, wider, sense to her query. "What course? Why the great Chronothairmal practice, based on the remittent and febrile character of all disease; above all, on

**The law of Perriodicity, a law**
Midicine yet has wells of light to draw.

By Remittency, I mean th' ebb of Disease, by Perriodicity, th' ebb and also the flow, the paroxysm and the remission. These remit and recur, and keep time like the tides, not in ague and remittent fever only, as the Profission imagines to this day, but in all diseases from a Scirrhus in the Pylorus t' a toothache. And I discovered this, and the new paths to cure of all diseases it opens. Alone I did it; and what my reward? hooted, insulted, belied, and called a quack, by the banded school of profissional assassins, who, in their day hooted Harvey and Jinner, authors too of great discoveries, but discoveries narrow in their consequences compared with mine. T' appreciate Chronothairmalism, ye must begin at the beginning; so just answer me—What is man?"

At this huge inquiry whirring up all in a moment, like a cock-pheasant in a wood, Mrs. Dodd sank back in her chair despondent. Seeing her hors de combat, Sampson turned to Julia and demanded, twice as loud, "WHAT IS MAN?" Julia opened two violet eyes at him, and then looked at her mother for a hint how to proceed.

"How can that child answer such a question?" sighed Mrs. Dodd "Let us return to the point."

"I have never strayed an inch from it. It's about 'Young Physic.'"

"No, excuse me, it is about a young lady. Universal Medicine: what have I to do with that?"

"Now this is the way with them all," cried Sampson, furious; "there

lowed John Bull. The men and women of this benighted nashin have an ear for anything; provided it matters nothing: talk Jology, Conchology, Entomology, Theology, Meteorology, Astronomy, Deuteronomy, Botheronomy, or Boshology, and one is listened to with riverence, because these are all far-off things in fogs; but at a word about the great, near, useful art of Healing, y' all stop your ears; for why; your life and dailianhourly happiness depend on it. But 'no,' sis John Bull, the knowledge of our own buddies, and how to save our own Bakin, Beef I mean, day by day from disease and chartered ass-ass-ins, all that may interest the thinkers in Saturn, but what the deevil is it t' *us*? talk t' *us* of the hiv'nly buddies, not of our own; babble o' comets an' meteors an' Ethereal nibulæ (never mind the nibulæ in our own skulls). Discourse t' us of Predistinashin, Spitzbairgen seaweed, the last novel, the siventh vile; of Chrischinising the Patagonians on condition they are not to come here and Chrischinise the Whitechapelians; of the letter to the Times from the tinker wrecked at Timbuctoo; and the dear Professor's lecture on the probabeelity of snail-shells in the back-yard of the moon: but don't ask us to know ourselves.—Ijjits!!"

The eloquent speaker, depressed by the perversity of Englishmen in giving their minds to every part of creation but their bodies, suffered a momentary loss of energy; then Mrs. Dodd, who had long been watching lynx-like, glided in. "Let us compound. You are for curing all the world, beginning with Nobody. My ambition is to cure *my girl*, and leave mankind in peace. Now if you will begin with *my Julia*, I will submit to rectify the universe in its proper turn. Any time will do to set the human race right; you own it is in no hurry: but *my child's* case presses; so do pray cure her for me. Or at least tell me what her Indisposition is."

"Oh! What, didn't I tell you? Well, there's nothing the matter with her."

At receiving this cavalier reply for the reward of all her patience, Mrs. Dodd was so hurt, and so nearly angry, that she rose with dignity from her seat, her cheek actually pink, and the water in her eyes. Sampson saw she was ruffled, and appealed to Julia of all people. "There now, Miss Julee," said he, ruefully; "she is in a rage because I won't humbug her. Poplus voolt decipee. I tell you, ma'am, it is not a midical case; give me disease and I'll cure 't. Stop, I'll tell ye what do; let her take and swallow the Barkton Docks' prescriptions, and Butcher Best's, and canting Kinyon's, and after those four tinkers there'll be plenty holes to mend; then send for me!"

Here was irony. Mrs. Dodd retorted by finesse; she turned on him with a treacherous smile, and said: "Never mind doctors and patients; it is so long since we met; I do hope you will waive ceremony, and dine with me en ami."

He accepted with pleasure; but must return to his inn first and get rid of his dirty boots, and pashints. And with this he whipped out his watch, and saw that, dealing with universal medicine, he had disappointed more than one sick individual; so shot out as hard as he had shot in, and left the ladies looking at one another after the phenomenon.

"Well!" said Julia, with a world of meaning.

"Yes, dear," replied Mrs. Dodd, "he *is* a little eccentric. I think I will request them to make some addition to the dinner."

"No, mamma, if you please, not to put me off so transparently. If I had interrupted, and shouted, and behaved so, you would have packed *me* off to bed, or somewhere, directly."

"Don't say 'packed,' love. Dismissed me to bed."

"Ah!" cried Julia, "that privileged person is gone, and we must all mind our P's and Q's once more."

Mrs. Dodd, with an air of nonchalance, replied to the effect that Dr. Sampson was not her offspring; and so she was not bound to correct his eccentricities. "And I suppose," said she, languidly, "we must accept these extraordinary people as we find them. But that is no reason why *you* should say P's and Q's, darling."

That day her hospitable board was spread over a trap. Blessed with an oracle irrelevantly fluent, and dumb to the point, she had asked him to dinner with maternal address. He could not be on his guard eternally; sooner or later, through inadvertence, or in a moment of convivial recklessness, or in a parenthesis of some grand Generality, he would cure her child: or, perhaps, at his rate of talking, would wear out all his idle themes, down to the very "well-being of mankind;" and then Julia's mysterious indisposition would come on the blank tapis. With these secret hopes she presided at the feast, all grace and gentle amity. Julia, too, sat down with a little design, but a very different one, viz., of being chilly company, for she disliked this new acquaintance, and hated the science of medicine.

The unconscious Object chatted away with both, and cut their replies very short, and did strange things; sent away Julia's chicken, regardless of her scorn, and prescribed mutton: called for champagne and made her drink it, and pout; and thus excited Mrs. Dodd's hopes that he was attending to the case by degrees.

But, after dinner, Julia, to escape medicine universal, and particular, turned to her mother, and dilated on the treachery of her literary guide, the Criticaster. "It said 'Odds and Ends' was a good novel to read by the sea-side. So I thought 'then oh, how different it must be from most books, if you can sit by the glorious sea and even look at it.' So I sent for it directly, and, would you believe, it was an ignoble thing; all flirtations and curates. The sea, indeed! A pond would be fitter to read it by; and one with a good many geese on."

"Was ever such simplicity?" said Mrs. Dodd. "Why, my dear, that phrase about the sea does not *mean* anything. I shall have you believing that Mr. So-and-So, a novelist, can '*wither fashionable folly*,' and that '*a painful incident*' to one shopkeeper has '*thrown a gloom*' over a whole market-town, and so on. Now-a-days every third phrase is of this character; a starling's note. Once, it appears, there was an age of gold, and then came one of iron, and then of brass. All these are gone, and the age of 'jargon' has succeeded."

She sighed, and Sampson generalized; he plunged from the sea-side novel into the sea of fiction. He rechristened that joyous art Feckshin, and lashed its living professors. "You devour their three volumes greedily," said he, "but after your meal you feel as empty as a drrum

there is no leading idea in 'um; now, there always is—in Molière: and *he* comprehended the medicine of his age. But what fundamental truth d'our novelists iver convey? All they can do is pile incidents. Their customers dictate th' article; unideased melodrains for unideased girls. The writers and their feckshins belong to one species, and that's 'the non-vertebrated animals;' and their medicine is Bosh; why they bleed still for falls and fevers; and niver mention vital chronometry. Then they don't look straight at Nature, but see with their ears, and repeat one another twelve deep. Now, listen me! there are the cracters for an 'ideased feckshin' in Barkington, and I'd write it, toe, only I haven't time."

At this, Julia, forgetting her resolution, broke out, "Romantic characters in Barkington? Who? who?"

"Who *should* they be, but my pashints? Ay, ye may lauch, Miss Julee, but wait till ye see them." He was then seized with a fit of candour, and admitted that some, even of his pashints, were colourless; indeed, not to mince the matter, six or seven of that sacred band were nullity in person. "I can compare the beggars to nothing," said he, "but the globules of the Do-Nothings; dee——d insipid, and nothing in 'em. But the others make up. Man alive, I've got 'a rosy-cheeked miser,' and an 'ill-used attorney,' and an 'honest Screw,' he is a gardener, with a head like a cart-horse."

"Mamma! mamma! that is Mr. Maxley," cried Julia, clapping her hands, and thawing in her own despite.

"Then there's my virgin martyr, and my puppy; they are brother and sister; and there's their father, but he is an impenetrable dog—won't unbosom. Howiver, he sairves to draw chicks for the other two, and so keep 'em goen. By-the-by, you know my puppy."

"We have not that honour. Do we know Dr. Sampson's puppy, love?" inquired Mrs. Dodd, rather languidly.

"Mamma!—I—I—know no one of that name."

"Don't tell me! Why it was he sent me here: told me where you lived, and I was to make haste, for Miss Dodd was very ill: it is young Hardie, the banker's son, ye know."

Mrs. Dodd said, good-humouredly, but with a very slight touch of irony, that really they were very much flattered by the interest Mr. Alfred Hardie had shown; especially as her daughter had never exchanged ten words with him. Julia coloured at this statement, the accuracy of which she had good reason to doubt; and the poor girl felt as if an icicle passed swiftly along her back. And then, for the first time in her life, she thought her mother vastly gracious; and she wanted to say *she* was obliged to Mr. Alfred Hardie, but dared not, and despised herself for not daring. Her composure was further attacked by Mrs. Dodd looking full at her, and saying interrogatively, "I wonder how that young gentleman could know about your being ill?"

At this Julia eyed her plate very attentively, and murmured, "I believe it is all over the town: and seriously too, as Mrs. Maxley says: for she tells me that in Barkington if more than one doctor is sent for, that bodes ill for the patient."

"Deevelish ill," cried Sampson, heartily:

"For two physicians, like a pair of oars
Conduck him faster to the Styjjin shores."*

Julia looked him in the face, and coldly ignored this perversion of Mrs. Marley's meaning; and Mrs. Dodd returned pertinaciously to the previous topic. "Mr. Alfred Hardie interests me; he was good to Edward. I am curious to know why you call him a puppy?"

"Only because he is one, ma'am. And that is no reason at all with 'the Six.' He is a juvenecl pidant, and a puppy, and contradicts ivery new truth, bekase it isn't in Aristotle and th' Eton Grammar; and he's such a chatterbox, ye can't get in a word idgeways; and he and his sister—that's my virgin martyr—are a farce. *He* keeps sneerin' at her relijjin, and that puts *her* in such a rage, she threatens 't' intercede for him at the throne.'"

"Jargon," sighed Mrs. Dodd, and just shrugged her lovely shoulders. "We breathe it—we float in an atmosphere of it. My love?" And she floated out of the room, and Julia floated after.

Sampson sat meditating on the gullibility of man in matters medical. This favourite speculation detained him late, and almost his first word on entering the drawing-room was, "Good night, little girl."

Julia coloured at this broad hint, drew herself up, and lighted a bed-candle. She went to Mrs Dodd, kissed her, and whispered in her ear, "I hate him!" and, as she retired, her whole elegant person launched ladylike defiance; under which brave exterior no little uneasiness was hidden. "O, what will become of me!" thought she, "if *he* has gone and told him about Henley."

"Let's see the prescriptions, ma'am," said Dr. Sampson.

Delighted at this concession, Mrs. Dodd took them out of her desk and spread them earnestly. He ran his eye over them, and pointed out that the mucous-membrane man and the nerve man had prescribed the same medicine, on irreconcilable grounds; and a medicine, moreover, whose effect on the nerves was nil, and on the mucous membrane was not to soothe it, but plough it and harrow it; "and did not that open her eyes?" He then reminded her that all these doctors in consultation would have contrived to agree. "But you," said he, "have baffled the collusive hoax by which Dox arrived at a sham uniformity—honest uniformity can never exist till scientific principles obtain. Listme! To begin, is the pashint in love?"

The doctor put this query in just the same tone in which they inquire, "Any expectoration?" But Mrs. Dodd, in reply, was less dry and business-like. She started and looked aghast. This possibility had once, for a moment, occurred to her, but only to be rejected, the evidence being all against it.

"In love?" said she. "That child, and I not know it!"

He said he had never supposed that. "But I thought I'd just ask ye; for she has no bodily ailment, and the paassions are all counterfeit diseases; they are connected, like all diseases, with cerebral instability, have their heats and chills like all diseases, and their paroxysms and remissions like all diseases. Nlistme! You have detected the signs of

* Garth.

a slight cerebral instability; I have ascertained th' absence of all physical cause: then why make this healthy pashint's buddy a test-tube for poisons? Sovereign drugs (I deal with no other, I leave the nullities to the noodles) are either counterpoisons, or poisons, and here there is nothing to counterpoison at prisent. So I'm for caushin, and working on the safe side th' hidge, till we are less in the dark. Mind ye, young women at her age are kittle cattle; they have gusts o' this, and gusts o' that, th' unreasonable imps. D'ye see these two pieces pasteboard? They are tickets for a ball,

In Barkton town-hall."

"Yes, of course I see them," said Mrs. Dodd, dolefully.

"Well, I prescribe 'em. And when they have been taken,

And the pashint well shaken,

perhaps we shall see whether we are on the right system: and if so, we'll dose her with youthful society in a more irrashinal formm; conversaziones, cookeyshines, et citera. And if we find ourselves on the wrong *tack*, why then we'll hark *back*.

Stick blindly to 'a course,' the dockers cry.
But it does me harm: *Then* 'twill do good *by-an-by*,
Where lairned ye that, Echoes of Echoes, say!
The killer ploughs 'a course,' the healer '*feels his way*.'"

So mysterious are the operations of the human mind, that, when we have exploded in verse tuneful as the above, we lapse into triumph instead of penitence. Not that doggrel meets with reverence here below—the statues to it are few, and not in marble, but in the material itself—But then an Impromptu! A moment ago our Posy was not: and now is; with the speed, if not the brilliancy, of lightning, we have added a handful to the intellectual dust-heap of an oppressed nation. From this bad eminence Sampson then looked down complacently, and saw Mrs. Dodd's face as long as his arm. She was one that held current opinions; and the world does not believe Poetry can sing the Practical; verse and useful knowledge pass for incompatibles; and, though Doggrel is not Poetry, yet it has a lumbering proclivity that way, and so forfeits the confidence of grave, sensible, people. This versification, and this impalpable and unprecedented prescription she had waited for so long, seemed all of a piece to poor mamma; wild, unpractical, and—"oh, horror! horror!"—eccentric.

Sampson read her sorrowful face after his fashion. "Oh, I see, ma'am," cried he. "Cure is not welcome unless it comes in the form consecrated by cinturies of slaughter. Well, then, give me a sheet." He took the paper and rent it asunder, and wrote this on the larger fragment:

℞ Die Mercur. circa x. hor: vespert:
eat in musca ad Aulam oppid:
Saltet cum xiii canicul:
præsertim meo. Dom: reddita,
℈ hora matutin: dormiat at prand:
Repetat stultit: pro re nata.

He handed this with a sort of spiteful twinkle to Mrs. Dodd, and her countenance lightened again. Her sex will generally compound with whoever can give as well as take. Now she had extracted a real, grave prescription, she acquiesced in the ball, though not a county one; "to satisfy your whim, my good, kind friend, to whom I owe so much."

Sampson called on his way back to town, and, in course of conversation, praised Nature for her beautiful instincts, one of which, he said, had inspired Miss Julee, at a credulous age, not to swallow "the didly drastics of the tinkerin dox."

Mrs. Dodd smiled, and requested permission to contradict him; her daughter had taken the several prescriptions.

Sampson inquired brusquely if she took him for a fool.

She replied calmly: "No; for a very clever, but *rather* opinionated personage."

"Opininated? So is ivery man who has grounds for his opinin. D'ye think, because Dockers Short, an' Bist, an' Kinyon, an' Cuckoo, an' Jackdaw, an' Starling, an' Co., don't know the dire effecks of calomel an' drastics on the buddy, I don't know't? Her eye, her tongue, her skin, her voice, her elastic walk, all tell *me* she has not been robbed of her vital resources. Why, if she had taken that genteel old thief Short's rimidies alone, the girl's gums would be sore,

And herself at Dith's door."

Mrs. Dodd was amused. "Julia, this is so like the gentlemen; they are in love with argument. They go on till they reason themselves out of their reason. Why beat about the bush; when there she sits?"

"What, go t' a wumman for the truth, when I can go t' infallible Inference?"

"You may always go to my David's daughter for the truth," said Mrs. Dodd, with dignity. She then looked the inquiry; and Julia replied to her look as follows: first, she coloured very high; then, she hid her face in both her hands; then, rose and turning her neck swiftly, darted a glance of fiery indignation and bitter reproach on Dr. Meddlesome, and left the apartment mighty stag-like.

"Mairey on us!" cried Sampson. "Did ye see that, ma'am? Yon's just a bonny basilisk. Another such thunderbolt as she dispinsed, and ye'll be ringing for your maid to sweep up the good physician's ashes."

Julia did not return till the good physician was gone back to London. Then she came in with a rush, and, demonstrative toad, embraced Mrs. Dodd's knees, and owned she had cultivated her geraniums with all those medicines, liquid and solid; and only one geranium had died.

There is a fascinating age, when an intelligent girl is said to fluctuate between childhood and womanhood. Let me add that these seeming fluctuations depend much on the company she is in: the budding virgin is princess of chameleons; and, to confine ourselves to her two most piquant contrasts, by her mother's side she is always more or less child-like; but, let a nice young fellow engage her apart, and, hey presto! she shall be every inch a woman: perhaps at no period of her life are the purely mental characteristics of her sex so supreme in her: thus her type, the rosebud, excels in essence of rosehood the rose itself.

My reader has seen Julia Dodd play both parts; but it is her child's face she has now been turning for several pages; so it may be prudent to remind him she has shone on Alfred Hardie in but one light; a young, but Juno-like, woman. Had she shown "my puppy" her childish qualities, he would have despised her; he had left that department himself so recently. But Nature guarded the budding fair from such a disaster.

We left Alfred Hardie standing in the moonlight gazing at her lodging. This was sudden; but, let slow coaches deny it as loudly as they like, fast coaches exist; and Love is a Passion, which like Hate, Envy, Avarice, &c., has risen to a great height in a single day. Not that Alfred's was "Love at first sight;" for he had seen her beauty in the full blaze of day with no deeper feeling than admiration; but in the moonlight he came under more sovereign spells than a fair face: her virtues and her voice. The narrative of their meeting has indicated the first, and as to the latter, Julia was not one of those whose beauty goes out with the candle; her voice was that rich, mellow, moving organ, which belongs to no rank nor station; is born, not made; and, flow it from the lips of dairymaid or countess, touches every heart, gentle or simple, that is truly male. And this divine contralto, full, yet penetrating, Dame Nature had inspired her to lower when she was moved or excited, instead of raising it: and then she was enchanting. All unconsciously she cast this crowning spell on Alfred, and he adored her. In a word, he caught a child-woman away from its mother; his flattering captive turned, put on composure, and bewitched him.

She left him, and the moonlight night seemed to blacken. But within his young breast all was light, new light. He leaned opposite her window in an Elysian reverie, and let the hours go by. He seemed to have vegetated till then, and lo! true life had dawned. He thought he should love to die for her; and, when he was calmer, he felt he was to live for her, and welcomed his destiny with rapture. He passed the rest of the Oxford term in a soft ecstasy; called often on Edward, and took a sudden and prodigious interest in him; and counted the days glide by and the happy time draw near, when he should be four months in the same town with his enchantress. This one did not trouble the doctors: he glowed with a steady fire; no heats and chills, and sad misgivings; for one thing he was not a woman, a being tied to that stake, Suspense, and compelled to wait, and wait, for others' actions. To him, life's path seemed paved with roses, and himself to march it in eternal sunshine, buoyed by perfumed wings.

He came to Barkington to try for the lovely prize. Then first he had to come down from love's sky, and realize how hard it is here below to court a young lady—who is guarded by a mother—without an introduction in the usual form. The obvious course was to call on Edward. Having parted from him so lately he forced himself to wait a few days, and then sc' out for Albion Villa.

As he went along, he arranged the coming dialogue for all the parties; Edward was to introduce him; Mrs. Dodd to recognize his friendship for her son; he was to say he was the gainer by it; Julia, silent at first, was to hazard a timid observation, and he to answer gracefully, and draw her out, and find how he stood in her opinion: the sprightly affair

should end by his inviting Edward to dinner. That should lead to their inviting him in turn, and then he should have a word with Julia, and find out what houses she visited, and get introduced to their proprietors: arrived at this point, his mind went over hedge and ditch faster than my poor pen can follow; as the crow flies, so flew he, and had reached the church-porch under a rain of nosegays with Julia—in imagination—by then he arrived at Albion Villa in the body. Yet he knocked timidly; his heart beat almost as hard as his hand.

Sarah, the black-eyed housemaid, "answered the door."

"Mr. Edward Dodd?"

"Not at home, sir. Left last week."

"For long?"

"I don't rightly know, sir. But he won't be back this week, I don't think."

"Perhaps," stammered Alfred, "the ladies—Mrs. Dodd—might be able to tell me."

"Oh yes, sir. But my mistress she's in London just now."

Alfred's eyes flashed. "Could I learn from Miss Dodd?"

"La, sir, she is in London along with her ma; why, 'tis for her they are gone; to insult the great doctors."

He started. "She is not ill? Nothing serious?"

"Well, sir, we do hope not; she is pining a bit, as young ladies will."

Alfred was anything but consoled by this off-hand account; he became alarmed, and looked wretched. Seeing him so perturbed, Sarah, who was blunt but goodnatured, added, "but cook she says hard work would cure our Miss of all *she* ails. But who shall I say was asking? for my work is a bit behind-hand."

Alfred took the hint reluctantly, and drew out his card-case, saying, "For Mr. Edward Dodd." She gave her clean but wettish hand a hasty wipe with her apron, and took the card; he retired, she stood on the step and watched him out of sight, said "Oho!" and took his card to the kitchen for preliminary inspection and discussion.

Alfred Hardie was resolute, but sensitive. He had come on the wings of Love and Hope; he went away heavily: a housemaid's tongue had shod his elastic feet with lead in a moment; of all misfortunes sickness was what he had not anticipated, for she looked immortal. Perhaps it was that fair and treacherous disease, consumption. Well, if it was, he would love her all the more, would wed her as soon as he was of age, and carry her to some soft Southern clime, and keep each noxious air at bay, and prolong her life, perhaps save it.

And now he began to chafe at the social cobwebs that kept him from her. But, just as his impatience was about to launch him into imprudence, he was saved by a genuine descendant of Adam. James Maxley kept Mr. Hardie's little pleasaunce trim as trim could be, by yearly contract. This entailed short but frequent visits; and Alfred often talked with him; for the man was really a bit of a character; had a shrewd rustic wit, and a ready tongue, was rather too fond of law, and much too fond of money; but scrupulously honest: head as long as Cudworth's, but broader; and could not read a line. One day he told Alfred that he must knock off now, and take a look in at Albion Villa the captain was due; and on no account would he, Maxley, allow that

there ragged box round the captain's quarter-deck: "that is how he do name their little mossel of a lawn: and there he walks for a wager, athirt and across, across and athirt, five steps and then about; and I'd a'most bet ye a halfpenny he thinks hisself on the salt sea ocean, bless his silly old heart."

All this time Alfred, after the first start of joyful surprise, was secretly thanking his stars for sending him an instrument. To learn whether she had returned, he asked Maxley whether the ladies had sent for him.

"Not they," said Maxley, rather contemptuously; "what do women-folk care about a border, without 'tis a lace one to their nightcaps; for none but the father of all vanity to see. Not as I have ought to say again the pair; they keep their turf tidyish—and pay ready money—and a few flowers in their pots; but the rest may shift for itself. Ye see, Master Alfred," explained Maxley, wagging his head wisely, "nobody's pride can be everywhere; now theirs is in-a-doors; their withdrawing-room it's like the Queen's palace, my missus tells me; she is wrapped up in 'em, ye know. But the captain for my money."

The sage shouldered his tools and departed. But he left a good hint behind him. Alfred hovered about the back door the next day till he caught Mrs. Maxley; she supplied the house with eggs and vegetables. "Could she tell him whether his friend Edward Dodd was likely to come home soon?" She thought not; he was gone away to study. "He haven't much head-piece, you know, not like what Miss Julia have. Mrs. and Miss are to be home to-day; they wrote to cook this morning. I shall be there to-morrow, sartain, and I'll ask in the kitchen when Master Edward is a coming back." She prattled on. The ladies of Albion Villa were good kind ladies; the very maid-servants loved them; Miss was more for religion than her mother, and went to St. Anne's church Thursday evenings, and Sundays morning and evening; and visited some poor women in the parish with food and clothes; Mrs. Dodd could not sleep a wink when the wind blew hard at night; but never complained, only came down pale to breakfast. Miss Julia's ailment was nothing to speak of, but they were in care along of being so wrapped up in her, and no wonder, for if ever there was a duck——!

Acting on this intelligence, Alfred went early the next Sunday to St. Anne's church, and sat down in the side gallery at its east end. While the congregation flowed quietly in, the organist played the Agnus Dei of Mozart. Those pious tender tones stole over this hot young heart, and whispered, "Peace, be still!" He sighed wearily, and it passed through his mind that it might have been better for him, and especially for his studies, if he had never seen her. Suddenly the aisle seemed to lighten up; she was gliding along it, beautiful as May, and modesty itself in dress and carriage. She went into a pew and kneeled a minute, then seated herself and looked out the lessons for the day. Alfred gazed at her face devoured it. But her eyes never roved. She seemed to have put off feminine curiosity, and the world, at the church door. Indeed he wished she was not quite so heavenly discreet; her lashes were delicious, but he longed to see her eyes once more; to catch a glance from them, and, by it, decipher his fate.

But, no; she was there to worship, and did not discern her earthly lover, who[illegible] longing looks were glued to her, and his body rose and sank with

the true worshippers, but with no more spirituality than a piston, or a Jack-in-the-box.

In the last hymn before the sermon, a well-meaning worshipper in the gallery delivered a leading note, a high one, with great zeal, but small precision, being about a semitone flat; at this outrage on her too sensitive ear, Julia Dodd turned her head swiftly to discover the offender; and failed; but her two sapphire eyes met Alfred's point-blank.

She was crimson in a moment, and lowered them on her book again, as if to look that way was to sin. It was but a flash: but sometimes a flash fires a mine.

The lovely blush deepened and spread before it melted away, and Alfred's late cooling heart warmed itself at that sweet glowing cheek. She never looked his way again, not once: which was a sad disappointment; but she blushed again and again before the service ended, only not so deeply: now there was nothing in the sermon to make her blush. I might add, there was nothing to redden her cheek with religious excitement. There was a little candid sourness—oil and vinegar—against sects and low churchmen; but thin generality predominated. Total: "Acetate of morphia," for dry souls to sip.

So Alfred took all the credit of causing those sweet irrelevant blushes; and gloated; the young wretch could not help glorying in his power to tint that fair statue of devotion with earthly thoughts.

But stay! that dear blush, was it pleasure or pain? What if the sight of him was intolerable?

He would know how he stood with her, and on the spot. He was one of the first to leave the church; he made for the churchyard gate, and walked slowly backwards and forwards by it, with throbbing heart till she came out.

She was prepared for him now, and bowed slightly to him with the most perfect composure, and no legible sentiment, except a certain marked politeness many of our young ladies think wasted upon young gentlemen; and are mistaken.

Alfred took off his hat in a tremor, and his eyes implored and inquired, but met with no further response; and she walked swiftly home, though without apparent effort. He looked longingly after her; but discretion forbade.

He now crawled by Albion Villa twice every day, wet or dry, and had the good fortune to see her twice at the drawing-room window. He was constant at St. Anne's church, and one Thursday crept into the aisle to be nearer to her, and he saw her steal one swift look at the gallery, and look grave; but soon she detected him, and though she looked no more towards him, she seemed demurely complacent. Alfred had learned to note these subtleties now, for Love is a microscope. What he did not know was, that his timid ardour was pursuing a masterly course; that to find herself furtively followed everywhere, and hovered about for a look, is apt to soothe womanly pride, and stir womanly pity, and to keep the female heart in a flutter of curiosity and emotion, two porters that open the heart's great gate to love.

Now the evening before his visit to the Dodds, Dr. Sampson dined with the Hardies, and happened to mention the "Dodds" among his old patients: "The Dodds of Albion Villa?" inquired Miss Hardie, to

her brother's no little surprise. "Albyn fiddlestick!" said the polished doctor. "No! they live by the water-side; used to; but now they have left the town, I hear. He is a sea-captain and a fine lad, and Mrs. Dodd is just the best-bred woman I ever prescribed for, except Mrs. Sampson."

"It *is* the Dodds of Albion Villa," said Miss Hardie. "They have two children; a son; his name is Edward; and a daughter, Julia; she is rather good-looking; a Gentleman's Beauty."

Alfred stared at his sister. Was she blind? with her "rather good-looking."

Sampson was quite pleased at the information. "N' listen me! I saved that girl's life when she was a year old."

"Then she is ill now, doctor," said Alfred, hastily. "Do go and see her! Hum! The fact is, her brother is a great favourite of mine." He then told him how to find Albion Villa. "Jenny, dear," said he, when Sampson was gone, "you never told me you knew her."

"Knew who, dear?"

"Whom? Why, Dodd's sister."

"Oh, she is a new acquaintance, and not one to interest you. We only meet in the Lord; I do not visit Albion Villa; her mother is an amiable worldling."

"Unpardonable combination!" said Alfred with a slight sneer. "So you and Miss Dodd meet only at church?"

"At church? hardly. She goes to St. Anne's: sits under a preacher, who starves his flock with moral discourses, and holds out the sacraments of the Church as the means of grace."

Alfred shook his head good-humouredly. "Now, Jenny, that is a challenge; and you know we both got into a fury the last time we were betrayed into that miserable waste of time and temper, Theological discussion. No, no:

> Let sects delight to bark and bite
> For 'tis their nature to;
> Let gown and surplice growl and fight,
> For Satan makes them so.

But let you and I cut High Church and Low Church, and be brother and sister. Do tell me in English where you meet Julia Dodd; that's a dear; for young ladies 'meeting in the Lord' conveys no positive idea to my mind."

Jane Hardie sighed at this confession. "We meet in the cottages of the poor and the sick, whom He loved and pitied when on earth; and we, His unworthy servants, try to soothe their distress, and lead them to Him, who can heal the soul as well as the body, and wipe away all the tears of all His people."

"Then it does you infinite credit, Jane," said Alfred, warmly. "Now, that is the voice of true religion; and not the whine of this sect, nor the snarl of that. And so she joins you in this good work? I am not surprised."

"We meet in it now and then, dear; but she can hardly be said to have joined me: I have a district, you know; but poor Mrs. Dodd will not allow Julia to enlist in the service. She visits independently, and

by fits and starts; and I am afraid she thinks more of comforting their perishable bodies than of feeding their souls. It was but the other day she confessed to me her backwardness to speak in the way of instruction to women as old as her mother. She finds it so much easier to let them run on about their earthly troubles: and of course it is much *easier*. Ah, the world holds her still in some of its subtle meshes."

The speaker uttered this sadly; but presently, brightening up, said, with considerable bonhomie, and almost a sprightly air: "But she is a dear girl, and the Lord will yet light her candle."

Alfred pulled a face as of one that drinketh verjuice unawares: but let it pass: hypercriticism was not his cue just then. "Well, Jenny," said he, "I have a favour to ask you. Introduce me to your friend, Miss Dodd. Will you?"

Miss Hardie coloured faintly. "I would rather not, dear Alfred: the introduction could not be for her eternal good. Julia's soul is in a very ticklish state; she wavers as yet between this world and the other world; and it won't do; it won't do; there is no middle path. You would very likely turn the scale, and then I should have fought against her everlasting welfare—my friend's."

"What, am I an infidel?" inquired Alfred, angrily. Jane looked distressed. "Oh no, Alfred; but you are a worldling."

Alfred, smothering a strong sense of irritation, besought her to hear reason; these big words were out of place here. "It is Dodd's sister; and he will introduce me at a word, worldling as I am."

"Then why urge me to do it, against my conscience?" asked the young lady, as sharply as if she had been a woman of the world. "You cannot be in *love* with her, as you do not know her."

Alfred did not reply to this unlucky thrust, but made a last effort to soften her. "Can you call yourself my sister, and refuse me this trifling service, which her brother, who loves her and esteems her ten times more sincerely than you do, would not think of refusing me if he was at home?"

"Why should he? He is in the flesh, himself; let the carnal introduce one another. I really must decline; but I am very, very sorry that you feel hurt about it."

"And I am very sorry I have not 'an amiable worldling' for my sister, instead of an unamiable and devilish conceited Christian." And, with these bitter words, Alfred snatched a candle and bounced to bed in a fury. So apt is one passion to rouse up others.

Jane Hardie let fall a gentle tear: but consoled herself with the conviction that she had done her duty, and that Alfred's anger was quite unreasonable, and so he would see as soon as he should cool.

The next day the lover, smarting under this check, and spurred to fresh efforts, invaded Sampson. That worthy was just going to dine at Albion Villa, so Alfred postponed pumping him till next day. Well, he called at the inn next day, and if the doctor was not just gone back to London!

Alfred wandered disconsolate homewards.

In the middle of Buchanan Street, an agitated treble called after him, "Mr. Halfred! hoh, Mr. Halfred!" He looked back and saw Dick Absalom, a promising young cricketer, brandishing a document and

imploring aid. "O, Master Halfred, dooee please come here. I durstn't leave the shop."

There is a tie between cricketers far too strong for social distinctions to divide, and, though Alfred muttered peevishly, "Whose cat is dead now?" he obeyed the strange summons.

The distress was a singular one. Master Absalom, I must premise, was the youngest of two lads in the employ of Mr. Jenner, a benevolent old chemist, a disciple of Malthus. Jenner taught the virtues of drugs and minerals to tender youths, at the expense of the public. Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since a pretty servant girl came into the shop, and laid a paper on the counter, saying, "Please to make that up, young man." Now at fifteen we are gratified by inaccuracies of this kind from ripe female lips: so master Absalom took the prescription with a complacent grin; his eye glanced over it; it fell to shaking in his hand; chill dismay penetrated his heart; and, to speak with oriental strictness, his liver turned instantly to water. However, he made a feeble clutch at Mercantile Mendacity, and stammered out, "Here's a many hingredients, and the governor's out walking, and he's been and locked the drawer where we keeps our haulhoppy. You couldn't come again in half an hour, Miss, could ye?" She acquiesced readily, for she was not habitually called Miss, and she had a follower, a languid one, living hard by, and belonged to a class which thinks it consistent to come after its followers.

Dicky saw her safe off, and groaned at his ease. Here was a prescription full of new chemicals, sovereign, no doubt; *i.e.*, deadly when applied Jennerically; and the very directions for use were in Latin words he had encountered in no prescription before. A year ago Dicky would have counted the prescribed ingredients on his fingers, and then taken down an equal number of little articles, solid or liquid, mixed them, delivered them, and so to cricket, serene: but now, his mind, to apply the universal cant, was "in a transition state." A year's practice had chilled the youthful valour which used to scatter Epsom salts, or oxalic acid; magnesia, or corrosive sublimate. An experiment or two by himself and his compeers, with comments by the coroner, had enlightened him as to the final result on the human body of potent chemicals fearlessly administered, leaving him dark as to their distinctive qualities applied remedially. What should he do? run with the prescription to old Taylor in the next street, a chemist of forty years? Alas! at his tender age he had not omitted to chaff that reverend rival persistently and publicly. Humble his establishment before the King Street one? Sooner perish drugs, and come eternal cricket! And, after all, why not? Drummer-boys, and powder-monkeys, and other imps of his age that dealt destruction, did not depopulate gratis; Mankind acknowledged their services in cash: but old Jenner, taught by Philosophy through its organ the newspapers that "knowledge is riches," was above diluting with a few shillings a week the wealth a boy acquired behind his counter: so his apprentices got no salary. Then why not shut up the old rogue's shutters, and excite a little sympathy for him, to be followed by a powerful reaction on his return from walking; and go and offer his own services on the cricket ground to field for the gentleman by the hour, or bowl at a shilling on their balls?

"Bowling is the lay for me," said he; "you get money for that, and you only bruise the gents a bit and break their thumbs: you can't put their vital sparks out as you can at this work."

By a striking coincidence the most influential member of the cricket club passed while Dick was in this quandary.

"Oh, Mr. Halfred, you was always very good to me on the ground; you couldn't have me hired by the club, could ye? for I am sick of this trade; I wants to bowl."

"You little duffer!" said Alfred, "cricket is a recreation, not a business. Besides, it only lasts five months. Unless you adjourn to the antipodes. Stick to the shop like a man, and make your fortune."

"Oh, Mr. Halfred," said Dick, sorrowfully, "how can I find fortune here? Jenner don't pay. And the crowner declares he will not have it; and the Barton Chronicle says us young gents ought all to be given a holiday to go and see one of us hanged by lot; but this is what have broke this camel's back at last; here's a dalled thing to come smiling and smirking in with, and put it across a counter in a poor boy's hand. Oh! oh! oh!"

"Dick," said Alfred, "if you blubber, I'll give you a hiding. You have stumbled on a passage you can't construe. Well, who has not? but we don't shed the briny about it. Here, let me have a go at it."

"Ah, I've heard you are a scholard," said Dick, "but you won't make out this; there's some new preparation of Mercury, and there's musk, and there's horehound, and there's a neutral salt; and dal his old head that wrote it!"

"Hold your jaw, and listen, while I construe it to you. '*Die Mercurii*, on Wednesday—*decimâ horâ vespertinâ*, at ten o'clock at night—*eat in Musca*:' what does that mean? '*Eat in Musca*?' I see; this is modern Latin with a vengeance. 'Let him go in a fly to the Town-hall. *Saltet*, let him jump—*cum tredecim caniculis*, with thirteen little dogs—*præsertim meo*, especially with my little dog.' Dicky, this prescription emanates from Bedlam direct. '*Domum reddita*'—hallo! it is a woman, then. 'Let *her* go in a fly to the—Town-hall,' eh? 'Let *her* jump,' no, dance, with thirteen whelps, especially mine.' Ha! ha! ha! And who is the woman that is to do all this, I wonder."

"Woman, indeed!" said a treble at the door! "no more than I am; it's for a young lady. O, jiminy!"

This polite ejaculation was drawn out by the speaker's sudden recognition of Alfred, who had raised his head at her remonstrance, and now started in his turn: for it was the black-eyed servant of Albion Villa. They looked at one another in expressive silence.

"Yes, sir, it is for my young lady. Is it ready, young man?"

"No, it ain't: and never will," squealed Dick, angrily; "it's a vile 'oax; and you ought to be ashamed of yourself bringing it into a respectable shop."

Alfred silenced him, and told Sarah he thought Miss Dodd ought to know the nature of this prescription before it went round the chemists.

He borrowed paper of Dick, and wrote:

"Mr. Alfred Hardie presents his compliments to Miss Dodd, and

begs leave to inform her that he has, by the merest accident, intercepted the enclosed prescription. As it seems rather a sorry jest, and tends to attract attention to Miss Dodd and her movements, he has ventured, with some misgivings, to send it back with a literal translation, on reading which it will be for Miss Dodd to decide whether it is to circulate.

"'On Wednesday, at ten P.M. let her go in a fly to the Town-hall, and dance with thirteen { little dogs, / puppies, / whelps, } especially with mine: return home at six A.M., and sleep till dinner, and repeat the folly as occasion serves.'"

"Suppose I could get it into Miss's hands when she's alone?" whispered Sarah.

"You would earn my warmest gratitude."

"'Warmest gratitude!' Is that a warm gown or a warm cloak, I wonder?"

"It is both, when the man is a gentleman, and a pretty, dark-eyed, girl pities him and stands his friend."

Sarah smiled, and whispered, "Give it me; I'll do my best."

Alfred enclosed the prescription and his note in one cover, handed them to her, and slipped a sovereign into her hand. He whispered, "Be prudent."

"I'm dark, sir," said she: and went off briskly homewards, and Alfred stood rapt in dreamy joy, and so self-elated that, had he been furnished like a peacock, he would have instantly become "a thing all eyes," and choked up Jenner's shop, and swept his counter. He had made a step towards familiarity, had written her a letter; and then, if this prescription came as he suspected, from Dr. Sampson, she would, perhaps, be at the ball. This opened a delightful vista. Meantime Mrs. Dodd had communicated Sampson's opinion to Julia, adding that there was a prescription besides, gone to be made up. "However, he insists on your going to this ball."

Julia begged hard to be excused: said she was in no humour for balls: and, Mrs. Dodd objecting that the tickets had actually been purchased, she asked leave to send them to the Dartons: "they will be a treat to Rose and Alice; they seldom go out: mamma, I do so fear they are poorer than people think. May I?"

"It would be but kind," said Mrs. Dodd. "Though really why my child should always be sacrificed to other people's children——!"

"Oh a mighty sacrifice!" said Julia. She sat down and enclosed the tickets to Rose Darton, with a little sugared note. Sarah being out, Elizabeth took it. Sarah met her at the gate, but did not announce her return: she lurked in ambush till Julia happened to go to her own room, then followed her, and handed Alfred's missive, and watched her slily, and, being herself expeditious as the wind in matters of the heart, took it for granted the enclosure was something very warm indeed; so she said with feigned simplicity, "I suppose it is all right now, miss?" and retreated swelling with a secret, and tormented her fellow-servants all day with innuendoes dark as Erebus.

Julia read the note again and again: her heart beat at those few ceremonious lines. "He does not like me to be talked of," she said to

herself. "How good he is! What trouble he takes about me! Ah! *he will be there.*"

She divined rightly; on Wednesday, at ten, Alfred Hardie was in the ball-room. It was a magnificent room, well lighted, and at present not half filled, though dancing had commenced. The figure Alfred sought was not there: and he wondered he had been so childish as to hope she would come to a city ball. He played the fine gentleman; would not dance. He got near the door with another Oxonian, and tried to avenge himself for her absence on the townspeople who were there, by quizzing them.

But in the middle of this amiable occupation, and, indeed, in the middle of a sentence, he stopped short, and his heart throbbed, and he thrilled from head to foot; for two ladies glided in at the door, and passed up the room with the unpretending composure of well-bred people. They were equally remarkable; but Alfred saw only the radiant young creature in flowing muslin, with the narrowest sash in the room, and no ornament but a necklace of large pearls, and her own vivid beauty. She had altered her mind about coming, with apologies for her vacillating disposition so penitent and disproportionate, that her indulgent and unsuspecting mother was really quite amused. Alfred was not so happy as to know that she had changed her mind with his note. Perhaps even this knowledge could have added little to that exquisite moment, when, unhoped for, she passed close to him, and the fragrant air from her brushed his cheek; and seemed to whisper, "Follow me and be my slave."

## CHAPTER V.

He did follow her, and, convinced that she would be engaged ten deep in five minutes, hustled up to the master of the ceremonies and begged an introduction. The great banker's son was attended to at once. Julia saw them coming, as her sex can see, without looking. Her eyes were on fire, and a delicious blush on her cheeks, when the M.C. introduced Mr. Alfred Hardie with due pomp. He asked her to dance.

"I am engaged for this dance, sir," said she softly.

"The next?" asked Hardie, timidly.

"With pleasure."

But when they had got so far they were both seized with bashful silence; and, just as Alfred was going to try and break it, Cornet Bosanquet, aged 18, height 5 feet 4 inches, strutted up with clanking heel, and, glancing haughtily up at him, carried Julia off, like a steam-tug towing away some fair schooner. To these little thorns society treats all anxious lovers, but the incident was new to Alfred, and discomposed him; and, besides he had nosed a rival in Sampson's prescription. So now he thought to himself, "that little ensign is 'his puppy.'"

To get rid of Mrs. Dodd he offered to conduct her to a seat. She thanked him; she would rather stand where she could see her daughter dance: on this he took her to the embrasure of a window opposite where Julia and her partner stood, and they entered a circle of spectators. The band struck up, and the solemn skating began.

"Who is this lovely creature in white?" asked a middle-aged solicitor.

"In white? I do not see any beauty in white," replied his daughter.

"Why there, before your eyes," said the gentleman, loudly.

"What, that girl dancing with the little captain? I don't see much beauty in her. *And* what a rubbishing dress."

"It never cost a pound, making and all," suggested another Barkingtonian nymph.

"But what splendid pearls!" said a third: "can they be real?"

"Real! what an idea!" ejaculated a fourth: "who puts on real pearls as big as peas with muslin at twenty pence the yard?"

"Weasels!" muttered Alfred, and quivered all over: and he felt to Mrs. Dodd so like a savage going to spring, that she laid her hand upon his wrist, and said gently, but with authority, "Be calm, sir! and oblige me by not noticing these people."

Then they threw dirt on her bouquet, and then on her shoes, while she was winding in and out before their eyes a Grace, and her soft muslin drifting and flowing like an appropriate cloud round a young goddess.

"A little starch would make it set out better. It's as limp as a towel on the line.

"I'll be sworn it was washed at home."

"Where it was made."

"I call it a rag, not a gown."

"Do let us move," whispered Alfred.

"I am very comfortable here," whispered Mrs. Dodd. "How can these things annoy my ears while I have eyes? Look at her: she is the best-dressed lady in the room; her muslin is Indian, and of a quality unknown to these provincial shopkeepers; a rajah gave it us: her pearls were my mother's and have been in every court in Europe; and she herself is beautiful, would be beautiful dressed like the dowdies who are criticising her: and, I think, sir, she dances as well as any lady can encumbered with an Atom that does not know the figure." All this with the utmost placidity.

Then, as if to extinguish all doubt, Julia flung them a heavenly smile; she had been furtively watching them all the time, and she saw they were talking about her.

The other Oxonian squeezed up to Hardie. "Do you know the beauty? She smiled your way."

"Ah!" said Hardie, deliberately, "you mean that young lady with the court pearls, in that exquisite Indian muslin, which floats so gracefully, while the other muslin girls are all crimp and stiff, like little pigs clad in crackling."

"Ha! ha! ha! Yes. Introduce me."

"I could not take such a liberty with the queen of the ball."

Mrs. Dodd smiled, but felt nervous and ill at ease. She thought to herself, "Now here is a generous, impetuous thing." As for the hostile party, staggered at first by the masculine insolence of young Hardie, it soon recovered, and, true to its sex, attacked him obliquely, through his white ladye.

"Who *is* the beauty of the ball?" asked one, haughtily.

"I don't know; but not that mawkish thing in limp muslin"

"I should say Miss Hetherington is the belle," suggested a third.

"Which is Miss Hetherington?" asked the Oxonian coolly of Alfred.

"Oh, she won't do for *us*. It is that little chalk-faced girl, dressed in pink with red roses; the pink of vulgarity and bad taste."

At this both Oxonians laughed arrogantly, and Mrs. Dodd withdrew her hand from the speaker's arm and glided away behind the throng. Julia looked at him with marked anxiety. He returned her look, and was sore puzzled what it meant, till he found Mrs. Dodd had withdrawn softly from him; then he stood confused, regretting too late he had not obeyed her positive request, and tried to imitate her dignified forbearance.

The quadrille ended. He instantly stepped forward, and, bowing politely to the cornet, said authoritatively, "Mrs. Dodd sends me to conduct you to her. With your permission, sir." His arm was offered and taken before the little warrior knew where he was.

He had her on his arm, soft, light, and fragrant as zephyr, and her cool breath wooing his neck; oh, the thrill of that moment! but her first word was to ask him, with considerable anxiety, "Why did mamma leave you?"

"Miss Dodd, I am the most unhappy of men."

"No doubt! no doubt!" said she, a little crossly. She added with one of her gushes of naïveté, "and I shall be unhappy too if you go and displease mamma."

"What could I do? A gang of snobbesses were detracting from—somebody. To speak plainly, they were running down—the loveliest of her sex. Your mamma told me to keep quiet. And so I did till I got a fair chance, and then I gave it them in their teeth." He ground his own, and added, "I think I was very good not to kick them."

Julia coloured with pleasure, and proceeded to turn it off; "Oh! most forbearing and considerate," said she: "ah, by the way, I think I did hear some ladies express a misgiving as to the pecuniary value of my costume; ha! ha! Oh—you— foolish!—Fancy noticing that! Why it is in little sneers that the approval of the ladies shows itself at a ball, and it is a much sincerer compliment than the gentlemen's bombastical praises; 'the fairest of her sex,' and so on; that none but the 'silliest of her sex' believe."

"Miss Dodd, I never said the fairest of her sex. I said the loveliest.

"Oh, that alters the case entirely," said Julia, whose spirits were mounting with the lights and music, and Alfred's company, "so now come and be reconciled to the best and wisest of her sex; ay, and the beautifullest, if you but knew her sweet, dear, darling face as I do; there she is; let us fly.

"Mamma, here is a penitent for you, real or feigned, I don't know which."

"Real, Mrs. Dodd," said Alfred. "I had no right to disobey you and risk a scene. You served me right by abandoning me; I feel the rebuke and its justice. Let me hope your vengeance will go no further."

Mrs. Dodd smiled at the grandiloquence of youth, and told him he had mistaken her character. "I saw I had acquired a generous, hot-headed ally, who was bent on doing battle with insects; so I withdrew; but so I should at Waterloo, or anywhere else where people put themselves in a passion."

The band struck up again.

"Ah!" said Julia, "and I promised you this dance; but it is a waltz and my guardian angel objects to the valse à deux temps."

"Decidedly. Should all the mothers in England permit their daughters to romp, and wrestle, in public, and call it waltzing, I must stand firm till they return to their senses."

Julia looked at Alfred despondently; he took his cue and said with a smile, "Well, perhaps it is a little rompy; a donkey's gallop and then twirl her like a mop."

"Since you admit that, perhaps you can waltz properly?" said Mrs. Dodd.

Alfred said he ought; he had given his whole soul to it in Germany last Long.

"Then I can have the pleasure of dropping the tyrant. Away with you both while there is room to circulate."

Alfred took his partner delicately; they made just two catlike steps forward, and melted into the old-fashioned waltz.

It was an exquisite moment. To most young people Love comes after a great deal of waltzing. But this pair brought the awakened tenderness, and trembling sensibilities, of two burning hearts, to this their first intoxicating whirl. To them therefore everything was an event, everything was a thrill—the first meeting and timid pressure of their hands, the first delicate enfolding of her supple waist by his strong arm but trembling hand, the delightful unison of their unerring feet, the movement, the music, the soft delicious whirl, her cool breath saluting his neck, his ardent but now liquid eyes seeking hers tenderly, and drinking them deep, hers that now and then sipped his so sweetly—all these were new and separate joys, that linked themselves in one soft delirium of bliss. It was not a waltz; it was an Ecstasy.

Starting almost alone, this peerless pair danced a gauntlet. On each side admiration and detraction buzzed all the time.

"Beautiful! They are turning in the air."

"Quite gone by. That's how the old fogies dance."

Chorus of shallow males. "How well she waltzes."

Chorus of shallow females. "How well he waltzes."

But they noted neither praise nor detraction: they saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing, but themselves and the other music, till two valsers à deux temps plunged into them. Thus smartly reminded they had not earth all to themselves, they laughed good-humouredly, and paused.

"Ah! I am happy!" gushed from Julia. She blushed at herself, and said severely, "You dance very well, sir:" this was said to justify her unguarded admission, and did, after a fashion. "I think it is time to go to mamma," said she demurely.

"So soon. And I had so much to say to you."

"Oh, very well. I am all attention."

The sudden facility offered set Alfred stammering a little. "I wanted to apologise to you for something—you are so good you seem to have forgotten it—but I dare not hope that—I mean at Henley—when the beauty of your character, and your goodness, so overpowered me, that a

"What do you mean, sir?" said Julia, looking him full in the face, like an offended lion, while, with true feminine and Julian inconsistency her bosom fluttered like a dove. "I never exchanged one word with you in my life before to-day; and I never shall again if you pretend the contrary."

Alfred stood stupified, and looked at her in piteous amazement.

"I value your acquaintance highly, Mr. Hardie, now I have made it, as acquaintances are made; but please to observe, I never saw you before—scarcely; not even in church."

"As you please," said he, recovering his wits in part. "What you say I'll swear to."

"Then I say, never remind a lady of what you ought to wish her to forget."

"I was a fool. And you are an angel of tact and goodness."

"Oh, now I am sure it is time to join mamma," said she in the driest, drollest, way. "Valsons."

They waltzed down to Mrs. Dodd, exchanging hearts at every turn, and they took a good many in the space of a round table, for in truth both were equally loth to part.

At two o'clock Mrs. Dodd resumed common-place views of a daughter's health, and rose to go.

Her fly had played her false, and, being our island home, it rained buckets. Alfred ran, before they could stop him, and caught a fly. He was dripping. Mrs. Dodd expressed her regrets; he told her it did not matter; for him the ball was now over, the flowers faded, and the lights darkness visible.

"The extravagance of these children!" said Mrs. Dodd to Julia, with a smile, as soon as he was out of hearing. Julia made no reply.

Next day she was at evening church: the congregation was very sparse. The first glance revealed Alfred Hardie standing in the very next pew. He wore a calm front of conscious rectitude; under which peeped sheep-faced misgivings as to the result of this advance; for, like all true lovers, he was half impudence, half timidity; and both on the grand scale.

Now Julia in a ball-room was one creature, another in church. After the first surprise, which sent the blood for a moment to her cheek, she found he had come without a prayer-book. She looked sadly and half reproachfully at him; then put her white hand calmly over the wooden partition, and made him read with her out of her book. She shared her hymn-book with him, too, and sang her Maker's praise modestly and soberly, but earnestly, and quite undisturbed by her lover's presence. It seemed as if this pure creature was drawing him to heaven holding by that good book, and by her touching voice. He felt good all over. To be like her he tried to bend his whole mind on the prayers of the church, and for the first time realized how beautiful they are.

After service he followed her to the door. Island home again, by the pailful; and she had a thick shawl but no umbrella. He had brought a large one on the chance; he would see her home.

"Quite unnecessary; it is so near."

He insisted; she persisted; and, persisting, yielded. They said but little; yet they seemed to interchange volumes, and, at each gaslight they passed, they stole a look, and treasured it to feed on.

That night was one broad step more towards the great happiness, or great misery, which awaits a noble love. Such loves, somewhat rare in Nature, have lately become so very rare in Fiction, that I have ventured, with many misgivings, to detail the peculiarities of its rise and progress. But now for a time it advanced on beaten tracks; Alfred had the right to call at Albion Villa, and he came twice; once when Mrs. Dodd was out. This was the time he stayed the two hours. A Mrs. James invited Jane and him to tea and exposition. There he met Julia and Edward, who had just returned. Edward was taken with Jane Hardie's face and dovelike eyes; eyes that dwelt with a soft and chastened admiration on his masculine face and his model form, and their owner felt she had received "a call" to watch over his spiritual weal. So they paired off.

Julia's fluctuating spirits settled now into a calm, demure, complacency. Her mother, finding this strange remedial virtue in youthful society, gave young parties, inviting Jane and Alfred in their turn. Jane hesitated, but, as she could no longer keep Julia from knowing her worldly brother, and hoped a way might be opened for her to rescue Edward, she relaxed her general rule, which was, to go into no company unless some religious service formed part of the entertainment. Yet her conscience was ill at ease; and, to set them an example, she took care, when she asked the Dodds in return, to have a clergyman there of her own party, who could pray and expound with unction.

Mrs. Dodd, not to throw cold water on what seemed to gratify her children, accepted Miss Hardie's invitation; but she never intended to go, and at the last moment wrote to say she was slightly indisposed. The nature of her *indisposition* she revealed to Julia alone. "That young lady keeps me on thorns. I never feel secure she will not say or do something extravagant or unusual: she seems to suspect sobriety and good taste of being in league with impiety. Here I succeed in bridling her a little; but encounter a female enthusiast in her own house? merci! After all, there must be something good in her, since she is your friend, and you are hers; but I have something more serious to say before you go there. It is about her brother; he is a flirt: in fact, a notorious one, more than one lady tells me."

Julia was silent, but began to be very uneasy; they were sitting and talking after sunset, yet without candles; she profited for once by that prodigious gap in the intelligence of "the sex."

"I hear he pays you compliments; and I have seen a disposition to single you out. Now, my love, you have the good sense to know that, whatever a young gentleman of that age says to you, he says to many other ladies; but your experience is not equal to your sense; so profit by mine; a girl of your age must never be talked of with a person of the other sex: it is fatal; fatal! but if you permit yourself to be singled out, you will be talked of, and distress those who love you. It is easy to avoid injudicious duets in society; oblige me by doing so to-night." To show how much she was in earnest, Mrs. Dodd hinted that, were her admonition neglected, she should regret for once having kept clear of an enthusiast.

Julia had no alternative; she assented in a faint voice. After a pause she faltered out, "And suppose he should esteem me seriously?"

Mrs. Dodd replied quickly, "Then that would be much worse. But," said she, "I have no apprehensions on that score; you are a child, and he is a precocious boy, and rather a flirt. But forewarned is forearmed. So now run away and dress, sweet one: my lecture is quite ended."

The sensitive girl went up to her room with a heavy heart. All the fears she had lulled of late revived. She saw plainly now that Mrs. Dodd only accepted Alfred as a pleasant acquaintance: as a son-in-law he was out of the question. "Oh, what will she say when she knows all?" thought Julia.

Next day, sitting near the window, she saw him coming up the road. After the first movement of pleasure at the bare sight of him, she was sorry he had come. Mamma's suspicions awake at last, and here he was again; the third call in one fortnight! She dared not risk an interview with him, ardent and unguarded, under that penetrating eye, which she felt would now be on the watch. She rose hurriedly, said as carelessly as she could, "I am going to the school," and, tying her bonnet on all in a flurry, whipped out at the back door with her shawl in her hand just as Sarah opened the front door to Alfred. She then shuffled on her shawl, and whisked through the little shrubbery into the open field, and reached a path that led to the school, and so gratified was she at her dexterity in evading her favourite, that she hung her head, and went murmuring, "Cruel, cruel, cruel!"

Alfred entered the drawing-room gaily, with a good-sized card and a prepared speech. His was not the visit of a friend but a functionary; the treasurer of the cricket-ground come to book two of his eighteen to play against the All England Eleven next month. "As for you, my worthy sir (turning to Edward), I shall just put you down without ceremony. But I must ask leave to book Captain Dodd. Mrs. Dodd, I come at the universal desire of the club; they say it is sure to be a dull match without Captain Dodd. Besides, he is a capital player."

"Mamma, don't you be caught by his chaff," said Edward, quietly. "Papa is no player at all. Anything more unlike cricket than his way of making runs!"

"But he makes them, old fellow; now you and I, at Lord's the other day, played in first-rate form, left shoulder well up, and achieved—with neatness, precision, dexterity, and despatch—the British duck's-egg."

"Misericorde! What is that?" inquired Mrs. Dodd.

"Why, a round O," said the other Oxonian, coming to his friend's aid.

"And what is that, pray?"

Alfred told her "the round O," which had yielded to "the duck's egg," and was becoming obsolete, meant the cypher set by the scorer against a player's name, who is out without making a run.

"I see," sighed Mrs. Dodd. "The jargon of the day penetrates to your very sports and games. And why British?"

"Oh, 'British' is redundant: thrown in by the universities."

"But what does it mean?"

"It means nothing. That is the beauty of it. British is inserted in imitation of our idols, the Greeks; they adored redundancy."

In short, poor Alfred, though an M.P., was talking to put off time,

till Julia should come in: so he now favoured Mrs. Dodd, of all people, with a flowery description of her husband's play, which I, who have not his motive for volubility, suppress. However, he wound up with the captain's "moral influence." "Last match," said he, "Barkington did not do itself justice. Several, that could have made a stand, were frightened out, rather than bowled, by the London professionals. Then Captain Dodd went in, and treated those artists with the same good-humoured contempt he would a parish bowler, and, in particular, sent Mynne's over-tossed balls flying over his head for five, or to square leg for four, and, on his retiring with twenty-five, scored in eight minutes, the remaining Barkingtonians were less funky, and made some fair scores."

Mrs. Dodd smiled a little ironically at this tirade, but said she thought she might venture to promise Mr. Dodd's co-operation, should he reach home in time. Then, to get rid of Alfred before Julia's return, the amiable worldling turned to Edward. "Your sister will not be back; so you may as well ring the bell for luncheon at once. Perhaps Mr. Hardie will join us."

Alfred declined, and took his leave with far less alacrity than he had entered; Edward went down stairs with him.

"Miss Dodd gone on a visit?" asked Alfred, affecting carelessness.

"Only to the school. By-the-by, I will go and fetch her."

"No, don't do that; call on my sister instead, and then you will pull me out of a scrape. I promised to bring her here: but her saintship was so long adorning 'the poor perishable body,' that I came alone."

"I don't understand you," said Edward. "I am not the attraction here; it is Julia."

"How do you know that? When a young lady interests herself in an undergraduate's soul, it is a pretty sure sign she likes the looks of him. But perhaps you don't want to be converted; if so, keep clear of *her*. 'Bar the fell dragon's blighting way; but shun that lovely snare.'"

"On the contrary," said Edward, calmly, "I only wish she *could* make me as good as she is, or half as good."

"Give her the chance, old fellow, and then it won't be your fault if she makes a mess of it. Call at two, and Jenny will receive you very kindly, and will show you you are in the 'gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.' Now, won't that be nice?"

"I will go," said Edward, gravely.

They parted. Where Alfred went the reader can perhaps guess; Edward to luncheon.

"Mamma," said he, with that tranquillity which sat so well on him, "don't you think Alfred Hardie is spoony upon our Julia?"

Mrs. Dodd suppressed a start, and (perhaps to gain time before replying sincerely) said she had not the honour of knowing what "spoony" meant.

"Why, sighs for her, and dies for her, and fancies she is prettier than Miss Hardie. He must be over head and ears to think that."

"Fie, child!" was the answer. "If I thought so, I should withdraw from their acquaintance. Excuse me; I must put on my bonnet at once, not to lose this fine afternoon."

Edward did not relish her remark: it menaced more Spoons than one.

However, he was not the man to be cast down at a word: he lighted a cigar, and strolled towards Hardie's house. Mr. Hardie, senior, had left three days ago on a visit to London; Miss Hardie received him; he passed the afternoon in calm complacency, listening reverently to her admonitions, and looking her softly out of countenance, and into earthly affections, with his lion eyes.

Meantime his remark, so far from really seeming foolish to Mrs. Dodd, was the true reason for her leaving him so abruptly. "Even this dear slow Thing sees it," thought she. She must talk to Julia more seriously, and would go to the school at once. She went up-stairs, and put on her bonnet and shawl before the glass; then moulded on her gloves, and came down equipped. On the stairs was a large window, looking upon the open field; she naturally cast her eyes through it, in the direction she was going, and what did she see but a young lady and gentleman coming slowly down the path towards the villa. Mrs. Dodd bit her lip with vexation, and looked keenly at them, to divine on what terms they were. And the more she looked the more uneasy she grew.

The head, the hand, the whole body of a sensitive young woman walking beside him she loves, betray her heart to experienced eyes watching unseen; and especially to female eyes. And why did Julia move so slowly? especially after that warning? Why was her head averted from that encroaching boy, and herself so near him? Why not keep her distance, and look him full in the face? Mrs. Dodd's first impulse was that of leopardesses, lionesses, hens, and all the mothers in nature; to dart from her ambush and protect her young; but she controlled it by a strong effort; it seemed wiser to descry the truth, and then act with resolution: besides, the young people were now almost at the shrubbery; so the mischief, if any, was done.

They entered the shrubbery.

To Mrs. Dodd's surprise and dismay they did not come out this side so quickly. She darted her eye into the plantation; and lo! Alfred had seized the fatal opportunity foliage offers, even when thinnish: he held Julia's hand, and was pleading eagerly for something she seemed not disposed to grant; for she turned away and made an effort to leave him. But Mrs. Dodd, standing there quivering with maternal anxiety, and hot with shame, could not but doubt the sincerity of that graceful resistance. If she had been quite in earnest, Julia had fire enough in her to box the little wretch's ears. She ceased even to doubt, when she saw that her daughter's opposition ended in his getting hold of two hands instead of one, and devouring them with kisses, while Julia still drew her head and neck away, but the rest of her supple frame seemed to yield and incline, and draw softly towards her besieger, by some irresistible spell.

"I can bear no more!" gasped Mrs. Dodd aloud, and turned to hasten and part them; but even as she curved her stately neck to go, she caught the lovers parting; and a very pretty one too, if she could but have looked at it, as these things ought always to be looked at: artistically.

Julia's head and lovely throat, unable to draw the rest of her away, compromised: they turned, declined, drooped, and rested one half moment on her captor's shoulder, like a settling dove: the next, she scudded from him, and made for the house alone.

Mrs. Dodd, deeply indignant, but too wise to court a painful interview with her own heart beating high, went into the drawing-room: and there sat down, to recover some little composure. But she was hardly seated when Julia's innocent voice was heard calling "Mamma, mamma!" and soon she came bounding into the drawing-room, brimful of good news, her cheeks as red as fire, and her eyes wet with happy tears; and there confronted her mother, who had started up at her footstep, and now, with one hand nipping the back of the chair convulsively, stood lofty, looking strangely agitated and hostile.

The two ladies eyed one another, silent, yet expressive; like a picture facing a statue; but soon the colour died out of Julia's face as well, and she began to cower with vague fears before that stately figure, so gentle and placid usually, but now so discomposed and stern.

"Where have you been, Julia?"

"Only at the school," she faltered.

"Who was your companion home?"

"Oh, don't be angry with me! It was Alfred."

"Alfred! His Christian name! You try my patience too hard."

"Forgive me. I was not to blame this time, indeed! indeed! You frighten me. What will become of me? What have I done for my own mamma to look at me so?"

Mrs. Dodd groaned. "Was that young coquette I watched from my window the child I have reared? No face on earth is to be trusted after this. 'What have you done' indeed? Only risked your own mother's esteem, and nearly broken her heart!" And with these words her own courage began to give way, and she sank into a chair with a deep sigh.

At this Julia screamed, and threw herself on her knees beside her, and cried "Kill me! oh, pray kill me! but don't drive me to despair with such cruel words and looks!" and fell to sobbing so wildly that Mrs. Dodd altered her tone with almost ludicrous rapidity "There, do not terrify me with your impetuosity, after grieving me so. Be calm, child; let me see whether I cannot remedy your sad imprudence; and, that I may, pray tell me the whole truth. How did this come about?"

In reply to this question, which she somewhat mistook, Julia sobbed out, "He met me c-coming out of the school, and asked to s-see me home. I said 'No thank you,' because I th-thought of your warning. 'Oh yes!' said he, and *would* walk with me, and keep saying he loved me. So, to stop him, I said, 'M-much ob-liged, but I was b-busy and had no time to flirt.' 'Nor have I the in-inclination,' said he. 'That is not what others say of you,' said I—you know what you t-told me, mamma—so at last he said d-did ever he ask any lady to be his wife? 'I suppose not,' said I, 'or you would be p-p-private property by now instead of p-public.'"

"Now there was a foolish speech; as much as to say nobody could resist him."

"W-wasn't it? And n-no more they could. You have no idea how he makes love; *so* unladylike: keeps advancing and advancing, and never once retreats, nor even st-ops. 'But I ask *you* to be my wife, said he. Oh, mamma, I trembled so. Why did I tremble? I don't

know. I made myself cold and haughty; 'I should make no reply to such ridiculous questions; say that to mamma, if you dare!' I said."

Mrs. Dodd bit her lip, and said, "Was there ever such simplicity?"

"Simple! Why that was my cunning. You are the only creature he is afraid of; so I thought to stop his mouth with you. But instead of that, my lord said calmly, 'That was understood; he loved me too well to steal me from her to whom he was indebted for me.' Oh, he has always an answer ready. And that makes him such a p-pest."

"It was an answer that did him credit."

"Dear mamma! now did it not? Then at parting he said he would come to-morrow, and ask you for my hand; but I must intercede with you first, or you would be sure to say 'No.' So I declined to interfere: 'W-w-what was it to me?' I said. He begged and prayed me; 'Was it likely you would give him such a treasure as Me unless I stood his friend?' (For the b-b-brazen Thing turns humble now and then.) And oh, mamma, he did so implore me to pity him, and kept saying no man ever loved as he loved me, and with his begging and praying me so passionately, oh, so passionately, I felt something warm drop from his poor eyes on my hand. Oh! oh! oh! oh!—What could I do? And then, you know, I wanted to get away from him. So I am afraid I did just say 'Yes. But only in a whisper. Mamma! my own, good, kind, darling mamma, have pity on him and on me; we love one another so."

A shower of tender tears gushed out in support of this appeal; and in a moment she was caught up with Love's mighty arms, and her head laid on her mother's yearning bosom. No word was needed to reconcile these two.

After a long silence, Mrs. Dodd said this would be a warning never to judge her sweet child from a distance again, nor unheard. "And therefore," said she, "let me hear from your own lips how so serious an attachment could spring up; why, it is scarcely a month since you were first introduced at that ball."

"Mamma," murmured Julia, hanging her head, "you are mistaken we knew each other before."

Mrs. Dodd looked all astonishment.

"Now I will ease my heart," said Julia, impetuously, addressing some invisible obstacle. "I tell you I am sick of having secrets from my own mother." And with this out it all came. She told the story of her heart better than I have; and, woman-like, dwelt on the depths of loyalty and delicate love she had read in Alfred's moonlit face that night at Henley. She said no elequence could have touched her like it. "Mamma, something said to me, 'Ay, look at him well, for that is your husband; to be.'" She even tried to solve the mystery of her soi-disant sickness; "I was disturbed by a feeling so new and so powerful,* but, above all, by having a secret from you; the first; the last."

"Well, darling, then why have a secret? Why not trust me, your friend as well as your mother?"

* Perhaps even this faint attempt at self-analysis was due to the influence of Dr. Whately. For, by nature, young ladies of this age seldom turn the eye inward.

"Ah! why, indeed? I am a puzzle to myself. I wanted you to know, and yet I could not tell you. I kept giving you hints, and hoped so you would take them, and *make* me speak out. But when I tried to tell you plump, something kept pull—pull—pulling me inside, and I couldn't. Mark my words! some day it will turn out that I am neither more nor less than a fool."

Mrs. Dodd slighted this ingenious solution. She said, after a moment's reflection, that the fault of this misunderstanding lay between the two. "I remember now I have had many hints; my mind must surely have gone to sleep. I was a poor simple woman who thought her daughter was to be always a child. And you were very wrong to go and set a limit to your mother's love: there is none—none whatever." She added: "I must import a little prudence and respect for the world's opinion into this new connexion; but whoever you love shall find no enemy in me."

Next day, Alfred came to know his fate. He was received with ceremonious courtesy. At first he was a good deal embarrassed, but this was no sooner seen than it was relieved by Mrs. Dodd with tact and gentleness. When her turn came, she said, "Your papa? Of course you have communicated this step to him?"

Alfred looked a little confused, and said, "No: he left for London two days ago, as it happens."

"That is unfortunate," said Mrs. Dodd. "Your best plan would be to write to him at once; I need hardly tell you that we shall enter no family without an invitation from its head."

Alfred replied that he was well aware of that, and that he knew his father, and could answer for him. "No doubt," said Mrs. Dodd; "but, as a matter of reasonable form, I prefer he should answer for himself." Alfred would write by this post. "It is a mere form," said he, "for my father has but one answer to his children, 'Please yourselves.' He sometimes adds, 'and how much money shall you want?' These are his two formulæ."

He then delivered a glowing eulogy on his father; and Mrs. Dodd, to whom the boy's character was now a grave and anxious study, saw with no common satisfaction his cheek flush, and his eyes moisten, as he dwelt on the calm, sober, unvarying affection, and reasonable indulgence, he and his sister had met with all their lives from the best of parents. Returning to the topic of topics, he proposed an engagement. "I have a ring in my pocket," said this brisk wooer, looking down. But this Mrs. Dodd thought premature and unnecessary. "You are nearly of age," said she, "and then you will be able to marry, if you are in the same mind." But, upon being warmly pressed, she half conceded even this. "Well," said she, "on receiving your father's consent, you can *propose* an engagement to Julia, and she shall use her own judgment; but, until then, you will not even mention such a thing to her. May I count on so much forbearance from you, sir?"

"Dear Mrs. Dodd," said Alfred, "of course you may. I should indeed be ungrateful if I could not wait a post for that. May I write to my father here?" added he, naïvely.

Mrs. Dodd smiled, furnished him with writing materials, and left him, with a polite excuse.

"Albion Villa, Sept. 29.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"You are too thorough a man of the world, and too well versed in human nature, to be surprised at hearing that I, so long invulnerable, have at last formed a devoted attachment to one whose beauty, goodness, and accomplishments I will not now enlarge upon; they are indescribable: and you will very soon see them and judge for yourself. The attachment, though short in weeks and months, has been a very long one in hopes, and fears, and devotion. I should have told you of it before you left, but in truth I had no idea I was so near the goal of all my earthly hopes; there were many difficulties: but these have just cleared away almost miraculously, and nothing now is wanting to my happiness but your consent. It would be affectation, or worse, in me to doubt that you will grant it. But, in a matter so delicate, I venture to ask you for something more: the mother of my ever and only beloved Julia is a lady of high breeding and sentiments; she will not let her daughter enter any family without a cordial invitation from its head. Indeed, she has just told me so. I ask, therefore, not your bare consent, of which I am sure, since my happiness for life depends on it, but a consent so gracefully worded—and who can do this better than you?—as to gratify the just pride and sensibilities of the high-minded family, about to confide its brightest ornament to my care.

"My dear father, in the midst of felicity almost more than mortal, the thought has come that this letter is my first step towards leaving the paternal roof under which I have been so happy all my life, thanks to you. I should indeed be unworthy of all your goodness if this thought caused me no emotion.

"Yet I do but yield to Nature's universal law. And, should I be master of my own destiny, I will not go far from you. I have been unjust to Barkington; or rather I have echoed, without thought, Oxonian prejudices and affectation. On mature reflection, I know no better residence for a married man.

"Do you remember about a year ago you mentioned a Miss Lucy Fountain to us as 'the most perfect gentlewoman you had ever met?' Well, strange to say, it is that very lady's daughter; and I think when you see her you will say the breed has anything but declined, in spite of Horace and his 'damnosa quid non.' Her brother is my dearest friend, and she is Jenny's; so a more happy alliance for all parties was never projected.

"Write to me by return, dear father, and believe me

"Ever your dutiful and grateful Son,

"ALFRED HARDIE."

As he concluded, Julia came in, and he insisted on her reading this masterpiece. She hesitated. Then he told her with juvenile severity that a good husband always shares his letters with his wife.

"His wife? Alfred!" and she coloured all over. "Don't call me names," said she, turning it off, after her fashion. "I can't bear it: it makes me tremble. With fury."

"This will never do, sweet one," said Alfred, gravely. "You and I

are to have no separate existence, now; you are to be I, and I am to be you. Come!"

"No; you read me so much of it, as is proper for me to hear. I shall not like it so well from your lips: but never mind."

When he came to read it, he appreciated the delicacy that had tempered her curiosity. He did not read it all to her, but nearly.

"It is a beautiful letter," said she; "a little pompouser than mamma and I write. 'The Paternal Roof!!' But all that becomes you; you are a scholar: and, dear Alfred, if I should separate you from your papa, I will never estrange you from him; oh, never, never. May I go for my work? for methinks, O most erudite, the 'maternal dame,' on domestic cares intent, hath confided to her offspring the recreation of your highness." The gay creature dropt him a curtsey, and fled to tell Mrs. Dodd the substance of "the sweet letter the dear high-flown Thing had written."

By then he had folded and addressed it, she returned and brought her work; charity children's great cloaks: her mother had cut them, and in the height of the fashion, to Jane Hardie's dismay; and Julia was binding, hooding, etcetering them.

How demurely she bent her lovely head over her charitable work, while Alfred poured his tale into her ears! How careful she was not to speak, when there was a chance of his speaking! How often she said one thing so as to express its opposite, a process for which she might have taken out a patent! How she and Alfred compared heart-notes, and their feelings at each stage of their passion! Their hearts put forth tendril after tendril, and so curled, and clung, round each other.

In the afternoon of the second blissful day, Julia suddenly remembered that this was dull for her mother. To have such a thought was to fly to her; and she flew so swiftly that she caught Mrs. Dodd in tears, and trying adroitly and vainly to hide them.

"What is the matter? I am a wretch. I have left you alone."

"Do not think me so peevish, love! you have but surprised the natural regrets of a mother at the loss of her child."

"Oh, mamma," said Julia, warmly, "and do you think all the marriage in the world can ever divide you and me—can make me lukewarm to my own sweet, darling, beautiful, blessed, angel, mother? Look at me: I am as much your Julia as ever; and shall be while I live. Your son is your son till he gets him a wife: but your daughter's your daughter, ALL—THE—DAYS—OF HER LIFE."

Divine power of native eloquence; with this trite distich you made hexameters tame; it gushed from that great young heart with a sweet infantine ardour, that even virtue can only pour when young, and youth when virtuous; and, at the words I have emphasised by the poor device of capitals, two lovely, supple arms flew wide out like a soaring albatross's wings, and then went all round the sad mother, and gathered every bit of her up to the generous young bosom.

"I know it, I know it!" cried Mrs. Dodd, kissing her; "I shall never lose my daughter while she breathes. But I am losing my child. You are turning to a woman, visibly: and you were such a happy child. Hence my misgivings, and these weak tears; which you have dried with

a word; see!" And she contrived to smile. "And now go down, dearest: he may be impatient; men's love is so fiery."

The next day Mrs. Dodd took Julia apart and asked her whether there was an answer from Mr. Hardie. Julia replied, from Alfred, that Jane had received a letter last night, and, to judge by the contents, Mr. Hardie must have left London before Alfred's letter got there. "He is gone to see poor Uncle Thomas."

"Why do you call him 'poor?'"

"Oh, he is not very clever; has not much mind, Alfred says; indeed, hardly any."

"You alarm me, Julia!" cried Mrs. Dodd, "what? madness in the family you propose to marry into?"

"Oh no, mamma," said Julia, in a great hurry; "no madness; only a little imbecility."

Mrs. Dodd's lip curved at this Julian answer; but just then her mind was more drawn to another topic. A serious doubt passed through her, whether, if Mr. Hardie did not write soon, she ought not to limit his son's attendance on her daughter. "He follows her about like a little dog," said she, half fretfully.

Next day, by previous invitation, Dr. Sampson made Albion Villa his head-quarters. Darting in from London he found Alfred sitting very close to Julia over a book.

"Lordsake!" cried he, "here's 'my puppy,' and 'm' enthusiast,' cheek by chowl." Julia turned scarlet, and Alfred ejaculated so loudly, that Sampson inquired what on airth was the matter now?

"Oh nothing; only here have I been jealous of my own shadow, and pestering her who 'your puppy' was: and she never would tell me. All I could get from her" added he, turning suddenly from gratitude to revenge, "was—that he was no greater a puppy than yourself, doctor."

"Oh, Alfred, no; I only said no vainer," cried Julia in dismay.

"Well, it is true," said Sampson, contentedly, and proceeded to dissect himself just as he would a stranger. "I am a vain man; a remarkably vain man. But then I'm a man of great mirit."

"All vain people are that," suggested Alfred, dryly.

"Who should know better than you, young Oxford? Y' have got a hidache."

"No, indeed."

"Don't tell lies now. Ye can't deceive me; man, I've an eye like a hawk. And what's that ye're studying with her? Ovid, for a pound."

"No; medicine; a treatise on your favourite organ, the brain; by one Dr. Whately."

"He is chaffing you, doctor," said Edward; "it is logic. He is coaching her; and then she will coach me."

"Then I forbid the chaff-cutting, young Pidant. Logic is an ill plaster to a sore head."

"Oh, 'the labour we delight in, physics pain.'"

"Jinnyus, Jinnyus;
Take care o' your carkuss,"

retorted the master of doggrel. "And that is a profounder remark than you seem to think, by your grinning, all of ye."

Julia settled the question by putting away the book. And she murmured to Alfred, "I wish I could steal your poor dear headaches: you might give me half of them at least; you would, too, if you really loved me."

This sound remonstrance escaped criticism by being nearly inaudible, and by Mrs. Dodd entering at the same moment.

After the first greeting, Sampson asked her with merry arrogance, how his prescription had worked? "Is her sleep broken still, ma'am? Are her spirits up and down? Shall we have to go back t' old Short and his black draught? How's her mookis membrin? An' her biliary ducks? an'—she's off like a flash."

"And no wonder," said Mrs. Dodd, reproachfully.

Thus splashed Sampson among the ducks: one of them did not show her face again till dinner.

Jane Hardie accompanied her brother by invitation. The general amity was diversified, and the mirth nowise lessened by constant passages of arms between Messrs. Sampson and Alfred Hardie.

After tea came the first contretemps. Sampson liked a game of cards: he could play, yet talk chronothermalism, as the fair can knit babies' shoes and imbibe the poetasters of the day.

Mrs. Dodd had asked Edward to bring a fresh pack. He was seen by his guardian angel to take them out of his pocket and undo them; presently Sampson, in his rapid way, clutcheld hold of them; and found a slip of paper curled round the ace of spades, with this written very clear in pencil,

REMEMBER THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH!

"What is this?" cried Sampson, and read it out aloud. Jane Hardie coloured, and so betrayed herself. Her "word in season" had strayed. It was the young and comely Edward she wished to save from the diabolical literature, the painted perdition; and not the uninteresting old sinner Sampson; who proceeded to justify her preference by remarking that "Remember not to trump your partner's best card, ladies," would be more to the point.

Everybody, except this hardened personage, was thoroughly uncomfortable. As for Alfred, his face betrayed a degree of youthful mortification little short of agony. Mrs. Dodd was profoundly disgusted, but fortunately for the Hardies, caught sight of his burning cheeks and compressed lips. "Dr. Sampson," said she, with cold dignity, "you will, I am sure, oblige me by making no more commeuts; sincerity is not always discreet; but it is always respectable: it is one of your own titles to esteem. I dare say," added she with great sweetness, "our resources are not so narrow that we need shock anybody's prejudices, and, as it happens, I was just going to ask Julia to sing: open the piano, love, and try if you can persuade Miss Hardie to join you in a duet."

At this, Jane and Julia had an earnest conversation at the piano, and their words, uttered in a low voice, were covered by a contemporaneous discussion between Sampson and Mrs. Dodd.

*Jane.* No, you must not ask me: I have forsworn these vanities. I have not opened my piano this two years.

*Julia.* Oh, what a pity; music is so beautiful; and surely we can choose our songs, as easily as our words; ah, how much more easily.

*Jane.* Oh, I don't go so far as to call music wicked: but music in society is *such* a snare. At least I found it so; my playing was highly praised; and that stirred up vanity: and so did my singing, with which I had even more reason to be satisfied. Snares! snares!

*Julia.* Goodness me! I don't find them so. Now you mention it, gentlemen do praise one; but, dear me, they praise every lady, even when we have been singing every other note out of tune. The little unmeaning compliments of society, can they catch anything so great as a soul?

*Jane.* I pray daily not to be led into temptation, and shall I go into it of my own accord?

*Julia.* Not if you find it a temptation. At that rate I ought to decline.

*Jane.* That doesn't follow. My conscience is not a law to yours. Besides, your mamma said "sing;" and a parent is not to be disobeyed upon a doubt. If papa were to insist on my going to a ball even, or reading a novel, I think I should obey; and lay the whole case before Him.

*Mrs. Dodd* (from a distance). Come, my dears, Doctor Sampson is getting *so* impatient for your song.

*Sampson.* Hum! for all that, young ladies' singing is a poor substitute for cards, and even for conversation.

*Mrs. Dodd.* That depends upon the singer, I presume.

*Sampson.* Mai—dear—madam, they all sing alike; just as they all write alike. I can hardly tell one fashionable tune from another; and nobody can tell one word from another, when they cut out all the consonants. N' listen me. This is what I heard sung by a lady last night:

Ee un Da' ei u aa an oo.
By oo eeeeyee aa
Vaullee, Vaullee, Vaullee, Vaullee,
Vaullee om is igh eeaa
An ellin in is ud.

*Mrs. Dodd.* That sounds like gibberish.

*Sampson.* It is gibberish, but it's Drydenish in articulating mouths. It is—

He sung Darius great and good
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And wiltering in his blood.

*Mrs. Dodd.* I think you exaggerate. I will answer for Julia that she shall speak as distinctly to music as you do in conversation.

*Sampson* (all unconscious of the tap). Time will show, madam. At prisent they seem to be in no hurry to spatter us with their word-jelly. Does some spark of pity linger in their marble bos'ms? or do they prefer inaud'ble chit-chat t' inarticulate mewin?

Julia, thus pressed, sang one of those songs that come and go every season. She spoke the words clearly, and with such variety and intelligence, that Sampson recanted, and broke in upon the—"very pretty"—"how sweet"—and "who is it by?" of the others, by shouting, "very weak trash very cleanly sung. Now give us something worth the wear and tear of your orgins. Immortal vairse widded t' immortal sounds; that is what I understand b' a song."

Alfred whispered, "No, no, dearest, sing something suitable to you and me."

"Out of the question. Then go further away, dear; I shall have more courage."

He obeyed, and she turned over two or three music-books; and finally sang from memory. She cultivated musical memory, having observed the contempt with which men of sense visit the sorry pretenders to music, who are tuneless and songless among the nightingales, and anywhere else away from their books. How will they manage to sing in heaven? Answer me that!

The song Julia Dodd sang on this happy occasion, to meet the humble but heterogeneous views of Messrs. Sampson and Hardie, was a simple eloquent Irish song, called Aileen Aroon. Whose history, by-the-by, was a curious one. Early in this century it occurred to somebody to hymn a son of George the Third for his double merit in having been born, and going to a ball. People, who thus apply the fine arts in modern days, are seldom artists; accordingly, this parasite could not invent a melody; so he coolly stole Aileen Aroon, soiled it by inserting sordid and incongruous jerks into the refrain, and called the stolen and adulterated article Robin Adair. An artisan of the same kidney was soon found to write words down to the degraded ditty: and, so strong is Flunkeyism, and so weak is Criticism, in these islands, that the polluted tune actually superseded the clean melody; and this sort of thing—

Who was in uniform at the ball?
Silly Billy.

smothered the immortal lines.

But Mrs. Dodd's severe taste in music rejected those ignoble jerks, and her enthusiastic daughter having the option to hymn immortal Constancy or mortal Fat, decided thus:

When like the early rose,
Aileen aroon,
Beauty in childhood glows,
Aileen aroon,

When like a diadem,
Buds blush around the stem,
Which is the fairest gem?
Aileen aroon.

Is it the laughing eye?
Aileen aroon.
Is it the timid sigh?
Aileen aroon.

Is it the tender tone,
Soft as the stringed harp's moan?
No; it is Truth alone,
Aileen aroon.

I know a valley fair,
Aileen aroon,
I know a cottage there,
Aileen aroon.

Far in that valley's shade,
I know a gentle maid,
Flower of the hazel glade,
Aileen aroon.

Who in the song so sweet?
Aileen aroon,
Who in the dance so fleet?
Aileen aroon.

Dear are her charms to me,
Dearer her laughter free,
Dearest her constancy,
Aileen aroon.

Youth must with time decay,
Aileen aroon,
Beauty must fade away,
Aileen aroon.
Castles are sacked in war,
Chieftains are scattered far,
Truth is a fixed star,
Aileen aroon.

The way the earnest singer sang these lines is beyond the conception of ordinary singers, public or private. Here one of nature's orators spoke poetry to music with an eloquence as fervid and delicate as ever rung in the Forum. She gave each verse with the same just variety as if she had been reciting, and, when she came to the last, where the thought rises abruptly, and is truly noble, she sang it with the sudden pathos, the weight, and the swelling majesty, of a truthful soul hymning truth with all its powers.

All the hearers, even Sampson, were thrilled, astonished, spell-bound: so can one wave of immortal music and immortal verse (alas! how seldom they meet!) heave the inner man when genius interprets. Judge, then, what it was to Alfred, to whom, with these great words and thrilling tones of her rich, swelling, ringing voice, the darling of his own heart vowed constancy, while her inspired face beamed on him like an angel's.

Even Mrs. Dodd, though acquainted with the song, and with her daughter's rare powers, gazed at her now with some surprise, as well as admiration, and kept a note Sarah had brought her, open, but unread, in her hand, unable to take her eyes from the inspired songstress. However, just before the song ended, she did just glance down, and saw it was signed Richard Hardie. On this her eye devoured it; and in one moment she saw that the writer declined, politely but peremptorily, the proposed alliance between his son and her daughter.

The mother looked up from this paper at that living radiance and incarnate melody in a sort of stupor: it seemed hardly possible to her that a provincial banker could refuse an alliance with a creature so peerless as that. But so it was; and despite her habitual self-government, Mrs. Dodd's white hand clenched the note till her nails dented it; and she reddened to the brow with anger and mortification.

Julia, whom she had trained never to monopolise attention in society, now left the piano in spite of remonstrance, and soon noticed her mother's face; for from red it had become paler than usual. "Are you unwell, dear?" said she, sotto voce.

"No love."

"Is there anything the matter, then?"

"Hush! We have guests: our first duty is to them." With this Mrs. Dodd rose, and, endeavouring not to look at her daughter at all, went round and drew each of her guests out in turn. It was the very heroism of courtesy; for their presence was torture to her. At last, to her infinite relief, they went, and she was left alone with her children. She sent the servants to bed, saying she would undress Miss Dodd: and accompanied her to her room. There the first thing she did, was to look the door; and the next was to turn round and look at her full.

"I always thought you the most lovable child I ever saw; but I never admired you as I have to-night; my noble my beautiful daughter, who

would grace the highest family in England." With this, Mrs. Dodd began to choke, and kissed Julia eagerly with the tears in her eyes, and drew her with tender, eloquent, defiance to her bosom.

"My own mamma," said Julia, softly, "what has happened?"

"My darling," said Mrs. Dodd, trembling a little, "have you pride? have you spirit?"

"I think I have."

"I hope so: for you will need them both. Read that!" And she held out Mr. Hardie's letter, but turned her own head away, not to see her girl's face under the insult.

## CHAPTER VII.

JULIA took Mr. Hardie's note and read it:

"MADAM,—

"I have received a very juvenile letter from my son, by which I learn he has formed a sudden attachment to your daughter. He tells me, however, at the same time, that you await my concurrence before giving your consent. I appreciate your delicacy; and it is with considerable regret I now write to inform you this match is out of the question. I have thought it due to you to communicate this to yourself and without delay, and feel sure that you will, under the circumstances, discountenance my son's further visits at your house.

"I am, Madam,

"With sincere respect,

"Your faithful servant,

"RICHARD HARDIE."

Julia read this letter, and re-read it in silence. It was an anxious moment to the mother.

"Shall our pride be less than this parvenu's?" she faltered. "Tell me yourself, what ought we to do?"

"What we ought to do is, never to let the name of Hardie be mentioned again in this house."

This reply was very comforting to Mrs. Dodd.

"Shall I write to him, or do you feel strong enough?"

"I feel that, if I do, I may affront him. He had no right to pretend that his father would consent. You write, and then we shall not lose our dignity though we are insulted."

"I feel so weary, mamma. Life seems ended."

"I could have loved him well. And now show me how to tear him out of my heart; or what will become of me?"

While Mrs. Dodd wrote to Alfred Hardie, Julia sank down and laid her head on her mother's knees. The note was shown her; she approved it languidly. A long and sad conversation followed; and, after kissing her mother and clinging to her, she went to bed chilly and listless, but did not shed a single tear. Her young heart was benumbed by the unexpected blow.

Next morning early, Alfred Hardie started gaily to spend the day at Albion Villa. Not a hundred yards from the gate he met Sarah, with Mrs. Dodd's letter, enclosing a copy of his father's to her. Mrs. Dodd here reminded him that his visits had been encouraged only upon a misapprehension of his father's sentiments; for which misapprehension he was in some degree to blame: not that she meant to reproach him on that score, especially at this unhappy moment: no, she rather blamed herself for listening to the sanguine voice of youth; but the error must now be repaired. She and Julia would always wish him well, and esteem him, provided he made no further attempt to compromise a young lady who could not be his wife. The note concluded thus:

"Individually I think I have some right to count on your honourable feeling to hold no communication with my daughter, and not in any way to attract her attention, under the present circumstances.

"I am,

"Dear Mr. Alfred Hardie,

"With many regrets at the pain I fear

"I am giving you,

"Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

"Lucy Dodd."

Alfred on reading this letter literally staggered: but proud and sensitive, as well as loving, he manned himself to hide his wound from Sarah, whose black eyes were bent on him in merciless scrutiny. He said doggedly, though tremulously, "Very well!" then turned quickly on his heel, and went slowly home. Mrs. Dodd, with well-feigned indifference, questioned Sarah privately: the girl's account of the abrupt way in which he had received the missive, added to her anxiety. She warned the servants that no one was at home to Mr. Alfred Hardie.

Two days elapsed, and then she received a letter from him. Poor fellow, it was the eleventh. He had written and torn up ten.

"Dear Mrs. Dodd,

"I have gained some victories in my life; but not one without two defeats to begin with; how then can I expect to obtain such a prize as dear Julia without a check or two? You need not fear that I shall intrude after your appeal to me as a gentleman: but I am not going to give in because my father has written a hasty letter from Yorkshire. He and I must have many a talk face to face before I consent to be miserable for life. Dear Mrs. Dodd, at first receipt of your cruel letter, so kindly worded, I was broken-hearted; but now I am myself again: difficulties are made for ladies to yield to, and for men to conquer. Only for pity's sake do not you be my enemy: do not set her against me for my father's fault. Think, if you can, how my heart bleeds at closing this letter without one word to her I love, better, a thousand times better, than my life.

"I am,

"Dear Mrs. Dodd,

"Yours sorrowfully,

"but not despairing,

"Alfred Hardie.

Mrs. Dodd kept this letter to herself. She could not read it quite unmoved, and therefore she felt sure it would disturb her daughter's heart the more.

Alfred had now a soft but dangerous antagonist in Mrs. Dodd. All the mother was in arms to secure her daughter's happiness coûte que coûte! and the surest course seemed to be to detach her affections from Alfred. What hope of a peaceful heart without this? and what real happiness without peace? But, too wise and calm to interfere blindly, she watched her daughter day and night, to find whether Love or Pride was the stronger: and this is what she observed:

Julia never mentioned Alfred. She sought occupation eagerly; came oftener than usual for money, saying it was for "Luxury." She visited the poor more constantly, taking one of the maids with her, at Mrs. Dodd's request. She studied Logic with Edward. She went to bed rather early, fatigued, it would appear, by her activity: and she gave the clue to her own conduct one day: "Mamma," said she, "nobody is downright unhappy who is good."

Mrs. Dodd noticed also a certain wildness and almost violence, with which she threw herself into her occupations: and a worn look about the eyes that told of a hidden conflict. On the whole Mrs. Dodd was hopeful; for she had never imagined the cure would be speedy or easy. To see her child on the right road was much. Only the great healer Time could "medicine her to that sweet peace which once she owned;" and even Time cannot give her back her childhood, thought the mother, with a sigh.

One day came an invitation to an evening party at a house where they always wound up with dancing. Mrs. Dodd was for declining as usual; for since that night Julia had shunned parties. "Give me the sorrows of the poor and afflicted," was her cry; "the gaiety of the hollow world jars me more than I can bear." But now she caught with a sort of eagerness at this invitation. "Accept. They shall not say I am wearing the willow."

"My brave girl!" said Mrs. Dodd, joyfully, "I would not press it; but you are right; we owe it to ourselves to outface scandal. Still, let there be no precipitation; we must not undertake beyond our strength."

"Try me to-night," said Julia; "you don't know what I can do. I dare say *he* is not pining for *me*."

She was the life and soul of the party, and, indeed, so feverishly brilliant, that Mrs. Dodd said softly to her, "Gently love; moderate your spirits, or they will deceive our friends as little as they do me."

Meantime it cost Alfred Hardie a severe struggle to keep altogether aloof from Julia. In fact, it was a state of daily self-denial, to which he would never have committed himself, but that he was quite sure he could gradually win his father over. At his age we are apt to count without our antagonist.

Mr. Richard Hardie was "a long-headed man." He knew the consequence of giving one's reasons; eternal discussion ending in war. He had taken care not to give any to Mrs. Dodd, and he was as guarded and reserved with Alfred. The young man begged to know the why and the wherefore, and, being repulsed, employed all his art to elicit them by surprise, or get at them by inference: but all in vain; Hardie senior

was impenetrable; and inquiry, petulance, tenderness, logic, were all shattered on him as the waves break on Ailsa Craig.

Thus began dissension, decently conducted at first, between a father indulgent hitherto, and an affectionate son.

In this unfortunate collision of two strong and kindred natures, every advantage was at present on the father's side; age, experience, authority, resolution, hidden and powerful motives, to which my reader even has no clue as yet; a purpose immutable and concealed. Add to these a colder nature and a far colder affection; for Alfred loved his father dearly.

At last, one day, the impetuous one lost his self-command, and said he was a son, not a slave, and had little respect for Authority when afraid or ashamed to appeal to Reason. Hardie senior turned on him with a gravity and dignity no man could wear more naturally. "Alfred, have I been an unkind father to you all these years?"

"Oh no, father, no; I have said nothing that can be so construed. And that is the mystery to me; you are acting quite out of character."

"Have I been one of those interfering, pragmatical fathers who cannot let their children enjoy themselves their own way?"

"No, sir; you have never interfered, except to pay for anything I wanted."

"Then make the one return in your power, young man; have a little faith in such a father, and believe that he does not interfere now but for your good, and under a stern necessity; and that when he does interfere for once, and say, 'this thing shall not be,' it shall not be—by Heaven!"

Alfred was overpowered by the weight and solemnity of this. Sorrow, vexation, and despondency all rushed into his heart together, and unmanned him for a moment; he buried his face in his hands, and something very like a sob burst from his young heart. At this Hardie senior took up the newspaper with imperturbable coldness, and wore a slight curl of the lip. All this was hardly genuine, for he was not altogether unmoved; but he was a man of rare self-command, and chose to impress on Alfred that he was no more to be broken or melted than a mere rock.

It is always precarious to act a part; and this cynicism was rather able than wise: Alfred looked up and watched him keenly as he read the monetary article with tranquil interest; and then, for the first time in his life, it flashed into the young man's mind that his father was not a father. "I never knew him till now," thought he. "This man is ἀστοργος."*

Thus a gesture, so to speak, sowed the first seed of downright disunion in Richard Hardie's house—disunion, a fast-growing plant, when men set it in the soil of the passions.

Alfred, unlike Julia, had no panacea. Had any lips, except perhaps hers, told him that "to be good is to be happy here below," he would have replied, "Negatur; contradicted by daily experience." It never occurred to him therefore to go out of himself, and sympathise with the sordid sorrows of the poor, and their bottomless egotism in contact with the well to do. He brooded on his own love, and his own un-

* Without bowels of affection.

happiness, and his own father's cruelty. His nights were sleepless, and his days leaden. He tried hard to read for his first class, but for once even ambition failed: it ended in flinging books away in despair. He wandered about dreaming and hoping for some change, and bitterly regretting his excessive delicacy, which had tied his own hands and brought him to a stand-still. He lost his colour and what little flesh he had to lose; for such young spirits as this are never plump. In a word, being now strait-jacketed into feminine inactivity, while void of feminine patience, his ardent heart was pining and fretting itself out. He was in this condition, when one day Peterson, his Oxonian friend, burst in on him open-mouthed with delight, and, as usual with bright spirits of this calibre, did not even notice his friend's sadness. "Cupid had clapped him on the shoulder," as Shakespeare hath it; and it was a deal nicer than the bum-bailiff rheumatism.

"Oh, such a divine creature! Met her twice; you know her by sight; her name is Dodd. But I don't care; it shall be Peterson; the rose by any other name, &c." Then followed a rapturous description of the lady's person, well worth omitting. "And such a jolly girl! brightens them all up wherever she goes; and such a dancer; did the cachouka with a little Spanish bloke Bosanquet has got hold of, and made his black bolus eyes twinkle like midnight cigars: danced it with castanets, and smiles, and such a what d'ye call 'em, my boy, you know; such a 'go.'"

"You mean such an 'abandon,'" groaned Alfred, turning sick at heart.

"That's the word. Twice the spirit of Duvernay, and ten times the beauty. But just you hear her sing, that is all; Italian, French, German, English even."

"Plaintive songs?"

"Oh, whatever they ask for. Make you laugh or make you cry—to order; never says no. Just smiles and sits down to the music-box. Only she won't sing two running: they have to stick a duffer in between. I shall meet her again next week; will you come? Any friend of mine is welcome. Wish me joy, old fellow; I'm a gone coon."

This news put Alfred in a phrensy of indignation and fear. Julia dancing the cachouka! Julia a jolly girl! Julia singing songs pathetic or merry, whichever were asked for! The heartless one! He called to mind all he had read in the classics, and elsewhere, about the fickleness of woman. But this impression did not last long; he recalled Julia's character, and all the signs of a love tender and true she had given him; he read her by himself, and, lover-like, laid all the blame on another. It was all her cold-blooded mother. "Fool that I have been. I see it all now. She appeals to my delicacy to keep away; then she goes to Julia and says, 'See, he deserts you at a word from his father. Be proud, be gay! He never loved you; marry another.' The shallow plotter forgets that whoever she does marry I'll kill. How many unsuspicious girls have these double-faced mothers deluded so? They do it in half the novels, especially in those written by women; and why? because these know the perfidy and mendacity of their sex better than we do; they see them nearer, and with their souls undrest. War, Mrs. Dodd! war to the death! From this moment I am alone in

the world with her. I have no friend but Alfred Hardie: and my bitterest enemies are my cold-blooded father and her cold-blooded mother."

The above sentences, of course, were never uttered. But they represent his thoughts accurately, though in a condensed form, and are, as it were, a miniature of this young heart boiling over.

From that moment he lay in wait for her, and hovered about the house day and night, determined to appeal to her personally, and undeceive her, and baffle her mother's treachery. But at this game he was soon detected: Mrs. Dodd lived on the watch now. Julia, dressed to go out, went to the window one afternoon to look at the weather; but retreated somewhat hastily and sat down on the sofa.

"You flutter, darling," said Mrs. Dodd. "Ah, he is there."

"Yes."

"You had better take off your things."

"Oh yes. I tremble at the thoughts of meeting him. Mamma, he is changed, sadly changed. Poor, poor Alfred!" She went to her own room and prayed for him. She informed the Omniscient that, though much greater and better in other respects than she was, he had not Patience. She prayed, with tears, that he might have Christian patience granted him from on high.

"Heart of stone! she shuns me," said Alfred, outside. He had seen her in her bonnet.

Mrs. Dodd waited several days to see whether this annoyance would not die of itself: waiting was her plan in most things. Finding he was not to be tired out, she sent Sarah out to him with a note carefully sealed.

"Mr. Alfred Hardie,—Is it generous to confine my daughter to the house?

"Yours regretfully,
"LUCY DODD."

A line came back instantly in pencil.

"Mrs. Dodd,—Is all the generosity and all the good faith to be on one side?

"Yours in despair,
"ALFRED HARDIE."

Mrs. Dodd coloured faintly: the reproach pricked her, but did not move her. She sat quietly down that moment, and wrote to a friend in London, to look out for a furnished villa in a healthy part of the suburbs, with immediate possession. "Circumstances," said she, "making it desirable we should leave Barkington immediately, and for some months."

The Besanquets gave a large party; Mrs. and Miss Dodd were there. The latter was playing a part in a charade to the admiration of all present, when in came Mr. Peterson, introducing his friend, Alfred Hardie.

Julia caught the name, and turned a look of alarm on her mother: but went on acting.

Presently she caught sight of him at some distance. He looked very

pale, and his glittering eye was fixed on her with a sort of stern wonder.

Such a glance from fiery eyes, that had always dwelt tenderly on her till then, struck her like a weapon. She stopped short, and turned red and pale by turns. "There, that is nonsense enough," said she bitterly, and went and sat by Mrs. Dodd. The gentlemen thronged round her with compliments, and begged her to sing. She excused herself. Presently she heard an excited voice, towards which she dared not look; it was inquiring whether any lady could sing Aileen Aroon. With every desire to gratify the young millionaire, nobody knew Aileen Aroon, nor had ever heard of it.

"Oh, impossible!" cried Alfred. "Why it is in praise of Constancy, a virtue ladies shine in: at least, they take credit for it."

"Mamma," whispered Julia, terrified, "get me away, or there will be a scene. He is reckless."

"Be calm, love," said Mrs. Dodd, "there shall be none." She rose and glided up to Alfred Hardie, looked coldly in his face; then said with external politeness and veiled contempt, "I will attempt the song, sir, since you desire it." She waved her hand, and he followed her sulkily to the piano. She sang Aileen Aroon, not with her daughter's eloquence, but with a purity and mellowness that charmed the room: they had never heard the genius sing it.

As spirits are said to overcome the man at whose behest they rise, so this sweet air, and the gush of reminiscence it awakened, overpowered him who had evoked them; Alfred put his hand unconsciously to his swelling heart, cast one look of anguish at Julia, and hurried away half choked. Nobody but Julia noticed.

A fellow in a rough great-coat and tattered white hat opened the fly door for Mrs. Dodd. As Julia followed her, he kissed her skirt unseen by Mrs. Dodd: but her quick ears caught a heart-breaking sigh. She looked and recognised Alfred in that disguise; the penitent fit had succeeded to the angry one. Had Julia observed? To ascertain this without speaking of him, Mrs. Dodd waited till they had got some little distance, then quietly put out her hand and rested it for a moment on her daughter's; the girl was trembling violently. "Little wretch!" came to Mrs. Dodd's lips, but she did not utter it. They were near home before she spoke at all, and then she only said very kindly, "My love, you will not be subjected again to these trials:" a remark intended quietly to cover the last occurrence as well as Alfred's open persecution.

They had promised to go out the very next day; but Mrs. Dodd went alone, and made excuses for Miss Dodd. On her return she found Julia sitting up for her, and a letter come from her friend describing a pleasant cottage, now vacant, near Maida Vale. Mrs. Dodd handed the open letter to Julia; she read it without comment.

"We will go up to-morrow and take it for three months. Then the Oxford vacation will terminate."

"Yes, mamma."

I am now about to relate a circumstance by no means without

parallels, but almost impossible to account for; and, as nothing is more common and contemptible than inadequate solutions, I will offer none at all: but so it was, that Mrs. Dodd awoke in the middle of that very night in a mysterious state of mental tremor; trouble, veiled in obscurity, seemed to sit heavy on her bosom. So strong, though vague, was this new and mysterious oppression, that she started up in bed and cried aloud, "David!—Julia!—Oh, what is the matter?" The sound of her own voice dispelled the cloud in part, but not entirely. She lay awhile, and then finding herself quite averse to sleep, rose and went to her window, and eyed the weather anxiously. It was a fine night; soft fleecy clouds drifted slowly across a silver moon. The sailor's wife was reassured on her husband's behalf. Her next desire was to look at Julia sleeping; she had no particular object: it was the instinctive impulse of an anxious mother whom something had terrified. She put on her slippers and dressing-gown, and, lighting a candle at her night lamp, opened her door softly and stepped into the little corridor. But she had not taken two steps when she was arrested by a mysterious sound.

It came from Julia's room.

What was it?

Mrs. Dodd glided softly nearer and nearer, all her senses on the stretch.

The sound came again. It was a muffled sob.

The stifled sound, just audible in the dead stillness of the night, went through and through her who stood there listening aghast. Her bowels yearned over her child; and she hurried to the door, but recollected herself, and knocked very gently. "Don't be alarmed, love, it is only me. May I come in?" She did not wait for the answer, but turned the handle and entered. She found Julia sitting up in bed, looking wildly at her, with cheeks flushed and wet. She sat on the bed and clasped her to her breast in silence: but more than one warm tear ran down upon Julia's bare neck; the girl felt them drop, and her own gushed in a shower.

"Oh what have I done?" she sobbed. "Am I to make you wretched too?"

Mrs. Dodd did not immediately reply. She was there to console; and her admirable good sense told her that to do that she must be calmer than her patient; so even while she kissed and wept over Julia, she managed gradually to recover her composure. "Tell me, my child," said she, "why do you act a part with me? Why brave it out under my eye, and spend the night secretly in tears? Are you still afraid to trust me?"

"Oh no, no; but I thought I was so strong, so proud: I undertook miracles. I soon found my pride was a molehill, and my love a mountain. I could not hold out by day if I did not ease my breaking heart at night. How unfortunate! I kept my head under the bed-clothes, too; but you have such ears. I thought I would stifle my grief, or else perhaps you would be as wretched as I am; forgive me! pray forgive me!"

"On one condition," said Mrs. Dodd, struggling with the emotion

these simple words caused her. "Anything to be forgiven," cried Julia, impetuously. "I'll go to London. I'll go to Botany Bay. I deserve to be hanged."

"Then, from this hour, no half-confidences between us. Dear me, you carry in your own bosom a much harsher judge, a much less indulgent friend, than I am. Come! trust me with your heart. Do you love him very much? Does your happiness depend on him?"

At this point-blank question Julia put her head over Mrs. Dodd's shoulder, not to be seen; and, clasping her tight, murmured scarce above a whisper, "I don't know how much I love him. When he came in at that party I felt his slave; his unfaithful adoring slave; if he had ordered me to sing Aileen Aroon, I should have obeyed; if he had commanded me take his hand and leave the room, I think I should have obeyed. His face is always before me as plain as life; it used to come to me bright and loving; now it is pale, and stern, and sad; I was not so wretched till I saw he was pining for me, and thinks me inconstant; oh, mamma, *so* pale! *so* shrunk! *so* reckless! He was sorry for misbehaving that night: he changed clothes with a beggar to kiss my dress: poor thing! poor thing! Who ever loved as he does me! I am dying for him; I am dying."

"There! there!" said Mrs. Dodd, soothingly. "You have said enough. This must be love. I am on your Alfred's side from this hour."

Julia opened her eyes, and was a good deal agitated as well as surprised. "Pray do not raise my hopes," she gasped. "We are parted for ever. His father refuses. Even you seemed averse; or have I been dreaming?"

"Me, dearest? How can I be averse to anything lawful, on which I find your heart is really set, and your happiness at stake? Of course I have stopped the actual intercourse, under existing circumstances; but these circumstances are not unalterable: your only obstacle is Mr. Richard Hardie."

"But what an obstacle!" sighed Julia. "His father! a man of iron! so everybody says; for I have made inquiries—oh!" And she was abashed. She resumed hastily, "And that letter, so cold, so cruel! I feel it was written by one not open to gentle influences. He does not think me worthy of his son; so accomplished, so distinguished, at the very university where our poor Edward—has—you know—"

"Little simpleton!" said Mrs. Dodd, and kissed her tenderly; "your iron man is the commonest clay; sordid; pliable; and your stern heroic Brutus is a shopkeeper; he is open to the gentle influences which sway the kindred souls of the men you and I buy our shoes, our tea, our gloves, our fish-kettles of: and these influences I think I command, and am prepared to use them to the utmost."

Julia lay silent, and wondering what she could mean.

But Mrs. Dodd hesitated now: it pained and revolted her to show her enthusiastic girl the world as it is. She said as much, and added, "I seem to be going to aid all these people to take the bloom from my own child's innocence. Heaven help me!"

"Oh, never mind that," cried Julia, in her ardent way; "give me Truth before Error, however pleasing."

Mrs. Dodd replied only by a sigh: grand general sentiments like that,

never penetrated her mind: they glided off like water from a duck's back. "We will begin with this mercantile Brutus, then," said she, with such a curl of the lip. Brutus had rejected her daughter.

"Mr. Richard Hardie was born and bred in a bank; one where no wild thyme blows, my poor enthusiast; nor cowslips nor the nodding violet grows; but gold and silver chink, and Things are discounted, and men grow rich, slowly but surely, by lawful use of other people's money. Breathed upon by these 'gentle influences,' he was, from his youth, a remarkable man; measured by Trade's standard. At five-and-twenty divine what he did! He saved the bank. You have read of bubbles; the Mississippi Bubble and the South Sea Bubble. Well, in the year 1825, it was not one bubble but a thousand; mines by the score, and in distant lands; companies by the hundred; loans to every nation or tribe; down to Guatemala, Patagonia and Greece; two hundred new ships were laid on the stocks in one year, for your dear papa told me; in short, a fever of speculation, and the whole nation raging with it: my dear, Princes, Dukes, Duchesses, Bishops, Poets, Lawyers, Physicians, were seen struggling with their own footmen for a place in the Exchange: and, at last, good, steady, old Mr. Hardie, Alfred's grandfather, was drawn into the vortex. Now, to excuse him and appreciate the precocious Richard, you must try and realise that these bubbles, when they rise, are as alluring and reasonable, as they are ridiculous and incredible when one looks back on them; even soap bubbles, you know, have rainbow hues till they burst: and, indeed, the blind avarice of men does but resemble the blind vanity of women: look at our grandmothers' hoops, and our mothers' short waists and monstrous heads! Yet in their day what woman did not glory in these insanities? Well then, Mr. Richard Hardie, at twenty-five, was the one to foresee the end of all these bubbles; he came down from London and brought his people to their senses by sober reason, and 'sound commercial principles' that means, I believe 'get other people's money, but do not risk your own.' His superiority was so clear, that his father resigned the helm to him, and, thanks to his ability, the bank weathered the storm, while all the other ones in the town broke, or suspended their trade. Now, you know, youth is naturally ardent and speculative: but Richard Hardie's was colder and wiser than other people's old age: and that is one trait. Some years later, in the height of his prosperity—I reveal this only for your comfort, and on your sacred promise as a person of delicacy, never to repeat it to a soul—Richard Hardie was a suitor for my hand."

"Mamma!"

"Do not ejaculate, sweetest. It discomposes me. 'Nothing is extraordinary,' as that good creature Dr. Sampson says. He must have thought it would *answer*, in one way or another, to have a gentlewoman at the head of his table; and I was not penniless, bien entendu. Failing in this, he found a plain little Thing, with a gloomy temper, and no accomplishments nor graces; but her father could settle twenty thousand pounds. He married her directly: and that is a trait. He sold his father's and grandfather's house and place of business, in spite of all their associations, and obtained a lease of his present place from my uncle Fountain: it seemed a more money-making situation. A trait. He gives me no reason for rejecting my daughter. Why? because he is

not proud of his reasons: this walking Avarice has intelligence: a trait. Now put all this together, and who more transparent than the profound Mr. Hardie? He has declined our alliance because he takes for granted we are poor. When I undeceive him on that head he will reopen *negotiations*, in a letter; No. 2 of the correspondence; copied by one of his clerks: it will be calm, plausible, flattering: in short, it will be done like a gentleman: though he is nothing of the kind. And this brings me to what I ought to have begun with; your dear father and I have always lived within our income for our children's sake; he is bringing home the bulk of our savings this very voyage, and it amounts to fourteen thousand pounds."

"O what an enormous sum!"

"No, dearest, it is not a fortune in itself. But it is a considerable sum to possess, independent of one's settlement and one's income. It is loose cash, to speak à la Hardie; that means I can do what I choose with it; and of course I choose—to make you happy. How I shall work on what you call Iron and I venture to call Clay must be guided by circumstances. I think of depositing three or four thousand pounds every month with Mr. Hardie; he is our banker, you know. He will most likely open his eyes, and make some move before the whole sum is in his hands. If he does not, I shall perhaps call at his bank, and draw a cheque for fourteen thousand pounds. The wealthiest provincial banker does not keep such a sum floating in his shop-tills. His commercial honour, the one semi-chivalrous sentiment in his soul, would be in peril. He would yield, and with grace: none the less readily that his house and his bank, which have been long heavily mortgaged to our trustees, were made virtually theirs by agreement yesterday (I set this on foot within twelve hours of Mr. Iron's impertinent letter), and he will say to himself, 'She can—post me, I think these people call it—this afternoon for not cashing her cheque, and she can turn me and my bank into the street to-morrow:' and then, of course, he shall see by my manner the velvet paw is offered as well as the claw. He is pretty sure to ask himself which will suit the *ledger* best—this cat's friendship and her fourteen thousand pounds, or—an insulted mother's enmity?" And Mrs. Placid's teeth made a little click just audible in the silent night.

"Oh, mamma! my heart is sick. Am I to be bought and sold like this?"

Mrs. Dodd sighed; but said calmly, "You must pay the penalty for loving a parvenu's son. Come, Julia, no peevishness, no more romance, no more vacillation. You have tried Pride and failed, pitiably: now I insist on your trying Love! Child, it is the bane of our sex to carry nothing out: from that weakness I will preserve you. And, by-the-by, we are not going to marry Mr. Richard Hardie, but Mr. Alfred. Now, Mr. Alfred, with all his faults and defects——"

"Mamma! what faults? what defects?"

"—Is a gentleman; thanks to Oxford, and Harrow, and nature. My darling, pray to Heaven night and day for your dear father's safe return; for on him, and him alone, your happiness depends: as mine does."

"Mamma!" cried Julia, embracing her, "what do poor girls do who have lost their mother?"

"Look abroad and see," was the grave reply.

Mrs. Dodd then begged her to go to sleep, like a good child, for her health's sake; all would be well; and with this was about to return to her own room; but a white hand and arm darted out of the bed and caught her. "What! Hope has come to me by night in the form of an angel, and shall I let her go back to her own room? Never! never! never! never! never!" And she patted the bed expressively, and with the prettiest impatience.

"Well, let Hope take off her earrings first," suggested Mrs. Dodd.

"No, no, come here directly, earrings and all."

"No, thank you; or I shall have *them* wounding you next."

Mrs. Hope quietly removed her earrings, and the tender pair passed the rest of the night in one another's arms. The young girl's tears were dried; and hope revived, and life bloomed again: only, henceforth, her longing eyes looked out to sea for her father; homeward bound.

Next day, as they were seated together in the drawing-room, Julia came from the window with a rush, and kneeled at Mrs. Dodd's knees, with bright imploring face upturned.

"He is there; and—I am to speak to him? Is that it?"

"Dear, dear, dear Mamma!" was the somewhat oblique reply.

"Well, then, bring me my things."

She was ten minutes putting them on: Julia tried to expedite her and retarded her. She had her pace, and could not go beyond it.

Now by this time Alfred Hardie was thoroughly miserable. Unable to move his father, shunned by Julia, sickened by what he had heard, and indeed seen, of her gaiety and indifference to their separation, stung by jealousy, and fretted by impatience, he was drinking nearly all the bitters of that sweet passion, Love. But as you are aware he ascribed Julia's inconstancy, lightness, and cruelty, all to Mrs. Dodd. He hated her cordially, and dreaded her into the bargain; he played the sentinel about her door all the more because she had asked him not to do it. "Always do what your enemy particularly objects to," said he, applying to his own case the wisdom of a Greek philosopher, one of his teachers.

So, when the gate suddenly opened, and instead of Julia, this very Mrs. Dodd walked towards him, his feelings were anything but enviable. He wished himself away, heartily, but was too proud to retreat. He stood his ground. She came up to him; a charming smile broke out over her features, "Ah, Mr. Hardie," said she, "if you have nothing better to do, will you give me a minute?" He assented with surprise and an ill grace.

"May I take your arm?"

He offered it with a worse.

She laid her hand lightly on it, and it shuddered at her touch. He felt like walking with a velvet tigress.

By some instinct she divined his sentiments, and found her task more difficult than she had thought; she took some steps in silence. At last, as he was no dissembler, he burst out passionately, "Why are you my enemy?"

"I am not your enemy," said she, quietly.

"Not openly, but all the more dangerous. You keep us apart, you bid her be gay, and forget me; you are a cruel hard-hearted lady."

"No, I am not, sir," said Mrs. Dodd, simply.

"Oh! I believe you are good and kind to all the rest of the world; but you know you have a heart of iron for me."

"I am my daughter's friend, but not your enemy; it is you who are too inexperienced to know how delicate, how difficult, my duties are. It is only since last night I see my way clear; and, look, I come at once to you with friendly intentions. Suppose I were as impetuous as you are! I should, perhaps, be calling you ungrateful."

He retorted bitterly. "Give me something to be grateful for, and you shall see whether that baseness is in my nature."

"I have a great mind to put you to the proof," said she archly. "Let us walk down this lane; then you can be as unjust to me *as you think proper*; without attracting public attention."

In the lane she told him quietly she knew the nature of his father's objections to the alliance he had so much at heart, and they were objections, which her husband, on his return, would remove. On this he changed his tone a little, and implored her piteously not to deceive him.

"I will not," said she, "upon my honour. If you are as constant as my daughter is in her esteem for you—notwithstanding her threadbare gaiety worn over loyal regret, and to check a parcel of idle ladies' tongues—you have nothing to fear from me, and everything to expect. Come, *Alfred*—may I take that liberty with you?—let us understand one another. We only want that, to be friends."

This was hard to resist; and at his age. His lip trembled, he hesitated, but at last gave her his hand. She walked two hours with him, and laid herself out to enlighten, soothe, and comfort his sore heart. His hopes and happiness revived under her magic, as Julia's had. In the midst of it all, the wise woman quietly made terms. He was not to come to the house but on her invitation, unless indeed he had news of the Agra to communicate; but he might write once a week to her, and enclose a few lines to Julia. On this concession he proceeded to mumble her white wrist, and call her his best, dearest, loveliest friend; his mother. "Oh, remember," said he, with a relic of distrust, "you are the only mother I can ever hope to have."

That touched her. Hitherto, he had been to her but a thing her laughter loved.

Her eyes filled. "My poor, warm-hearted, motherless boy," she said, "pray for my husband's safe return. For on that your happiness depends: and hers. And mine."

So now two more bright eyes looked longingly seaward for the Agra; homeward bound.
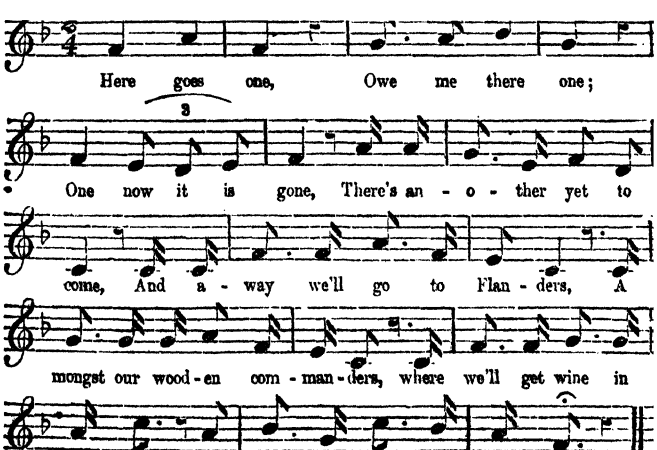
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## CHAPTER VII.

North Latitude 23½, Longitude East 113; the time March of this same year; the wind southerly; the port Whampoa, in the Canton river. Ships at anchor reared their tall masts here and there; and the broad stream was enlivened and coloured by junks, and boats, of all sizes and vivid hues, propelled on the screw principle by a great scull at the stern, with projecting handles for the crew to work; and at times a gorgeous mandarin boat, with two great glaring eyes set in the bows,

hung on the gunwale and flashed fire in the sunbeams; the mandarin, in conical and buttoned hat, sitting on the top of his cabin calmly smoking Paradise, alias opium, while his gong boomed and his boat flew fourteen miles an hour, and all things scuttled out of his celestial way And there, looking majestically down on all these water ants, the huge Agra, cynosure of so many loving eyes and loving hearts in England, lay at her moorings; homeward bound.

Her tea not being yet on board, the ship's hull floated high as a castle, and to the subtle, intellectual, doll-faced, bolus-eyed people, that sculled to and fro busy as bees, though looking forked mushrooms, she sounded like a vast musical shell: for a lusty harmony of many mellow voices vibrated in her great cavities, and made the air ring cheerily around her. The vocalists were the Cyclopes, to judge by the tremendous thumps that kept clean time to their sturdy tune. Yet it was but human labour, so heavy and so knowing, that it had called in music to help. It was the third mate and his gang completing his floor to receive the coming tea chests. Yesterday he had stowed his dunnage, many hundred bundles of light flexible canes from Sumatra and Malacca; on these he had laid tons of rough saltpetre, in 200 lb. gunny-bags: and was now mashing it to music, bags and all. His gang of fifteen, naked to the waist, stood in line, with huge wooden beetles called commanders, and lifted them high and brought them down on the nitre in cadence with true nautical power and unison, singing as follows, with a ponderous bump on the first note in each bar.




Here goes two. Owe me there two, &c.

And so up to fifteen, when the stave was concluded with a shrill "Spell, oh!" and the gang relieved, streaming with perspiration. When the saltpetre was well mashed, they rolled ton water-butts on it, till

the floor was like a billiard table. A fleet of chop boats then began to arrive, so many per day, with the tea-chests. Mr. Grey proceeded to lay the first tier on his saltpetre floor, and then built the chests, tier upon tier, beginning at the sides, and leaving in the middle a lane somewhat narrower than a tea chest. Then he applied a screw jack to the chests on both sides, and so enlarged his central aperture, and forced the remaining tea chests in; and behold the enormous cargo packed as tight as ever shopkeeper packed a box—nineteen thousand eight hundred and six chests, sixty half chests, fifty quarter chests.

While Mr. Grey was contemplating his work with singular satisfaction, a small boat from Canton came alongside, and Mr. Tickell, midshipman, ran up the side, skipped on the quarter-deck, saluted it first, and then the first mate; and gave him a line from the captain, desiring him to take the ship down to Second Bar—for her water—at the turn of the tide.

Two hours after receipt of this order the ship swung to the ebb. Instantly Mr. Sharpe unmoored, and the Agra began her famous voyage, with her head at right angles to her course; for the wind being foul, all Sharpe could do was to set his topsails, driver, and jib, and keep her in the tide way, and clear of the numerous craft, by backing or filling as the case required; which he did with considerable dexterity, making the sails steer the helm for the nonce: he crossed the Bar at sunset, and brought to with the best bower anchor in five fathoms and a half. Here they began to take in their water, and on the fifth day the six-oared gig was ordered up to Canton for the captain. The next afternoon he passed the ship in her, going down the river to Lin-Tin, to board the Chinese admiral for his chop, or permission to leave China. All night the Agra showed three lights at her mizen peak for him, and kept a sharp look out. But he did not come: he was having a very serious talk with the Chinese admiral; at daybreak, however, the gig was reported in sight: Sharpe told one of the midshipmen to call the boatswain and man the side. Soon the gig ran alongside; two of the ship's boys jumped like monkeys over the bulwarks, lighting, one on the main channels, the other on the midship port, and put the side ropes assiduously in the captain's hands; he bestowed a slight paternal smile on them, the first the imps had ever received from an officer; and went lightly up the sides. The moment his foot touched the deck, the boatswain gave a frightful shrill whistle; the men at the sides uncovered; the captain saluted the quarter deck, and all the officers saluted him, which he returned, and stepping for a moment to the weather side of his deck, gave the loud command, "All hands heave anchor." He then directed Mr. Sharpe to get what sail he could on the ship, the wind being now westerly; and dived into his cabin.

The boatswain piped three shrill pipes, and "All hands up anchor," was thrice repeated forward, followed by private admonitions, "Rouse and bitt!" "Show a leg!" &c., and up tumbled the crew with homeward bound written on their tanned faces.

(Pipe.) "Up all hammocks."

In ten minutes the ninety and odd hammocks were all stowed neatly in the netting, and covered with a snowy hammock cloth; and the hands were active, unbitting the cable, shipping the capstan bars, &c.

"All ready below, sir," cried a voice.

"Man the bars," returned Mr. Sharpe from the quarter-deck. "Play up, fifer. Heave away."

Out broke the merry fife with a rhythmical tune, and tramp, tramp, tramp went a hundred and twenty feet round and round, and, with brawny chests pressed tight against the capstan bars, sixty fine fellows walked the ship up to her anchor, drowning the fife at intervals with their sturdy song, as pat to their feet as an echo:

Heave with a will, ye jolly boys,
Heave around:
We're off from Chainee, jolly boys,
Homeward bound.

"Short stay apeak, sir," roars the boatswain from forward.

"Unship the bars. Way aloft. Loose sails. Let fall."

The ship being now over her anchor, and the top-sails set, the capstan bars were shipped again, the men all heaved with a will, the messenger grinned, the anchor was torn out of China with a mighty heave, and then run up with a luff tackle and secured; the ship's head cast to port:

"Up with the jib—man the taupsle halliards—all hands make sail." Round she came slow and majestically; the sails filled, and the good ship bore away for England.

She made the Bogue forts in three or four tacks, and there she had to come to again for another chop, China being a place as hard to get into as Heaven, and to get out of as—Chancery. At three P.M. she was at Macao, and hove to four miles from the land, to take in her passengers.

A gun was fired from the forecastle. No boats came off. Sharpe began to fret: for the wind, though light, had now got to the N.W., and they were wasting it. After a while the captain came on deck, and ordered all the carronades to be scaled. The eight heavy reports bellowed the great ship's impatience across the water, and out pulled two boats with the passengers. While they were coming, Dodd sent and ordered the gunner to load the carronades with shot, and secure and apron them. The first boat brought Colonel Kenealy, Mr. Fullalove, and a prodigious negro, who all mounted by the side-ropes. But the whip was rigged for the next boat, and the Honourable Mrs. Beresford and poodle hoisted on board, item her white maid, item her black nurse, item her little boy and male Oriental in charge thereof, the strangest compound of dignity and servility, and of black and white, being clad in snowy cotton and japanned to the nine.

Mrs. Beresford was the wife of a member of council in India. She had been to Macao for her boy's health, intending to return to Calcutta; but meantime her husband was made a director, and went home: so she was going to join him. A tall, handsome lady, with too curved a nose.

Like most aquiline women, she was born to domineer a bit; and, for the last ten years, Orientals cringing at her knee, and Europeans flattering at her ear, had nursed this quality high, and spoiled her with all their might. A similar process had been applied to her boy Frederick from infancy: he was now nearly six: arrogance and caprice shone so in both their sallow faces, and spoke so in every gesture, that, as they

came on board, Sharpe, a reader of passengers, whispered the second mate: "Bayliss, we have shipped the devil."

"And a cargo of his imps," grunted Mr. Bayliss.

Mr. Fullalove was a Methodist parson—to the naked eye: grave, sober, lean, lank-haired. But some men are hidden fires. Fullalove was one of the extraordinary products of an extraordinary nation, the United States of America. He was an engineer for one thing, and an inventive and practical mechanician; held two patents of his own creating, which yielded him a good income both at home and in Great Britain. Such results are seldom achieved without deep study and seclusion: and, accordingly, Joshua Fullalove, when the inventive fit was on, would be buried deep as Archimedes for a twelvemonth, burning the midnight oil: then, his active element predominating, the pale student would dash into the forest or the prairie, with a rifle and an Indian, and come out bronzed, and more or less bepanthered or bebuffaloed; thence invariably to sea for a year or two; there, Anglo-Saxon to the back-bone, his romance had ever an eye to business; he was always after foreign mechanical inventions—he was now importing an excellent one from Japan—and ready to do lucrative feats of knowledge: thus he bought a Turkish ship at the bottom of the Dardanelles for twelve hundred dollars, raised her cargo (hardware), and sold it for six thousand dollars; then weighed the empty ship, pumped her, repaired her, and navigated her himself into Boston harbour, Massachusetts. On the way he rescued, with his late drowned ship, a Swedish vessel, and received salvage. He once fished eighty elephants' tusks out of a craft foundered in the Firth of Forth, to the disgust of elder Anglo-Saxons looking on from the shore. These unusual pursuits were varied by a singular recreation: he played at elevating the African character to European levels. With this view he had bought Vespasian for eighteen hundred dollars; whereof anon. America is fertile in mixtures: what do we not owe her? Sherry cobbler, gin sling, cocktail, mint julep, brandy smash, sudden death, eye openers. Well, one day she outdid herself, and mixed Fullalove: Quaker, Nimrod, Archimede, Philanthropist, decorous Red Rover, and What Not.

The passenger boats cast loose.

"All hands make sail."

The boatswain piped, the light-heeled topsmen sped up the ratlines, and lay out on the yards, while all on deck looked up, as usual, to see them work. Out bellied sail after sail aloft; the ship came curtseying round to the southward, spread her snowy pinions high and wide, and went like a bird over the wrinkled sea—homeward bound.

It was an exhilarating start, and all faces were bright—but one. The captain looked somewhat grave and thoughtful, and often scanned the horizon with his glass; he gave polite but very short answers to his friend Colonel Kenealy, who was firing nothings in his ear; and sent for the gunner.

While that personage, a crusty old Niler, called Monk, is cleaning himself to go on the quarter-deck, peep we into Captain Dodd's troubled mind, and into the circumstances which connect him with the heart of this story, despite the twelve thousand miles of water between him and the lovers at Barkington.

It had always been his pride to lay by money for his wife and children, and, under advice of an Indian friend, he had, during the last few years, placed considerable sums, at intervals, in a great Calcutta house, which gave eight per cent. for deposits: swelled by fresh capital, and such high interest, the hoard grew fast. When his old ship, sore battered off the Cape, was condemned by the Company's agents at Canton, he sailed to Calcutta, intending to return thence to England as a passenger. But, while he was at Calcutta, the greatest firm there suspended payment, carrying astonishment and dismay into a hundred families. At such moments the press and the fireside ring for a little while the common-sense cry,* "Good interest means bad security." As for Dodd, who till then had revered all these great houses with nautical or childlike confidence, a blind terror took the place of blind trust in him; he felt guilty towards his children for risking their money (he had got to believe it was theirs, not his), and vowed, if he could only get hold of it once more, he would never trust a penny of it out of his own hands again, except, perhaps, to the bank of England. But should he ever get it? it was a large sum. He went to Messrs. Anderson and Anderson, and drew for his fourteen thousand pounds. To his dismay, but hardly to his surprise, the clerks looked at one another, and sent the cheque into some inner department. Dodd was kept waiting. His heart sank within him: there was a hitch.

Meantime came a Government officer, and paid in an enormous sum in notes and mercantile bills, principally the latter.

Presently Dodd was invited into the manager's room.

"Leaving the country, Captain Dodd?"

"Yes, sir."

"You had better take some of your money in bills at sight on London."

"I would rather have notes, sir," faltered Dodd.

"Oh, bills by Oliveira upon Baring are just as good, even without our endorsement. However, you can have half and half. Calcutta does but little in English bank-notes, you know."

They gave him his money. The bills were all manifestly good. But he recognised one of them as having just been paid in by the civilian. He found himself somehow safe in the street clutching the cash, with one half of his great paternal heart on fire, and the other half freezing. He had rescued his children's fortune; but he had seen destruction graze it. The natural chill at being scraped by peril soon passed, the triumphant glow remained. The next sentiment was precaution; he filled with it to the brim; he went and bought a great broad pocket-book with a key to it; though he was on dry land, he covered it with oiled silk against the water; and sewed the whole thing to his flannel waistcoat, and felt for it with his hand a hundred times a day: the fruit of his own toil, his children's hoard, the rescued treasure he was to have the joy of bringing home safe to the dear partner of all his joys.

Unexpectedly he was ordered out to Canton to sail the Agra to the Cape. Then a novel and strange feeling came over him like a cloud; that feeling was, a sense of personal danger: not that the many perils of

* The Duke of Wellington (the iron one) is the author of this saying.

the deep were new to him: he had faced them this five-and-twenty years: but till now they were little present to his imagination: they used to come; be encountered: be gone: but now, though absent, they darkened the way. It was the pocket-book. The material treasure, the hard cash, which had lately set him in a glow, seemed now to load his chest and hang heavy round the neck of his heart. Sailors are more or less superstitious: and men are creatures of habit, even in their courage. Now David had never gone to sea with a lot of money on him before. As he was a stout-hearted man, these vague forebodings would, perhaps, have cleared away with the bustle, when the Agra set her studding sails off Macao, but for a piece of positive intelligence he had picked up at Lin-Tin. The Chinese admiral had warned him of a pirate, a daring pirate, who had been lately cruising in these waters: first heard of south the line: but had since taken a Russian ship at the very mouth of the Canton river, murdered the crew in sight of land, and sold the women for slaves, or worse. Dodd asked for particulars: was he a Ladroner, a Malay, a Bornese? In what latitude was he to be looked for? The admiral on this examined his memoranda: by these it appeared little was known as yet about the miscreant, except that he never cruised long on one ground; the crew was a mixed one: the captain was believed to be a Portuguese, and to have a consort commanded by his brother: but this was doubtful; at all events the pair had never been seen at work together.

The gunner arrived and saluted the quarter deck; the captain on this saluted him, and beckoned him to the weather side. On this the other officers kept religiously to leeward.

"Mr. Monk," said Dodd, "you will clean and prepare all the small arms directly."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the old Niler, with a gleam of satisfaction.

"How many of your deck guns are serviceable?"

This simple question stirred up in one moment all the bile in the poor old gentleman's nature.

"My deck guns serviceable! how the —— *can* they, when that son of a sea cook your third mate has been and lashed the water butts to their breechings, and jammed his gear in between their nozzles, till they can't breathe, poor things, far less bark. I wish *he* was lashed between the devil's hind hocks with a red hot cable as tight as he has jammed my guns."

"Be so good as not to swear, Mr. Monk," said Dodd. "At your age, sir, I look to you to set an example to the petty officers."

"Well, I won't swear no more, sir: d—d if I do!" He added very loudly, and with a seeming access of ire, "and I ax your pardon, captain, and the deck's."

When a man has a deep anxiety, some human midge or mosquito buzzes at him. It is a rule. To Dodd, heavy with responsibility, and a dark misgiving he must not communicate, came delicately, and by degrees, and with a semigenuflexion every three steps, one like a magpie; and, putting his hands together, as our children do to approach the Almighty, delivered himself thus, in modulated tones, and good Hindostanee. "The Daughter of Light, in whose beams I, Ramgolam, bask,

glows with an amicable desire to see the lord commander of the ship resembling a mountain; and to make a communication."

Taught by sad experience how weighty are the communications the daughters of light pour into nautical commanders at sea, Dodd hailed Mr. Tickell, a midshipman, and sent him down to the lady's cabin. Mr. Tickell soon came back reddish, but grinning, to say that nothing less than the captain would do.

Dodd sighed, and dismissed Monk with a promise to inspect the gun deck himself; then went down to Mrs. Beresford and found her indignant. Why had he stopped the ship miles and miles from Macao, and given her the trouble and annoyance of a voyage in that nasty little boat? Dodd opened his great brown eyes, "Why, madam, it is shoal water off Macao; we dare not come in."

"No evasion, sir. What have I to do with your shoal water? it was laziness, and want of consideration for a lady who has rented half your ship."

"Nothing of the kind, madam, I assure you."

"Are you the person they call Gentleman Dodd?"

"Yes."

"Then don't contradict a lady! or I shall take the liberty to dispute your title."

Dodd took no notice of this, and with a patience few nautical commanders would have shown, endeavoured to make her see that he was obliged to give Macao shoals a wide berth, or cast away the ship. She would not see it. When Dodd saw she wanted, not an explanation, but a grievance, he ceased to thwart her. "I am neglecting my duties to no purpose," said he, and left her without ceremony. This was a fresh offence; and, as he went out, she declared open war. And she made it too from that hour: a war of pins and needles.

Dodd went on the gun deck and found that the defence of the ship had, as usual in these peaceful days, been sacrificed to the cargo. Out of twenty eighteen-pounders she carried on that deck, he cleared three, and that with difficulty. To clear any more he must have sacrificed either merchandise or water: and he was not the man to do either on the mere chance of a danger so unusual as an encounter with a pirate. He was a merchant captain, not a warrior.

Meantime the Agra had already shown him great sailing qualities: the log was hove at sundown and gave eleven knots; so that with a good breeze abaft, few fore-and-aft-rigged pirates could overhaul her. And this wind carried her swiftly past one nest of them, at all events; the Ladrone isles. At nine P.M. all the lights were ordered out. Mrs. Beresford had brought a novel on board, and refused to comply; the master-at-arms insisted; she threatened him with the vengeance of the Company, the premier, and the nobility and gentry of the British realm. The master-at-arms, finding he had no chance in argument, doused the glim—pitiable resource of a weak disputant—then basely fled the rhetorical consequences.

The northerly breeze died out, and light variable winds baffled the ship. It was the 6th April ere she passed the Macclesfield Bank in latitude 16. And now they sailed for many days out of sight of land

Dodd's chest expanded: his main anxiety at this part of the voyage lay in the state cabin; of all the perils of the sea none shakes a sailor like fire. He set a watch day and night on that spoiled child.

On the 1st May they passed the great Nantuna, and got among the Bornese and Malay islands: at which the captain's glass began to sweep the horizon again: and night and day at the dizzy foretop gallant masthead he perched an Eye.

They crossed the line in longitude 107, with a slight breeze, but soon fell into the Doldrums. A dead calm, and nothing to do but kill time. Dodd had put down Neptune: that old blackguard could no longer row out on the ship's port side and board her on the starboard, pretending to come from ocean's depths; and shave the novices with a rusty hoop and dab a soapy brush in their mouths. But champagne popped, the sexes flirted, and the sailors span fathomless yarns, and danced rattling hornpipes; fiddled to by the grave Fullalove. "If there is a thing I *can* dew, it's fiddle," said he. He and his friend, as he systematically called Vespasian, taught the crew Yankee steps, and were beloved. One honest saltatory British tar offered that western pair his grog for a week. Even Mrs. Beresford emerged, and walked the deck, quenching her austere regards with a familiar smile on Colonel Kenealy, her escort: this gallant good-natured soldier flattered her to the nine, and, finding her sweeten with his treacle, tried to reconcile her to his old friend Dodd. Straight she soured, and forbade the topic imperiously.

By this time the mates and midshipmen of the Agra had fathomed their captain. Mr. Tickell delivered the mind of the united midshipmen when he proposed Dodd's health in their mess-room, "as a navigator, a mathematician, a seaman, a gentleman, and a brick, with 3 times 3."

Dodd never spoke to his officers like a ruffian, nor yet palavered them: but he had a very pleasant way of conveying appreciation of an officer's zeal, by a knowing nod with a kindly smile on the heels of it. As for the men, they seldom come in contact with the captain of a well-officered ship: this crew only knew him at first as a good-tempered soul, who didn't bother about nothing. But one day, as they lay becalmed south of the line, a jolly foretopman came on the quarter deck with a fid of soup, and saluting and scraping, first to the deck, then to the captain, asked him if he would taste that.

"Yes, my man. Smoked!"

"Like —— and blazes, your honour, axing your pardon, and the deck's."

"Young gentleman," said Dodd to Mr. Meredith, a midshipman, "be so good as to send the cook aft."

The cook came, and received, not an oath nor a threat, but a remonstrance, and a grim warning.

In the teeth of this he burnt the soup horribly the very next day. The crew sent the lucky foretopman aft again. He made his scrape and presented his fid. The captain tasted the soup, and sent Mr. Grey to bid the boatswain's mate pipe the hands on deck and bring the cook aft.

"Quartermaster, unsling a fire-bucket and fill it from the men's kids: Mr. Tickell, see the cook swallow his own mess. Bosen's mate, take a bight of the flying jib sheet, stand over him, and start him if he dallies

with it." With this the captain went below, and the cook, supping at the bucket, delivered himself as follows: "Well, ye lubbers, it is first-rate. *There's* no burn in it. It goes down like oil. Curse your lady-like stomachs; you ain't fit for a ship; why don't ye go ashore and man a gingerbread coach and feed off French frogs and Italian baccy-pipe stems? (Whack.) What the —— is that for?"

*Boatswain's mate.* "Sup more, and jaw less."

"Well, I am supping as fast as I can. (Whack, whack.) Bloody end to ye, what are ye about? (Whack, whack, whack.) Oh, Joe, Lord bless you, I *can't* eat any more of it. (Whack.) I'll give you my grog for a week only to let me fling the —— stuff over the side. (Whack, whack, whack.) Oh, good, kind, dear Mr. Tickell, do go down to the captain for me." (Whack, whack.)

"Avast!" cried the captain, reappearing; and the uplifted rope fell harmless.

"Silence, fore and aft!"

(Pipe.)

"The cook has received a light punishment this time, for spoiling the men's mess. My crew shall eat nothing I can't eat myself. My care is heavier than theirs is; but not my work, nor my danger in time of danger. Mind that, or you'll find I can be as severe as any master afloat. Purser."

"Sir."

"Double the men's grog: they have been cheated of their meal."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"And stop the cook's and his mate's for a week."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Bosen, pipe down."

"Shipmates, listen to me," said the foretopman. "This old Agra is a d—d com-for-table ship."

The oracular sentence was hailed with a ringing cheer. Still it is unlucky the British seaman is so enamoured of theological terms; for he constantly misapplies them.

After lying a week like a dead log on the calm but heaving waters, came a few light puffs in the upper air and inflated the topsails only: the ship crawled southward, the crew whistling for wind.

At last, one afternoon, it began to rain, and after the rain came a gale from the eastward. The watchful skipper saw it purple the water to windward, and ordered the topsails to be reefed and the lee ports closed. This last order seemed an excess of precaution; but Dodd was not yet thoroughly acquainted with his ship's qualities: and the hard cash round his neck made him cautious. The lee ports were closed, all but one, and that was lowered. Mr. Grey was working a problem in his cabin, and wanted a little light and a little air, so he just drooped his port; but, not to deviate from the spirit of his captain's instructions, he fastened a tackle to it; that he might have mechanical force to close it with should the ship lie over.

Down came the gale with a whoo, and made all crack. The ship lay over pretty much, and the sea poured in at Mr. Grey's port. He applied his purchase to close it. But though his tackle gave him the force of a dozen hands, he might as well have tried to move a mountain: on the

contrary, the tremendous sea rushed in and burst the port wide open. Grey, after a vain struggle with its might, shrieked for help; down tumbled the nearest hands, and hauled on the tackle in vain. Destruction was rushing on the ship, and on them first. But meantime the captain, with a shrewd guess at the general nature of the danger he could not see, had roared out, "Slack the main sheet." The ship righted, and the port came flying to, and terror-stricken men breathed hard, up to their waists in water and floating boxes. Grey barred the unlucky port, and went aft, drenched in body, and wretched in mind, to report his own fault. He found the captain looking grim as death. He told him, almost crying, what he had done, and how he had miscalculated the power of the water.

Dodd looked and saw his distress. "Let it be a lesson, sir," said he, sternly. "How many ships have been lost by this in fair weather, and not a man saved to tell how the craft was fooled away."

"Captain, bid me fling myself over the side, and I'll do it."

"Humph! I'm afraid I can't afford to lose a good officer for a fault he —will—never—repeat."

It blew hard all night and till twelve the next day. The Agra showed her weak point: she rolled abominably. A dirty night came on. At eight bells Mr. Grey touched by Dodd's clemency, and brimful of zeal, reported a light in Mrs. Beresford's cabin. It had been put out as usual by the master-at-arms; but the refractory one had relighted it.

"Go and take it away," said Dodd.

Soon screams were heard from the cabin. "Oh, mercy! mercy! I will not be drowned in the dark."

Dodd, who had kept clear of her so long, went down and tried to reassure her.

"Oh, the tempest! the tempest!" she cried. "AND TO BE DROWNED IN THE DARK!"

"Tempest? It is blowing half a gale of wind; that is all."

"Half a gale! Ah, that is the way you always talk to us ladies. Oh, pray give me my light, and send me a clergyman."

Dodd took pity, and let her have her light, with a midshipman to watch it. He even made her a hypocritical promise that, should there be one grain of danger, he would lie to; but said he must not make a foul wind of a fair one for a few lee lurches. The Agra broke plenty of glass and crockery though with her fair wind and her lee lurches.

Wind down at noon next day, and a dead calm.

At two P.M. the weather cleared; the sun came out high in heaven's centre; and a balmy breeze from the west.

At six twenty-five, the grand orb set calm and red, and the sea was gorgeous with miles and miles of great ruby dimples: it was the first glowing smile of southern latitude. The night stole on so soft, so clear, so balmy, all were loth to close their eyes on it: the passengers lingered long on deck, watching the Great Bear dip, and the Southern Cross rise, and over head a whole heaven of glorious stars most of us have never seen, and never shall see in this world. No belching smoke obscured, no plunging paddles deafened; all was musical; the soft air sighing among the sails; the phosphorescent water bubbling from the ship's bows; the murmurs from little knots of men on deck subdued by the

at calm: home seemed near, all danger far; Peace ruled the sea, the sky, the heart: the ship, making a track of white fire on the deep, glided gently yet swiftly homeward, urged by snowy sails piled up like alabaster towers against a violet sky, out of which looked a thousand eyes of holy tranquil fire. So melted the sweet night away.

Now carmine streaks tinged the eastern sky at the water's edge; and that water blushed; now the streaks turned orange, and the waves below them sparkled. Thence splashes of living gold flew and settled on the ship's white sails, the deck, and the faces; and with no more prologue, being so near the line, up came majestically a huge, fiery, golden sun, and set the sea flaming liquid topaz.

Instant the look-out at the foretop-gallant-mast-head hailed-the deck below.

"STRANGE SAIL! RIGHT AHEAD!"

The strange sail was reported to Captain Dodd, then dressing in his cabin. He came soon after on deck and hailed the look-out: "Which way is she standing?"

"Can't say, sir. Can't see her move any."

Dodd ordered the boatswain to pipe to breakfast; and taking his deck glass went lightly up to the fore-top-gallant-mast-crosstrees. Thence, through the light haze of a glorious morning, he espied a long low schooner, latine-rigged, lying close under Point Leat, a small island about nine miles distant on the weather bow; and nearly in the Agra's course then approaching the Straits of Gaspar, 4 Latitude S.

"She is hove-to," said Dodd, very gravely.

At eight o'clock, the stranger lay about two miles to windward; and still hove-to.

By this time all eyes were turned upon her, and half a dozen glasses. Everybody, except the captain, delivered an opinion. She was a Greek lying-to for water: she was a Malay coming north with canes, and short of hands: she was a pirate watching the Straits.

The captain leaned silent and sombre with his arms on the bulwarks, and watched the suspected Craft.

Mr. Fullalove joined the group, and levelled a powerful glass, of his own construction. His inspection was long and minute, and, while the glass was at his eye, Sharpe asked him half in a whisper, could he make out anything?

"Wal," said he, "the varmint looks considerable snaky." Then, without moving his glass, he let drop a word at a time, as if the facts were trickling into his telescope at the lens, and out at the sight. "One —two—four—seven, false ports."

There was a momentary murmur among the officers all round. But British sailors are undemonstrative: Colonel Kenealy, strolling the deck with his cigar, saw they were watching another ship with maritime curiosity, and making comments; but he discerned no particular emotion nor anxiety in what they said, nor in the grave low tones they said it in. Perhaps a brother seaman would though.

The next observation that trickled out of Fullalove's tube was this.

"I judge there are too few hands on deck, and too many—white—eyeballs—glittering at the portholes."

"Confound it!" muttered Bayliss, uneasily; "how can you see that?"

Fullalove replied only by quietly handing his glass to Dodd. The captain, thus appealed to, glued his eye to the tube.

"Well, sir; see the false ports, and the white eyebrows?" asked Sharpe, ironically.

"I see this is the best glass I ever looked through," said Dodd doggedly, without interrupting his inspection.

"I think he is a Malay pirate," said Mr. Grey.

Sharpe took him up very quickly, and, indeed, angrily: "Nonsense; And if he is, he won't venture on a craft of this size."

"Says the whale to the swordfish," suggested Fullalove, with a little guttural laugh.

The captain, with the American glass at his eye, turned half round to the man at the wheel: "Starboard!"

"Starboard it is."

"Steer South South East."

"Ay, ay, sir." And the ship's course was thus altered two points.

This order lowered Dodd fifty per cent. in Mr. Sharpe's estimation. He held his tongue as long as he could: but at last his surprise and dissatisfaction burst out of him, "Won't that bring him out on us?"

"Very likely, sir," replied Dodd.

"Begging your pardon, captain, would it not be wiser to keep our course, and show the blackguard we don't fear him?"

"When we *do*? Sharpe, he has made up his mind an hour ago whether to lie still, or bite; my changing my course two points won't change his mind; but it may make him declare it; and *I* must know what he does intend, before I run the ship into the narrows ahead."

"Oh, I see," said Sharpe, half convinced.

The alteration in the Agra's course produced no movement on the part of the mysterious schooner. She lay-to under the land still, and with only a few hands on deck, while the Agra edged away from her and entered the Straits between Long Island and Point Leat, leaving the schooner about two miles and a half distant to the N.W.

Ah! The stranger's deck swarms black with men.

His sham ports fell as if by magic, his guns grinned through the gaps like black teeth; his huge foresail rose and filled, and out he came in chase.

The breeze was a kiss from Heaven, the sky a vaulted sapphire, the sea a million dimples of liquid, lucid, gold.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Amongst the curiosities of human reasoning is this: one forms a judgment on certain statements; they turn out incorrect, yet the judgment sound.

This occurs oftenest when, to divine what any known person will do

in a case stated, we go boldly by his character, his habits, or his interest: for these are great forces, towards which men gravitate through various and even contrary circumstances.

Now women, sitting at home out of detail's way, are somewhat forced, as well as naturally inclined, to rely on their insight into character; and, by this broad clue, often pass through false or discoloured data to a sound calculation.

Thus it was Mrs. Dodd applied her native sagacity to divine why Richard Hardie declined Julia for his son's wife, and how to make him withdraw that dissent: and the fair diviner was much mistaken in detail but right in her conclusion; for Richard Hardie *was* at that moment the unlikeliest man in Barkington to decline Julia Dodd—with Hard Cash in five figures—for his daughter-in-law.

I am now about to make a revelation to the reader, that will incidentally lead him to Mrs. Dodd's conclusion, but by a different path.

The outline she gave her daughter and my reader of Richard Hardie's cold and prudent youth was substantially correct; but something had occurred since then, unknown to her, unknown to all Barkington. The centuries had blown a respectable bubble.

About two hundred and fifty years ago, some genius, as unknown as the inventor of the lathe, laid the first wooden tramroad, to enable a horse to draw forty-two cwt. instead of seventeen. The coalowners soon used it largely. In 1738, iron rails were invented; but prejudice, stronger than that metal, kept them down, and the wooden ones in vogue, for some thirty years. Then iron prevailed.

Meantime, a much greater invention had been creeping up to join the metal way; I mean the locomotive power of steam; whose history is not needed here. Enough that in 1804 took place as promising a wedding as civilization ever saw; for then an engine built by Trevethick, a great genius frittered for want of pluck, drew carriages, laden with ten tons, five miles an hour on a Welsh railway. Next stout Stephenson came on the scene, and insisted on benefiting mankind in spite of themselves, and of shallow legislators, à priori reasoners, and a heavy Review, whose political motto was, "Stemus super antiquas vias;" which may be rendered, "Better stand still on turnpikes than move on rails."

His torments and triumph are history.

Two of his repartees seem neat: 1. To Lord Noodle, or Lord Doodle, which was it? objecting haughtily, "And suppose a cow should get in the way of your engine, sir?" he replied, "Why, then it would be bad—for the coow." The objector had overrated the obstructive power of his honoured parent.

2. To the à priori reasoners, who sat in their studies and demonstrated with complete unanimity that uncogged wheels would revolve on a smooth rail, but leave the carriage in statu quo, he replied by building an engine with Lord Ravensworth's noble aid, hooking on eight carriages, and rattling off up an incline. "Solvitur ambulando," quoth Stephenson the stout-hearted to Messrs. À Priori.

Next a coach ran on the Stockton and Darlington rail. Next the Liverpool and Manchester line was projected. Oh then what bitter opposition to the national benefactors, and the good of man!

Awake from the tomb echoes of dead Cant.

"The revolving wheels might move the engine on a rail; but what would that avail if they could not move them in the closet, and on a mathematical paper? Railways would be bad for canals, bad for morals, bad for highwaymen, bad for roadside inns: the smoke would kill the partridges ('Aha! thou hast touched us nearly,' said the country gentlemen), the travellers would go slowly to their destination, but swift to destruction." And the Heavy Review, whose motto was "Stemus super turnpikes," offered "to back old Father Thames against the Woolwich railway for any sum." And Black Will, who drove the next heaviest ephemeral in the island, told a schoolboy, who now writes these pages, "there's nothing can ever be safe at twenty miles an hour, without 'tis a bird in the air;" and confirmed it with an oath. Briefly, buzz! buzz! buzz!

Gray was crushed, Trevethick driven out of the country, stout Steevie thwarted, badgered, taunted, and even insulted, and bespattered with dirt, I might say with dung; since his opponents discharged their own brains at him by speech and writing. At last, when after the manner of men they had manured their benefactor well, they consented to reap him. Railways prevailed, and increased, till lo and behold a prime minister with a spade delving one in the valley of the Trent. The tide turned; good working railways from city to city became an approved investment of genuine capital; notwithstanding the frightful frauds and extortion to which the projectors were exposed in a parliament, which, under a new temptation showed itself as corrupt and greedy as any nation or age can parallel.

When this sober state of things had endured some time, there came a year that money was loose, and a speculative fever due in the whirligig of time. Then railways bubbled. New ones were advertised, fifty a month, and all went to a premium. High and low scrambled for the shares, even when the projected line was to run from the town of Nought to the village of Nothing across a goose common. The flame spread, fanned by prospectus and advertisement, two mines of glowing fiction, compared with which the legitimate article is a mere tissue of understatements: princes sat in railway tenders, and clove the air like the birds whose effigies surmount their armorials; our stiffest Peers relaxed into Boards; Bishops warned their clergy against avarice, and buttered Hudson an inch thick for shares; and turned their little aprons into great pockets; men, stainless hitherto, put down their infants, nurses included, as independent subscribers, and bagged the coupons, capturi tartaros: nearly everything, that had a name, and, by some immense fortuity, could write it, demanded its part in the new and fathomless source of wealth: a charwoman's two sons were living in a garret on fifteen shillings apiece per week; down went their excellencies' names for 37,000*l.* worth of bubbling iron; another shareholder applied imperiously from a house in Grosvenor Square; he had breakfasted on the steps. Once more, in Time's whirligig gentlemen and their footmen jostled one another on the Exchange, and a motley crew of peers and printers, vicars and admirals, professors, cooks, costermongers, cotton-spinners, waiters, coachmen, priests, potboys, bankers, braziers, dairy-

men, mail-guards, barristers, spinsters, butchers, beggars, duchesses, rag-merchants; in one word, of Nobs and Snobs; fought and scrambled pell mell for the popular paper; and all to get rich in a day.*

Richard Hardie had some money in existing railways; but he declined to invest his hard cash upon hypotheticals. He was repeatedly solicited to be a director; but always declined. Once he was offered a canny bribe of a thousand pounds to let his name go on a provisional committee. He refused with a characteristic remark; "I never buy any merchandise at a fancy price, not even hard cash."

Antidote to the universal mania, Barkington had this one wet blanket: an unpopular institution; but far more salutary than a damp sheet, especially in time of Bubble.

Nearly all his customers consulted Richard Hardie, and this was the substance of his replies: "The Bubbles of History, including the great one of my youth, were national, as well as individual, follies. It is not so now: the railways, that ruin their allottees and directors, will be pure additions to the national property, and some day remove one barrier more from commerce. The Dutch tulip frenzy went on a petty fancy; the Railway fury goes on a great fact. Our predecessors blew mere soap bubbles; we blow an iron bubble: but here the distinction ends; in 1825 the country undertook immediate engagements, to fulfil which a century's income would not have sufficed: to-day a thousand railway companies are registered, requiring a capital of six hundred million and another thousand projected, to cost another five hundred million. Where is the money to come from? If the world was both cultivated and civilised (instead of neither), and this nation could be sold, with every building, ship, quadruped, jewel, and marketable female in it, it would not fetch the money to make these railways; yet the country undertakes to create them in three years *with its floating capital.* Arithmetic of Bedlam! The thing cannot last a year without collapsing." Richard Hardie *talked* like this from first to last. But, when he saw that shares invariably mounted; that even those who, for want of interest, had to buy them at a premium, sold them at a profit; when he saw paupers making large fortunes in a few months, by buying into every venture and selling the next week; he itched for his share of the booty, and determined to profit in act by the credulity of mankind, as well as expose it in words. He made use of his large connexions to purchase shares; which he took care to part with speedily; he cleared a good deal of money, and that made him hungrier: he went deeper and deeper into what he called Flat catching, till one day he stood to win thirty thousand pounds at a coup.

But it is dangerous to be a convert, real or false, to Bubble: the game is to be rash at once, and turn prudent at the full tide. When Richard Hardie was up to his chin in these time bargains, came an incident not easy to foresee: the conductors of the 'Times,' either from patriotism, or long-sighted policy, punctured the bladder, though they were making thousands weekly by the railway advertisements. The time was so well chosen, and the pin applied, that it was a death-blow: shares declined

* For the humours of the time see the parliamentary return of Railway Subscribers, published 1846: Francis's British Railway: Evans's Commercial Crisis: and the pamphlets and journals of the day.

from that morning, and the inevitable panic was advanced a week or two. The more credulous speculators held on in hopes of a revival; but Hardie, who knew that the collapse had been merely hastened, saw the gravity of the situation, and sold largely at a heavy loss. But he could not sell all the bad paper he had accumulated for a temporary purpose: the panic came too swiftly, and too strong; soon there were no buyers at any price. The biter was bit: the fox who had said "This is a trap; I'll lightly come and lightly go," was caught by the light fantastic toe.

In this emergency he showed high qualities; vast financial ability, great fortitude, and that sense of commercial honour which Mrs. Dodd justly called his semi-chivalrous sentiment. He mustered all his private resources to meet his engagements, and maintain his high position. Then commenced a long and steady struggle, conducted with a Spartan dignity and self-command, and a countenance as close as wax. Little did any in Barkington guess the doubts and fears, the hopes and despondencies, which agitated and tore the heart and brain that schemed, and throbbed, and glowed, and sickened by turns, beneath that steady modulated exterior. And so for months and months he secretly battled with insolvency; sometimes it threatened in the distance, sometimes at hand, but never caught him unawares: he provided for each coming danger, he encountered each immediate attack. But not unscathed in morals. Just as matters looked brighter, came a concentration of liabilities he could not meet without emptying his tills, and so incurring the most frightful danger of all. He had provided for its coming too; but a decline, greater than he had reckoned on, in the value of his good securities, made that provision inadequate. Then it was he committed a faux-pas. He was one of his own children's trustees, and the other two signed after him like machines. He said to himself: "My honour is my children's; my position is worth thousands *to them*. I have sacrificed a fortune to preserve it; it would be madness to recoil now." He borrowed three thousand pounds of the trust money, and, soon after, two thousand more: it kept him above water; but the peril, and the escape on such terms, left him gasping inwardly.

At last, when even his granite nature was almost worn down with labour, anxiety, and struggling all alone without a word of comfort—for the price of one grain of sympathy would have been "Destruction"—he shuffled off his iron burden, and breathed again.

One day he spent in a sort of pleasing lethargy, like a strong swimmer who, long and sore buffeted by the waves, has reached the shore at last.

The next day his cashier, a sharp-visaged, bald-headed old man called young Skinner, invited his attention rather significantly to the high amount of certain balances compared with the cash at his (Skinner's) disposal.

"Indeed!" said Hardie, quietly; "that must be regulated." He added graciously, as if conferring a great favour, "I'll look into the books myself, Skinner."

He did more; he sat up all night over the books; and his heart died within him. Bankruptcy seemed coming towards him, slow perhaps, but sure. And meantime to live with the sword hanging over him by a hair!

Soon matters approached a crisis; several large drafts were drawn, which would have cleaned the bank out, but that the yearly rents of a wealthy nobleman had for some days past been flowing in. This nobleman had gone to explore Syria and Assyria. He was a great traveller, who contrived to live up to his income at home, but had never been able to spend a quarter of it abroad, for want of enemies and masters—better known as friends and servants—to help him. So Hardie was safe for some months, unless there should be an extraordinary run on him, and that was not likely this year; the panic had subsided, and, nota bene, his credit had never stood higher. The reason was, he had been double-faced; had always spoken against railways: and his wise words were public, whereas his fatal acts had been done in the dark.

But now came a change, a bitter revulsion, over this tossed mind: hope and patience failed at last, and his virtue, being a thing of habit and traditions, rather than of the soul, wore out; nay more, this man, who had sacrificed so nobly to commercial integrity, filled with hate of his idol, and contempt of himself. "Idiot!" said he, "to throw away a fortune fighting for honour,—a greater bubble than that which has ruined me—instead of breaking like a man, with a hidden purse, and starting fair again as sensible traders do."

No honest man in the country that year repented of his vices so sincerely as Richard Hardie loathed his virtue. And he did not confine his penitence to sentiment; he began to spend his days at the bank poring over the books, and to lay out his arithmetical genius in a subtle process, that should enable him by degrees to withdraw a few thousands from human eyes for his future use, despite the feeble safeguards of the existing law. In other words Richard Hardie, like thousands before him, was fabricating and maturing a false balance-sheet.

One man in his time plays many animals. Hardie at this period turned mole. He burrowed darkling into æs alienum. There is often one of these sleek miners in a Bank: it is a section of human zoology the journals have lately enlarged on, and drawn the painstaking creature grubbing and mining away to brief opulence; and briefer penal servitude than one could wish. I rely on my reader having read these really able sketches of my contemporaries; and spare him minute details, that possess scarcely a new feature, except one: in that Bank was not only a mole; but a mole-catcher: and contrary to custom, the mole was the master, the mole-catcher the servant. The latter had no hostile views; far from it: he was rather attached to his master: but his attention was roused by the youngest clerk, a boy of sixteen, being so often sent for into the Bank parlour, to copy into the books some arithmetical result, without its process. Attention soon became suspicion; and suspicion found many little things to feed on, till it grew to certainty. But the outer world was none the wiser: the mole-catcher was no chatter-box; he was a solitary man; no wife nor mistress about him; and he revered the mole, and liked him better than anything in the world—*except money*.

Thus the great Banker stood, a colossus of wealth and stability to the eye, though ready to crumble at a touch; and indeed self-doomed; for bankruptcy was now his game.

This was a miserable man; far more miserable than his son whose

happiness he had thwarted: his face was furrowed, and his hair thinned by secret struggle: and of all the things that gnawed him, like the fox, beneath his Spartan robe, none was more bitter than to have borrowed five thousand pounds of his children, and sunk it.

His wife's father, a keen man of business, who saw there was little affection on his side, had settled his daughter's money on her for life, and, in case of her death, on the children upon coming of age. The marriage of Alfred or Jane would be sure to expose him; settlements would be proposed; lawyers engaged to peer into the trust, &c. No; they *must* remain single for the present, or else marry wealth.

So, when his son announced an attachment to a young lady living in a suburban villa, it was a terrible blow, though he took it with outward calm, as usual. But if, instead of prating about beauty, virtue, and breeding, Alfred had told him hard cash in five figures could be settled by the bride's family on the young couple, he would have welcomed the wedding with great external indifference, but a secret gush of joy; for then he could throw himself on Alfred's generosity, and be released from that one corroding debt; perhaps allowed to go on drawing the interest of the remainder.

Thus, in reality, all the interests, with which this story deals, converged towards one point; the fourteen thousand pounds. Richard Hardie's opposition was a mere misunderstanding; and, if he had been told of the Cash, and to what purpose Mrs. Dodd destined it, and then put on board the Agra in the Straits of Gaspar, he would have calmly taken off his coat, and helped to defend the bearer of It against all assailants as stoutly, and, to all appearance, imperturbably, as he had fought that other bitter battle at home. For there was something heroic in this erring man; though his rectitude depended on circumstances.

## CHAPTER IX.

The way the pirate dropped the mask, showed his black teeth, and bore up in chase, was terrible: so dilates and bounds the sudden tiger on his unwary prey. There were stout hearts among the officers of the peaceable Agra; but danger in a new form shakes the brave; and this was their first pirate: their dismay broke out in ejaculations not loud but deep. "Hush!" said Dodd, doggedly; "the lady!"

Mrs. Beresford had just come on deck to enjoy the balmy morning.

"Sharpe," said Dodd, in a tone that conveyed no suspicion to the new comer, "set the royals, and flying jib.—Port!"

"Port it is," cried the man at the helm.

"Steer due South!" And, with these words in his mouth, Dodd dived to the gun deck.

By this time elastic Sharpe had recovered the first shock; and the order to crowd sail on the ship galled his pride and his manhood; he muttered, indignantly, "The white feather!" This eased his mind, and he obeyed orders briskly as ever. While he and his hands were setting every rag the ship could carry on that tack, the other officers having unluckily no orders to execute, stood gloomy and helpless, with their

eyes glued, by a sort of sombre fascination, on that coming fate: and they literally jumped and jarred, when Mrs. Beresford, her heart opened by the lovely day, broke in on their nerves with her light treble.

"What a sweet morning, gentlemen. After all a voyage is a delightful thing: oh, what a splendid sea! and the very breeze is warm. Ah, and there's a little ship sailing along: here Freddy, Freddy darling, leave off beating the sailor's legs, and come here and see this pretty ship. What a pity it is so far off. Ah! ah! what is that dreadful noise?"

For her horrible small talk, that grated on those anxious souls like the mockery of some infantine fiend, was cut short by ponderous blows and tremendous smashing below. It was the captain staving in water casks: the water poured out at the scuppers.

"Clearing the lee guns," said a middy, off his guard.

Colonel Kenealy pricked up his ears, drew his cigar from his mouth, and smelt powder. "What, for action?" said he, briskly. "Where's the enemy?"

Fullalove made him a signal, and they went below.

Mrs. Beresford had not heard, or not appreciated the remark: she prattled on till she made the mates and midshipmen shudder.

Realise the situation, and the strange incongruity between the senses and the mind in these poor fellows! The day had ripened its beauty; beneath a purple heaven shone, sparkled, and laughed, a blue sea, in whose waves the tropical sun seemed to have fused his beams; and beneath that fair, sinless, peaceful sky, wafted by a balmy breeze over those smiling, transparent, golden waves, a bloodthirsty Pirate bore down on them with a crew of human tigers; and a lady babble babble babble babble babble babbled in their quivering ears.

But now the captain came bustling on deck, eyed the loftier sails, saw they were drawing well, appointed four midshipmen a staff to convey his orders; gave Bayliss charge of the carronades, Grey of the cutlasses, and directed Mr. Tickell to break the bad news gently to Mrs. Beresford, and to take her below to the orlop deck; ordered the purser to serve out beef, biscuit, and grog to all hands, saying, "Men can't work on an empty stomach: and fighting is hard work;" then beckoned the officers to come round him. "Gentlemen," said he, confidentially, "in crowding sail on this ship I had no hope of escaping that fellow on this tack, but I was, and am, most anxious to gain the open sea, where I can square my yards and run for it, if I see a chance. At present I shall carry on till he comes up within range: and then, to keep the Company's canvas from being shot to rags, I shall shorten sail; and to save ship and cargo and all our lives, I shall fight while a plank of her swims. Better be killed in hot blood than walk the plank in cold."

The officers cheered faintly; the captain's dogged resolution stirred up theirs.

The pirate had gained another quarter of a mile and more. The ship's crew were hard at their beef and grog, and agreed among themselves it was a comfortable ship; they guessed what was coming, and woe to the ship in that hour if the captain had not won their respect. Strange to say, there were two gentlemen in the Agra to whom the pirate's approach was not altogether unwelcome. Colonel Kenealy and Mr Fullalove were

rival sportsmen; and rival theorists. Kenealy stood out for a smooth bore, and a four ounce ball; Fullalove for a rifle of his own construction. Many a doughty argument they had, and many a bragging match; neither could convert the other. At last Fullalove hinted that by going ashore at the Cape, and getting each behind a tree at one hundred yards, and popping at one another, one or other would be convinced.

"Well, but," said Kenealy, "if he is dead, he will be no wiser; besides, to a fellow like me, who has had the luxury of popping at his enemies, popping at a friend is poor insipid work."

"That is true," said the other, regretfully. "But I reckon we shall never settle it by argument."

Theorists are amazing; and it was plain, by the alacrity with which these good creatures loaded the rival instruments, that to them the pirate came not so much a pirate as a solution. Indeed Kenealy, in the act of charging his piece, was heard to mutter, "Now, this is lucky." However, these theorists were no sooner loaded, than something occurred to make them more serious. They were sent for in haste to Dodd's cabin; they found him giving Sharpe a new order.

"Shorten sail to the taupsles and jib, get the colours ready on the halyards, and then send the men aft."

Sharpe ran out full of zeal, and tumbled over Ramgolam, who was stooping remarkably near the keyhole. Dodd hastily bolted the cabin door, and looked with trembling lip and piteous earnestness in Kenealy's face and Fullalove's. They were mute with surprise at a gaze so eloquent yet mysterious.

He manned himself, and opened his mind to them with deep emotion, yet not without a certain simple dignity.

"Colonel," said he, "you are an old friend; *you*, sir, are a new one; but I esteem you highly, and what my young gentlemen chaff you about, you calling all men brothers, and making that poor negro love you, instead of fear you, that shows me you have a great heart. My dear friends, I have been unlucky enough to bring my children's fortune on board this ship: here it is, under my shirt. Fourteen thousand pounds! This weighs me down. Oh, if they should lose it after all! Do pray give me a hand apiece and pledge your sacred words to take it home safe to my wife at Barkington, if you, or either of you, should see this bright sun set to-day, and I should not."

"Why Dodd, old fellow," said Kenealy, cheerfully, "this is not the way to go into action."

"Colonel," replied Dodd, "to save this ship and cargo, I must be wherever the bullets are, and I will, too."

Fullalove, more sagacious than the worthy colonel, said earnestly: "Captain Dodd, may I never see Broadway again, and never see Heaven at the end of my time, if I fail you; There's my hand."

"And mine," said Kenealy, warmly.

They all three joined hands, and Dodd seemed to cling to them.

"God bless you both! God bless you! Oh, what a weight your true hands have pulled off my heart. Good-bye, for a few minutes. The time is short. I'll just offer a prayer to the Almighty for wisdom, and then I'll come up and say a word to the men, and fight the ship; according to my lights."

Sail was no sooner shortened, and the crew ranged, than the captain came briskly on deck, saluted, jumped on a carronade, and stood erect. He was not the man to show the crew his forebodings.

(Pipe.) "Silence fore and aft."

"My men, the schooner coming up on our weather quarter is a Portuguese pirate. His character is known; he scuttles all the ships he boards, dishonours the women, and murders the crew. We cracked on to get out of the narrows, and now we have shortened sail to fight this blackguard, and teach him to molest a British ship. I promise, in the Company's name, twenty pounds prize money to every man before the mast if we beat him off or outmanœuvre him; thirty if we sink him; and forty if we tow him astern into a friendly port. Eight guns are clear below, three on the weather side, five on the lee; for, if he knows his business, he will come up on the lee quarter: if he doesn't, that is no fault of yours nor mine. The muskets are all loaded, the cutlasses ground like razors——"

"Hurrah!"

"We have got women to defend——"

"Hurrah!"

"A good ship under our feet, the God of justice over head, British hearts in our bosoms, and British colours flying—run 'em up!—over our heads." (The ship's colours flew up to the fore, and the Union Jack to the mizen peak.) "Now lads, I mean to fight this ship while a plank of her (stamping on the deck) swims beneath my foot and—what do you say?"

The reply was a fierce "hurrah!" from a hundred throats, so loud, so deep, so full of volume, it made the ship vibrate, and rang in the creeping on pirate's ears. Fierce, but cunning, he saw mischief in those shortened sails, and that Union Jack, the terror of his tribe, rising to a British cheer; he lowered his mainsail, and crawled up on the weather quarter. Arrived within a cable's length, he double reefed his foresail to reduce his rate of sailing nearly to that of the ship; and the next moment a tongue of flame, and then a gush of smoke, issued from his lee bow, and the ball flew screaming like a seagull over the Agra's mizen top. He then put his helm up, and fired his other bow-chaser, and sent the shot hissing and skipping on the water past the ship. This prologue made the novices wince. Bayliss wanted to reply with a carronade; but Dodd forbade him sternly, saying, "If we keep him aloof we are done for."

The pirate drew nearer, and fired both guns in succession, hulled the Agra amidships, and sent an eighteen-pound ball through her foresail. Most of the faces were pale on the quarter deck; it was very trying to be shot at, and hit, and make no return. The next double discharge sent one shot smash through the stern cabin window, and splintered the bulwark with another, wounding a seaman slightly.

"LIE DOWN FORWARD!" shouted Dodd. "Bayliss, give him a shot."

The carronade was fired with a tremendous report, but no visible effect. The pirate crept nearer, steering in and out like a snake to avoid the carronades, and firing those two heavy guns alternately into the devoted ship. He hulled the Agra now nearly every shot.

The two available carronades replied noisily, and jumped as usual; they sent one thirty-two pound shot clean through the schooner's deck and side; but that was literally all they did worth speaking of.

"Curse them!" cried Dodd; "load them with grape! they are not to be trusted with ball. And all my eighteen-pounders dumb! The coward won't come alongside and give them a chance."

At the next discharge the pirate chipped the mizen mast, and knocked a sailor into dead pieces on the forecastle. Dodd put his helm down ere the smoke cleared, and got three carronades to bear, heavily laden with grape. Several pirates fell, dead or wounded, on the crowded deck, and some holes appeared in the foresail; this one interchange was quite in favour of the ship.

But the lesson made the enemy more cautious; he crept nearer, but steered so adroitly, now right astern, now on the quarter, that the ship could seldom bring more than one carronade to bear, while he raked her fore and aft with grape and ball.

In this alarming situation, Dodd kept as many of the men below as possible; but, for all he could do, four were killed and seven wounded.

Fullalove's word came too true: it was the swordfish and the whale: it was a fight of hammer and anvil; one hit, the other made a noise. Cautious and cruel, the pirate hung on the poor hulking creature's quarters and raked her at point blank distance. He made her pass a bitter time. And her captain! To see the splintering hull, the parting shrouds, the shivered gear, and hear the shrieks and groans of his wounded; and he unable to reply in kind! The sweat of agony poured down his face. Oh, if he could but reach the open sea, and square his yards, and make a long chase of it; perhaps fall in with aid. Wincing under each heavy blow, he crept doggedly, patiently, on, towards that one visible hope.

At last, when the ship was cloved with shot, and peppered with grape, the channel opened; in five minutes more he could put her dead before the wind.

No. The pirate, on whose side luck had been from the first, got half a broadside to bear at long musket shot, killed a midshipman by Dodd's side, cut away two of the Agra's mizen shrouds, wounded the gaff: and cut the jib stay; down fell that powerful sail into the water, and dragged across the ship's forefoot, stopping her way to the open sea, she panted for; the mates groaned; the crew cheered stoutly, as British tars do in any great disaster; the pirates yelled with ferocious triumph, like the devils they looked.

But most human events, even calamities, have two sides. The Agra being brought almost to a standstill, the pirate forged ahead against his will, and the combat took a new and terrible form. The elephant gun popped, and the rifle cracked, in the Agra's mizen top, and the man at the pirate's helm jumped into the air and fell dead: both Theorists claimed him. Then the three carronades peppered him hotly; and he hurled an iron shower back with fatal effect. Then at last the long eighteen-pounders on the gun-deck got a word in. The old Niler was not the man to miss a vessel alongside in a quiet sea; he sent two round shot clean through him; the third splintered his bulwark, and swept across his deck.

"His masts! fire at his masts!' roared Dodd to Monk, through his trumpet; he then got the jib clear, and made what sail he could without taking all the hands from the guns.

This kept the vessels nearly alongside a few minutes, and the fight was hot as fire. The pirate now for the first time hoisted his flag. It was black as ink. His crew yelled as it rose: the Britons, instead of quailing, cheered with fierce derision; the pirate's wild crew of yellow Malays, black chinless Papuans, and bronzed Portuguese, served their side guns, twelve-pounders, well and with ferocious cries; the white Britons, drunk with battle now, naked to the waist, grimed with powder, and spotted like leopards with blood, their own and their mates', replied with loud undaunted cheers, and deadly hail of grape from the quarter deck; while the master-gunner and his mates, loading with a rapidity the mixed races opposed could not rival, hulled the schooner well between wind and water, and then fired chain shot at her masts, as ordered, and began to play the mischief with her shrouds and rigging. Meantime, Fullalove and Kenealy, aided by Vespasian, who loaded, were quietly butchering the pirate crew two a minute, and hoped to settle the question they were fighting for; smooth bore *v.* rifle: but unluckily neither fired once without killing; so "there was nothing proven."

The pirate, bold as he was, got sick of fair fighting first; he hoisted his mainsail and drew rapidly ahead, with a slight bearing to windward, and dismounted a carronade and stove in the ship's quarter-boat, by way of a parting kick.

The men hurled a contemptuous cheer after him; they thought they had beaten him off. But Dodd knew better. He was but retiring a little way to make a more deadly attack than ever: he would soon wear, and cross the Agra's defenceless bows, to rake her fore and aft at pistol-shot distance: or grapple, and board the enfeebled ship two hundred strong.

Dodd flew to the helm, and with his own hands put it hard a weather, to give the deck guns one more chance, the last, of sinking or disabling the Destroyer. As the ship obeyed, and a deck gun bellowed below him, he saw a vessel running out from Long Island, and coming swiftly up on his lee quarter.

It was a schooner. Was she coming to his aid?

Horror! A black flag floated from her foremast head.

While Dodd's eyes were staring almost out of his head at this death-blow to hope, Monk fired again; and just then a pale face came close to Dodd's, and a solemn voice whispered in his ear: "Our amunition is nearly done!'

Dodd seized Sharpe's hand convulsively, and pointed to the pirate's consort coming up to finish them; and said, with the calm of a brave man's despair, "Cutlasses! and die hard!"

At that moment the master gunner fired his last gun. It sent a chain shot on board the retiring pirate, took off a Portuguese head and spun it clean into the sea ever so far to windward, and cut the schooner's foremast so nearly through that it trembled and nodded, and presently snapped with a loud crack, and came down like a broken tree, with the yard and sail; the latter overlapping the deck and burying itself, black flag and all, in the sea; and there, in one moment, lay the Destroyer buffeting and wriggling—like a heron on the water with his long wing broken—an utter cripple.

The victorious crew raised a stunning cheer.

"Silence!" roared Dodd, with his trumpet. "All hands make sail!"

He set his courses, bent a new jib, and stood out to windward close hauled, in hopes to make a good offing, and then put his ship dead before the wind, which was now rising to a stiff breeze. In doing this he crossed the crippled pirate's bows, within eighty yards; and sore was the temptation to rake him; but his ammunition being short, and his danger being imminent from the other pirate, he had the self-command to resist the great temptation.

He hailed the mizen top: "Can you two hinder them from firing that gun?"

"I ratther think we can," said Fullalove, "eh, colonel?" and capped his long rifle.

The ship no sooner crossed the schooner's bows* than a Malay ran forward with a linstock. Pop went the colonel's ready carbine, and the Malay fell over dead, and the linstock flew out of his hand. A tall Portuguese, with a movement of rage, snatched it up, and darted to the gun: the Yankee rifle cracked, but a moment too late. Bang! went the pirate's bow-chaser, and crashed into the Agra's side, and passed nearly through her.

"Ye missed him! Ye missed him!" cried the rival theorist, joyfully. He was mistaken: the smoke cleared, and there was the pirate captain leaning wounded against the mainmast with a Yankee bullet in his shoulder, and his crew uttering yells of dismay and vengeance. They jumped, and raged, and brandished their knives, and made horrid gesticulations of revenge; and the white eyeballs of the Malays and Papuans glittered fiendishly; and the wounded captain raised his sound arm and had a signal hoisted to his consort, and she bore up in chase, and jamming her fore latine flat as a board, lay far nearer the wind than the Agra could, and sailed three feet to her two besides. On this superiority being made clear, the situation of the Merchant vessel, though not so utterly desperate as before Monk fired his lucky shot, became pitiable enough. If she ran before the wind, the fresh pirate would cut her off: if she lay to windward, she might postpone the inevitable and fatal collision with a foe as strong as that she had only escaped by a rare piece of luck; but this would give the crippled pirate time to refit and unite to destroy her. Add to this the failing ammunition, and the thinned crew!

Dodd cast his eyes all round the horizon for help.

The sea was blank.

The bright sun was hidden now; drops of rain fell, and the wind was beginning to sing; and the sea to rise a little.

"Gentlemen," said he, "let us kneel down and pray for wisdom, in this sore strait."

He and his officers kneeled on the quarter deck. When they rose, Dodd stood rapt about a minute; his great thoughtful eye saw fio more the enemy, the sea, nor anything external; it was turned inward. His officers looked at him in silence.

"Sharpe," said he, at last, "there *must* be a way out of them both with such a breeze as this is now; if we could but see it."

* Being disabled, the schooner's head had come round to windward, though she was drifting to leeward.

"Ay, *if*," groaned Sharpe.

Dodd mused again.

"About ship!" said he, softly, like an absent man.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Steer due north!" said he, still like one whose mind was elsewhere.

While the ship was coming about, he gave minute orders to the mates and the gunner, to ensure co-operation in the delicate and dangerous manœuvres that were sure to be at hand.

The wind was W.N.W: he was standing north: one pirate lay on his ee beam stopping a leak between wind and water, and hacking the deck clear of his broken mast and yards. The other fresh, and thirsting for the easy prey, came up to weather on him and hang on his quarter, pirate fashion.

When they were distant about a cable's length, the fresh pirate, to meet the ship's change of tactics, changed his own, luffed up, and gave the ship a broadside, well aimed but not destructive, the guns being loaded with ball.

Dodd, instead of replying immediately, put his helm hard up and ran under the pirate's stern, while he was jammed up in the wind, and with his five eighteen pounders raked him fore and aft, then paying off, gave him three carronades crammed with grape and canister; the rapid discharge of eight guns made the ship tremble, and enveloped her in thick smoke; loud shrieks and groans were heard from the schooner: the smoke cleared; the pirate's mainsail hung on deck, his jib-boom was cut off like a carrot and the sail struggling; his foresail looked lace, lanes of dead and wounded lay still or writhing on his deck, and his lee scuppers ran blood into the sea. Dodd squared his yards and bore away.

The ship rushed down the wind, leaving the schooner staggered and all abroad. But not for long; the pirate wore and fired his bow chasers at the now flying Agra, split one of the carronades in two, and killed a Lascar, and made a hole in the foresail; this done, he hoisted his mainsail again in a trice, sent his wounded below, flung his dead overboard, to the horror of their foes, and came after the flying ship, yawing and firing his bow chasers. The ship was silent. She had no shot to throw away. Not only did she take these blows like a coward, but all signs of life disappeared on her, except two men at the wheel, and the captain on the main gangway.

Dodd had ordered the crew out of the rigging, armed them with cutlasses, and laid them flat on the forecastle. He also compelled Kenealy and Fullalove to come down out of harm's way, no wiser on the smooth bore question than they went up.

The great patient ship ran environed by her foes; one destroyer right in her course, another in her wake, following her with yells of vengeance, and pounding away at her—but no reply.

Suddenly the yells of the pirates on both sides ceased, and there was a moment of dead silence on the sea.

Yet nothing fresh had happened.

Yes, this had happened: the pirates to windward, and the pirates to leeward, of the Agra, had found out, at one and the same moment, that the merchant captain they had lashed, and bullied, and tortured, was a patient but tremendous man. It was not only to rake the fresh

schooner he had put his ship before the wind, but also by a double, daring, masterstroke to hurl his monster ship bodily on the other. Without a foresail she could never get out of her way. The pirate crew had stopped the leak, and cut away and unshipped the broken foremast, and were stepping a new one, when they saw the huge ship bearing down in full sail. Nothing easier than to slip out of her way could they get the foresail to draw; but the time was short, the deadly intention manifest, the coming destruction swift.

After that solemn silence came a storm of cries and curses, as their seamen went to work to fit the yard and raise the sail; while their fighting men seized their matchlocks and trained the guns. They were well commanded by an heroic able villain. Astern the consort thundered; but the Agra's response was a dead silence more awful than broadsides.

For then was seen with what majesty the enduring Anglo-Saxon fights.

One of that indomitable race on the gangway, one at the foremast, two at the wheel, conned and steered the great ship down on a hundred matchlocks and a grinning broadside, just as they would have conned and steered her into a British harbour.

"Star-board!" said Dodd, in a deep calm voice, with a motion of his hand.

"Star-board it is."

The pirate wriggled ahead a little. The man forward made a silent signal to Dodd.

"Port!" said Dodd, quietly.

"Port it is."

But at this critical moment the pirate astern sent a mischievous shot and knocked one of the men to atoms at the helm.

Dodd waved his hand without a word, and another man rose from the deck, and took his place in silence, and laid his unshaking hand on the wheel stained with that man's warm blood whose place he took.

The high ship was now scarce sixty yards distant; *she seemed to know:* she reared her lofty figure-head with great awful shoots into the air.

But now the panting pirates got their new foresail noisted with a joyful shout: it drew, the schooner gathered way, and their furious consort close on the Agra's heels just then scourged her deck with grape.

"Port!" said Dodd, calmly.

"Port it is."

The giant prow darted at the escaping pirate. That acre of coming canvas took the wind out of the swift schooner's foresail; it flapped: oh, then she was doomed! That awful moment parted the races on board her; the Papuans and Sooloos, their black faces livid and blue with horror, leaped yelling into the sea, or crouched and whimpered; the yellow Malays and brown Portuguese, though blanched to one colour now, turned on death like dying panthers, fired two cannon slap into the ship's bows, and snapped their muskets and matchlocks at their solitary executioner on the ship's gangway, and out flew their knives like crushed wasp's stings. CRASH! the Indiaman's cutwater in thick smoke beat in the schooner's broadside: down went her masts to leeward like fishing-rods whipping the water; there was a horrible shrieking yell; wild forms leaped off on the Agra, and were hacked to pieces almost ere they reached the deck—a surge, a chasm in the sea, filled with an

instant rush of engulphing waves, a long, awful, grating, grinding noise, never to be forgotten in this world, all along under the ship's keel—and the fearful majestic monster passed on over the blank she had made, with a pale crew standing silent and awestruck on her deck; a cluster of wild heads and staring eyeballs bobbing like corks in her foaming wake, sole relic of the blotted-out destroyer; and a wounded man staggering on the gangway, with hands uplifted and staring eyes.

Shot in two places, the head and the breast!

With a loud cry of pity and dismay, Sharpe, Fullalove, Kenealy, and others rushed to catch him; but, ere they got near, the captain of the triumphant ship fell down on his hands and knees, his head sunk over the gangway, and his blood ran fast and pattered in the midst of them, on the deck he had defended so bravely.

## CHAPTER X.

THEY got to the wounded captain, and raised him: he revived a little: and, the moment he caught sight of Mr. Sharpe, he clutched him, and cried, "Stunsels!"

"Oh, captain," said Sharpe, "let the ship go; it is you we are anxious for now."

At this Dodd lifted up his hands and beat the air impatiently, and cried again in the thin, querulous, voice of a wounded man, but eagerly, "STUNSELS! STUNSELS!"

On this, Sharpe gave the command.

"Make sail! All hands set stunsels 'low and aloft!"

While the unwounded hands swarmed into the rigging, the surgeon came aft in all haste; but Dodd declined him till all his men should have been looked to: meantime he had himself carried to the poop, and laid on a mattress, his bleeding head bound tight with a wet cambric handkerchief, and his pale face turned towards the hostile schooner astern. She had hove to, and was picking up the survivors of her blotted-out consort. The group on the Agra's quarter-deck watched her to see what she would do next; flushed with immediate success, the younger officers crowed their fears she would not be game to attack them again; Dodd's fears ran the other way: he said, in the weak voice to which he was now reduced, "They are taking a wet blanket aboard; that crew of blackguards we swamped won't want any more of us: it all depends on the Pirate Captain; if he is not drowned, then blow wind, rise sea: or there's trouble ahead for us."

As soon as the schooner had picked up the last swimmer, she hoisted foresail, mainsail, and jib, with admirable rapidity, and bore down in chase.

The Agra had, meantime, got a start of more than a mile, and was now running before a stiff breeze with studding sails alow and aloft.

In an hour the vessels ran nearly twelve miles, and the pirate had gained half a mile.

At the end of the next hour they were out of sight of land; wind and sea rising; and the pirate only a quarter of a mile astern.

The schooner was now rising and falling on the waves; the ship only nodding, and firm as a rock.

"Blow wind, rise sea!" faltered Dodd.

Another half-hour passed without perceptibly altering the position of the vessels. Then, suddenly, the wounded captain laid aside his glass, after a long examination, and rose unaided to his feet in great excitement, and found his manly voice for a moment: he shook his fist at the now pitching schooner, and roared, "Good-bye! ye Portuguese lubber: outfought—outmanœuvred—AND OUTSAILED!"

It was a burst of exultation rare for him; he paid for it by sinking faint and helpless into his friend's arms: and the surgeon, returning soon after, insisted on his being taken to his cabin, and kept quite quiet.

As they were carrying him below, the Pirate Captain made the same discovery; that the ship was gaining on him: he hauled to the wind directly, and abandoned the chase.

When the now receding pirate was nearly hull down, the sun began to set; Mr. Tickell looked at him, and said, "Hallo! old fellow, what are *you* about? Why, it isn't two o'clock."

The remark was quite honest: he really feared, for a moment, that orb was mistaken and would get himself—and others—into trouble. However, the middy proved to be wrong, and the sun right to a minute; Time flies fast, fighting.

Mrs. Beresford came on deck with brat and poodle: Fred, a destructive child, clapped his hands with glee at the holes in the canvas: Snap toddled about smelling the blood of the slain, and wagging his tail by halves; perplexed. "Well, gentlemen," said Mrs. Beresford, "I hope you have made noise enough over one's head: and what a time you did take to beat that little bit of a thing: Freddy, be quiet; you worry me; where is your bearer? will anybody oblige me by finding Rangolam?"

"I will," said Mr. Tickell, hastily, and ran off for the purpose; but he returned after some time with a long face. No Ramgolam to be found.

Fullalove referred her—with humour-twinkling eye—to Vespasiah. "I have a friend here who says he can tell you something about him."

"Can you, my good man?" inquired the lady, turning haughtily towards the negro.

"Iss, Missy," said Vespasian, showing his white teeth in a broad grin, "dis child knows where to find dat ar niggar, widout him been and absquatulated since."

"Then go and fetch him directly."

Vespasian went off with an obedient start.

This annoyed Fullalove; interfered with his system: "Madam," said he, gravely, "would you oblige me by bestowing on my friend a portion of that courtesy with which you favour me, and which becomes you so gracefully?"

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Beresford. "Mr. Fullalove, I am out of patience with you: the idea of a sensible intelligent gentleman, like you, calling that creature your friend! and you an American; where they do nothing but whip them from morning till night. Who ever heard of making friends with a black?—Now what is the meaning of

this? I detest practical jokes." For the stalwart negro had returned, bringing a tall bread-bag in his arms: he now set it up before her, remarking, "Dis yar bag white outside, but him nation black inside." To confirm his words, he drew off the bag, and revealed Ramgolam, his black skin powdered with meal. The good-natured negro then blew the flour off his face, and dusted him a bit: the spectators laughed heartily, but Ramgolam never moved a muscle: not a morsel discomposed at what would have made an European miserably ashamed, even in a pantomime, the Caucasian darkie retained all his dignity, while the African one dusted him; but, being dusted, he put on his obsequiousness, stepped forward, joined his palms together to Mrs. Beresford—like mediæval knights and modern children at their devotions—and addressed her thus:—

"Daughter of light, he who basks in your beams, said to himself, 'The pirates are upon us, those children of blood, whom Sheitan their master blast for ever! They will ravish the Queen of Sunshine and the ayahs, and throw the sahibs and sailors into the sea; but, bread being the staff of existence, these foxes of the water will not harm it, but keep it for their lawless appetites; therefore Ramgolam, Son of Chittroo, Son of Soonarayan, will put the finger of silence on the lip of discretion, and be bread in the day of adversity: the sons of Sheitan will peradventure return to dry land, and close the eye of watchfulness; then will I emerge like the sun from a cloud; and depart in peace."

"Oh, very well," said Mrs. Beresford; "then you are an abominable egotist, that is all: and a coward: and thank Heaven Freddy and I were defended by English: and Americans, and—hem!—their friends; and not by Hindoos." She added charmingly, "this shows me my first words on coming here ought to have been to offer my warmest thanks to the brave men who *have* defended me and my child:" and swept them so queenly a courtesy, that the men's hats and caps flew off in an instant. "Mr. Black," said she, turning with a voice of honey to Vespasian, but aiming obliquely at Fullalove's heart, "*would* you oblige me by kicking that dog a *little*: he is always smelling what does not belong to him; why it is blood; oh!" and she turned pale in a moment.

Sharpe thought some excuse necessary. "You see, ma'am, we haven't had time to clean the decks since."

"It is the blood of men; of the poor fellows who have defended us so nobly," faltered the lady, trembling visibly.

"Well, ma'am," said Sharpe, still half apologetically, "you know a ship can't fight all day long without an accident or two." He added with nautical simplicity, and love of cleanliness; "however, the deck will be cleaned and holy-stoned to-morrow, long before you turn out."

Mrs. Beresford was too much overcome to explain how much deeper her emotion was than a dislike to stained floors. She turned faint, and on getting the better of that, went down to her cabin crying. Thence issued a royal order that the wounded were to have wine and every luxury they could fancy, without limit or stint—at her expense.

The next day a deep gloom reigned in the ship; the crew were ranged in their Sunday clothes, and bare-headed: a grating was rigged; Sharpe read the burial service; and the dead, each man sewed up in his hammock with a 32 lb. shot, glided off the grating into the sea with a sullen

plunge; while their shipmates cried so, that the tears dripped on the deck.

With these regrets for the slain, too violent to last, was mingled a gloomy fear that Death had a heavier blow in store. The surgeon's report of Captain Dodd was most alarming; he had become delirious about midnight; and so continued.

Sharpe commanded the ship; and the rough sailors stepped like cats over that part of the deck, beneath which their unconscious captain lay. If two men met on the quarter deck, a look of anxious, but not hopeful, inquiry was sure to pass between them.

Among the constant inquirers was Ramgolam. The grave Hindoo often waylaid the surgeon at the captain's door, to get the first intelligence. This marked sympathy with a hero in extremity was hardly expected from a sage, who at the first note of war's trumpet had vanished in a meal-bag. However, it went down to his credit. One person, however, took a dark view of this innocent circumstance. But then that hostile critic was Vespasian, a rival in matters of tint. He exploded in one of those droll rages darkies seem liable to: "Massa cunnel," said he, "what for dat yar niggar always prowling about the capn's door? What for he ask so many stupid questions? Dat ole fox arter no good: him heart so black as um skin: dam ole niggar!"

Fullalove suggested slily that a person with a dark skin might have a grateful heart: and the colonel, who dealt little in inuendo, said, "Come, don't you be so hard on jet; you ebony!"

"Bery well, gemmen," replied Vespasian, ceremoniously, and with seeming acquiescence. Then, with sudden ire, "Because Goramighty made you white, you tink you bery wise without any more trouble. Dat ar niggar am an abommable egotisk."

"Pray what does that mean?" inquired Kenealy, innocently.

"What him mean? what him mean? Yah! yah!"

"Yes. What does it mean?"

"What him mean? Yah! What dinn't you hear Missy Besford miscal him an abommable egotisk?"

"Yes," said Fullalove, winking to Kenealy; "but we don't know what it means. Do you, sir?"

"Iss, sar. Dat are expression he signify a darned old cuss dat says to dis child, 'My lord Vespasium, take benevolence on your insidious slave, and invest me in a bread-bag, instead of fighting for de ladies like a freenindependum citizen. Now you two go fast asleep; dis child he shut one eye and open de oder bery wide open on dat ar niggar." And with this mysterious threat he stalked away.

His contempt for a black skin, his ebullitions of unexpected ire, his turgid pomposity, and love of long terms, may make the reader smile; but they could hardly amuse his friends just then; everything that touched upon Dodd was too serious now. The surgeon sat up with him nearly all night: in the daytime those two friends sat for hours in his cabin, watching sadly, and silently moistening his burning brow and his parched lips.

At length, one afternoon, there came a crisis, which took an unfavourable turn. Then the surgeon, speaking confidentially to these two staunch friends, inquired if they had asked themselves what should be

done with the body? "Why I ask," "said he, "we are in a very hot latitude; and, if you wish to convey it to Barkington, the measures ought to be taken in time: in fact, within an hour or two after death."

The poor friends were shocked and sickened by this horrible piece of foresight. But Colonel Kenealy said with tears in his eyes that his old friend should never be buried like a kitten.

"Then you had better ask Sharpe to give me an order for a barrel of spirits," said the surgeon.

"Yes, yes, for two if you like. O don't die, Dodd, my poor old fellow. How shall I ever face his wife—I remember her, the loveliest girl you ever saw—with such a tale as this? She will think it a cruel thing I should come out of it without a scratch, and a ten times better man to be dead: and so it is; it is cruel, it is unjust, it is monstrous; him to be lying there, and we muffs to be sitting croaking over him and watching for his last breath like three cursed old ravens." And the stout colonel groaned aloud.

When the surgeon left them, they fell naturally upon another topic: the pledge they had given Dodd about the 14,000*l*. They ascertained it was upon him: next his skin: but it seemed as unnecessary as it was repugnant, to remove it from his living person. They agreed, however, that instantly on his decease they would take possession of it, note the particulars, seal it up, and carry it to Mrs. Dodd, with such comfort as they could hope to give her by relating the gallant act in which his precious life was lost.

At nine P.M. the surgeon took his place by Dodd's bedside; and the pair, whom, one thing after another had drawn so close together, retired to Kenealy's cabin.

Many a merry chat they had had there: and many a gasconade, being rival hunters: but now, they were together for physical companionship in sorrow, rather than for conversation. They smoked their cigars in moody silence; and at midnight shook hands with a sigh, and parted. That sigh meant to say that in the morning all would be over.

They turned in: but, ere either of them was asleep, suddenly the captain's cabin seemed to fill with roars and shrieks of wild beasts, that made the whole ship ring in the silent night; the savage cries were answered on deck by shouts of dismay and many pattering feet making for the companion ladder: but the nearest persons to the cabin, and the first to reach it, were Kenealy and Fullalove, who burst in, the former with a drawn sword, the latter with a revolver; both in their nightgowns; and there saw a sight that took their breath away.

The surgeon was not there: and two black men, one with a knife, and one with his bare claws, were fighting, and struggling, and trampling all over the cabin at once, and the dying man sitting up in his cot, pale, and glaring at them.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE two supple dusky forms went whirling so fast, there was no grasping them to part them. But presently the negro seized the Hindoo by the throat; the Hindoo just pricked him in the arm with his knife, and the next moment his own head was driven against the side of the cabin

with a stunning crack; and there he was, pinned, and wriggling, and bluish with fright, whereas the other swart face close against his was dark-grey with rage, and its two fireballs of eyes rolled fearfully, as none but African eyes can roll.

Fullalove pacified him by voice and touch: he withdrew his iron grasp with sullen and lingering reluctance, and glared like a disappointed mastiff. The cabin was now full, and Sharpe was for putting both the blacks in irons. No splitter of hairs was he. But Fullalove suggested there might be a moral distinction between things that looked equally dark to the eye.

"Well, then, speak quick, both of you," said Sharpe, "or I'll lay ye both by the heels. Ye black scoundrels, what business have *you* in the captain's cabin, kicking up the devil's delight?"

Thus threatened, Vespasian panted out his tale; he had discovered this nigger, as he persisted in calling the Hindoo, eternally prowling about the good captain's door, and asking stupid questions: he had watched him, and, on the surgeon coming out with the good news that the captain was better, in had crawled "this yar abommable egotisk." And he raised a ponderous fist to point the polysyllables: with this aid the sarcasm would doubtless have been crushing: but Fullalove hung on the sable orator's arm, and told him drily to try and speak without gesticulating. "The darned old cuss," said Vespasian, with a pathetic sigh at not being let hit him. He resumed; and told how he had followed the Hindoo, stealthily, and found him with a knife uplifted over the captain—a tremor ran through all present—robbing him. At this a loud murmur filled the room; a very ugly one, the sort of snarl with which dogs fly at dogs' throats with their teeth, and men fly at men's throats with a cord.

"Be quiet," said Sharpe, imperiously. "I'll have no lynching in a vessel I command. Now then, you sir, how do you know he was robbing the captain?"

"How do I know! Yah! yah! Cap'n, if you please you tell dis unskeptical gemman whether you don't miss a lilly book out of your bosom!"

During this extraordinary scene, Dodd had been looking from one speaker to another in great surprise and some confusion: but, at the negro's direct appeal, his hand went to his breast and clutched it with a feeble but heartrending cry.

"Oh, him not gone far. Yah! yah!" and Vespasian stooped, and took up an oilskin packet off the floor; and laid it on the bed: "dis child seen him in dat ar niggar's hand: and heard him go whack on de floor."

Dodd hurried the packet into his bosom, then turned all gratitude to his sable friend: "Now God bless you! God bless you! Give me your honest hand! You don't know what you have done for me and mine."

And, sick as he was, he wrung Vespasian's hand with convulsive strength, and would not part with it. Vespasian patted him soothingly all over, and whimpered out: "Nebber you mind, cap'n! You bery good man: dis child bery fond of you a long time ago. You bery good man, outrageous good man, dam good man! I propose your health: invalass directly!"

While Dodd was speaking, the others were silent out of respect: but now Sharpe broke in, and, with the national desire to hear both sides, called on Ramgolam for his version. The Hindoo was now standing with his arms crossed on his breast, looking all the martyr, meek and dignified. He inquired of Sharpe, in very broken English, whether he spoke Hindostanee?

"Not I: nor don't act it neither," said Sharpe.

At this confession Ramgolam looked down on him with pity and mild contempt.

Mr. Tickell was put forward as interpreter.

*Ramgolam* (*in Hindostanee*). He, whom Destiny, too strong for mortals, now oppresses with iron hand, and feeds with the bread of affliction——

*Mr. Tickell* (*translating*). He, who by bad luck has got into trouble——

*Ramgolam.* Has long observed the virtues that embellish the commander of this ship resembling a mountain, and desired to imitate them——

*Tickell.* Saw what a good man the captain is, and wanted to be like him——

*Vespasian.* The darned old cuss.

*Ramgolam.* Seeing him often convey his hand to his bosom, I ascribed his unparalleled excellence to the possession of some sovereign talisman. (Tickell managed to translate this sentence all but the word talisman, which he rendered—with all a translator's caution—"article.") Finding him about to depart to the regions of the blessed, where such auxiliaries are not needed, and being eager to emulate his perfections here below, I came softly to the place where he lay——

*Tickell.* When I saw him going to slip his cable, I wanted to be as good a fellow as he is, so I crept alongside——

*Ramgolam.* And gently, and without force, made myself proprietor of the amulet, and inheritor of a good man's qualities——

*Tickell.* And quietly boned the article, and the captain's virtues. I don't know what the beggar means.

*Ramgolam.* Then a traitor with a dark skin, but darker soul——

*Tickell.* Then another black hearted-nigger——

*Ramgolam.* Came furiously and misappropriated the charm thus piously obtained——

*Tickell.* Ran in and stole it from me.

*Ramgolam.* And bereft me of the excellences I was inheriting: and——

Here Sharpe interrupted the dialogue by putting the misappropriator of other men's virtues in irons: and the surgeon insisted on the cabin being cleared. But Dodd would not part with the three friends yet; he begged them to watch him, and see nobody else came to take his children's fortune.

"I'll sink or swim with it: but, oh, I doubt we shall have no luck while it is aboard me. I never had a Pirate alongside before, in all those years. What is this?—here's something *in* it now; something hard—something heavy: and—why, it is a bullet!"

On this announcement, an eager inspection took place: and, sure

enough, a bullet had passed through Dodd's coat, and waistcoat, &c., and through the oilskin, and the leather pocket-book, and just dented the "Hard Cash;" no more.

There was a shower of comments and congratulations.

The effect of this discovery on the sick man's spirits was remarkable. "I was a villain to belie it," said he. "It is my wife's, and my children's; and it has saved my life for them."

He kissed it, and placed it in his bosom, and soon after sunk into a peaceful slumber. The excitement had not the ill effect the surgeon feared: it somewhat exhausted him; and he slept long: but, on awakening, was pronounced out of danger. To tell the truth, the tide had turned in his favour overnight; and it was to convey the good news on deck the surgeon had left him.

While Dodd was recovering, the Agra was beating westward, with light but contrary winds: and a good month elapsed without any incident affecting the Hard Cash, whose singular adventures I have to record. In this dearth please put up with a little characteristic trifle, which did happen one moonlight night. Mr. Fullalove lay coiled below decks in deep abstraction meditating a patent: and, being in shadow and silent, he saw Vespasian in the moonlight creeping on all fours like a guilty thing into the bedroom of Colonel Kenealy, then fast asleep. A horrible suspicion thrilled through Fullalove: a suspicion he waited grimly to verify.

The transatlantic Mixture, Fullalove, was not merely an inventor a philanthrope a warrior a preacher a hunter a swimmer a fiddler a sharp fellow a good fellow a Puritan and a Bohemian; he was also a Theorist: and his Theory, which dub we

THE AFRICAN THEORY,

had two branches. 1. That the races of men started equal: but accident upon accident had walked some tribes up a ladder of civilisation, and kicked others down it, and left others standing at the foot.

2. That the good work of centuries could be done, at a pinch, in a few generations, by artificial condensation of the favourable circumstances. For instance, secure this worker in Ebony 150 years' life, and he would sign a penal bond to produce Negroes of the fourth descent equal in mind to the best contemporary white. "You can breed Brains," said he, "under any skin, as inevitably as Fat. It takes time and the right crosses; but so does Fat; or ratther it did; for Fat is an institution now." And here our Republican must have a slap at thrones. "Compare," said he, "the opportunities of these distinguished Gentlemen and Ladies with their acts. Their seats have been high, but their minds low, I swan. They have been breeders for ages: and known the two rudiments of the science; have crossed and crossed for grenadiers, race-horses, poultry, and prize bullocks; and bred in and in for fools; but which of them has ever aspired to breed a Newton, a Pascal, a Shakespeare, a Solon, a Raphael? Yet all these were results to be obtained by the right crosses, as surely as a swift horse or a circular sow. Now fancy breeding short-horns when you might breed long heads." So

Vespasian was to engender Young Africa; he was to be first elevated morally and intellectually as high as he would go, and, then set to breed; his partner, of course to be elected by Fullalove, and educated as high as she would consent to without an illicit connexion with the Experimentalist. He would be down on their Pickaninnies before the parents could transfer the remnant of their own weaknesses to them, polysyllables included; and would polish these ebony chips: and, at the next cross, reckoned to rear a genius, by which time as near as he could calculate, he the Theorist would be in his dotage: and all the better; make a curious contrast, in favour of young Africa.

Vespasian could not hit a barn door sitting—with a rifle: it was purely with a view to his moral improvement, mind you, that Fullalove invited him into the mizentop to fight the Pirate. The Patient came gingerly and shivered there with fear. But five minutes elapsing, and he not killed, that weakness gave way to a jocund recklessness; and he kept them all gay with his quaint remarks, of which I must record but one. When they crossed the stern of the Pirate, the distance was so small that the faces of that motley crew were plainly visible: now, Vespasian was a merciless critic of coloured skins; "Wal," said he, turning up his nose sky high, "dis child never seen such a mixallaneous biling o' darkies as this yar; why darned ef there ain't every colour in the rainbow; from the ace of spades down to the fine dissolving views." This amazing description, coupled with his look of affront and disgust, made the white men roar; for men fighting for their lives have a greater tendency to laugh than one would think possible. Fullalove was proud of the critic, and for a while lost sight of the Pirate in his theory; which also may seem strange. But your true theorist is a man apart: he can withdraw into himself under difficulties. "What said one of the breed two thousand years ago?

Media inter prælia semper
Sideribus cœlique plagis Superisque vacavi.

Oh the great African heart!" said Fullalove after the battle. "By my side he fears no danger. Of all men negroes are the most capable of friendship; their affection is a mine: and we have only worked it with the lash; and that is a ridicalous mining tool I ratther think."

When Vespasian came out so strong versus Ramgolam, Fullalove was even more triumphant: for after all it is not so much the heart as the intelligence of the negro we albiculi affect to doubt.

"Oh, the great African intellect!" said Fullalove, publicly, taking the bull by the horns.

"I know," said Mrs. Beresford, maliciously; "it is down in the maps as the great African Desert."

To balance his many excellencies Vespasian had an infirmity. This was, an ungovernable itch for brushing whites. If he was talking with one of that always admired, and now beloved, race, and saw a speck of dirt on him, he would brush him unobtrusively, but effectually, in full dialogue: he would steal behind a knot of whites and brush whoever needed it, however little. Fullalove remonstrated, but in vain; on this one point Instinct would not yield to Reason. He could not keep his hands off a dusty white. He would have died of the miller of Dee.

But the worst was he did not stop at clothes; he loathed ill-blacked shoes: woe to all foot-leather that did not shine; his own skin furnished a perilous standard of comparison. He was eternally blacking boots en amateur. Fullalove got in a rage at this, and insisted on his letting his fellow-creatures' leather alone. Vespasian pleaded hard, especially for leave to black Colonel Kenealy. "The cunnell," said he, pathetically, "is such a tarnation fine gentleman spoilt for want of a lilly bit of blacking." Fullalove replied that the colonel had got a servant whose mission it was to black his shoes. This simply amused Vespasian. "A servant?" said he. "Yah! yah! What is the use of white servants? They are not biddable. Massa Fullalove, sar, Goramighty he reared all white man to kick up a dust, white servants inspecially, and the darkies to brush 'em; and likewise additionally to make their boots shine, a lilly bit." He concluded with a dark hint that the colonel's white servant's own shoes, though better blacked than his master's, were anything but mirrors, and that this child had his eye on them.

The black desperado emerged on tiptoe from Kenealy's cabin, just as Macbeth does from the murdered Duncan's chamber: only with a pair of boots in his hand instead of a pair of daggers; got into the moonlight, and finding himself uninterrupted, assumed the whistle of innocence, and polished them to the nine, chuckling audibly.

Fullalove watched him with an eye like a rattlesnake: but kept quiet. He saw interference would only demoralise him worse: for it is more ignoble to black boots clandestinely, than bravely: men ditto.

He relieved his heart with idioms. "Darn the critter; he's fixed my flint eternally. Now I cave. I swan to man I may just hang up my fiddle: for this darkie's too hard a row to hoe."

It was but a momentary dejection. The Mixture was (inter alia) a Theorist and an Anglo-Saxon; two indomitables. He concluded to temporise with the Brush; and breed it out.

"I'm bound to cross the obsequious cuss with the catawamptiousest gal in Guinea: and one that never saw a blacking bottle, not even in a dream." Majora canamus.

Being now about a hundred miles South of the Mauritius, in fine weather with a light breeze, Dodd's marine barometer began to fall steadily: and by the afternoon the declension had become so remarkable, that he felt uneasy, and somewhat to the surprise of the crew,—for there was now scarce a breath of air,—furled his slight sails, treble reefed his topsails, had his top-gallant, and royal, yards, and gaff topsail, sent on deck, got his flying jib boom in, &c., and made the ship snug.

Kenealy asked him what was the matter?

"Barometer going down; moon at the full; and Jonah aboard," was the reply, uttered doggedly.

Kenealy assured him it was a beautiful evening, precursor of a fine day. "See how red the sunset is:

> Evening red and morning grey
> Are the sure signs of a fine day."

Dodd looked, and shook his head. The sun was red: but the wrong red: an angry red: and, as he dipped into the wave, discharged a lurid

coppery hue that rusned in a moment like an embodied menace over the entire heavens. The wind ceased altogether: and in the middle of an unnatural and suspicious calm the glass went down, down, down.

The moon rose: and instantly all eyes were bent on her with suspicion; for in this latitude the hurricanes generally come at the full moon. She was tolerably clear, however; but a light scud sailing across her disc showed there was wind in the upper regions.

Dodd trusted to science; barred the lee-ports, and had the dead lights put into the stern cabin and secured: then turned in for an hour's sleep.

Science proved a prophet. Just at seven bells, in one moment, like a thunderbolt from the sky, a heavy squall struck the ship. Under a less careful captain her lee-ports would have been open, and she might have gone to the bottom like a bullet.

"Let go the main sheet!" roared Sharpe, hastily, to a hand he had placed there on purpose: he let go, and there was the sail flapping like thunder, and the sheet lashing everything in the most dangerous way. Dodd was on deck in a moment. "Helm hard up! Hands shorten sail!"

(Pipe.) "All hands furl sail, ahoy!"

Up tumbled the crew, went cheerily to work, and by three bells in the middle watch, had hauled up what was left of the shivered mainsail, and hove the ship to, under close-reefed main topsail and storm stay sails: and so the voyage was suspended.

A heavy sea got up under a scourging wind that rose and rose, till the Agra, under the pressure of that single sail treble reefed, heeled over so as to dip her lee channels. This went on till the waves rolled so high, and the squalls were so bitter, that sheets of water were actually torn off their crests and launched incessantly on deck, not only drenching Dodd and his officers, which they did not mind, but threatening to flood the ship.

Dodd battened down the hatches, and stopped that game.

Then came a danger no skill could avert: the ship lurched so violently now, as not merely to dip, but bury, her lower deck port-pendants: and so a good deal of water found ingress through the windage. Then Dodd set a gang to the pumps: for he said: "We can hardly hope to weather this out without shipping a sea: and I won't have water coming in upon water."

And now the wind, raging and roaring like discharges of artillery, and not like wind as known in our seas, seemed to have put out all the lights of heaven. The sky was inky black, and quite close to their heads: and the wind still increasing, the vessel came down to her extreme bearings, and it was plain she would soon be on her beam ends. Sharpe and Dodd met, and holding on by the life-lines, applied their speaking trumpets tight to each other's ears; and even then they had to bawl.

"She can't carry a rag much longer."

"No, sir; not half an hour."

"Can we furl that main taupsle?"

Sharpe shook his head. "The first moment we start a sheet, the sail will whip the mast out of her."

"You are right. Well then, I'll cut it away."

"Volunteers, sir?"

"Ay, twelve: no more. Send them to my cabin."

Sharpe's difficulty was to keep the men back, so eager were the fine fellows to risk their lives. However, he brought twelve to the cabin, headed by Mr. Grey, who had a right, as captain of the watch, to go with them; on which right he insisted in spite of Dodd's earnest request that he would forego it. When Dodd saw his resolution, he dropped the friend, and resumed the captain; and spoke to them through a trumpet; the first time he had ever used one in a cabin or seen one used.

"Mr. Grey, and men, going aloft to save the mainmast, by cutting the sail away."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Service of danger, great danger!"

"Hurrah!"

"But great dangers can be made smaller by working the right way. Attend! Lay out all on the yard, and take your time from one; man at the lee yard arm: don't know who that will be; but one of the smartest men in the ship. Order to *him* is: hold his knife hand well up; rest to see! and then in knives altogether: mind and cut from you, and below the reef band; and then I hope to see all come down alive."

Mr. Grey and his twelve men left the cabin: and hey! for the main top. The men let the officer lead them as far as Jacob's ladder, and then hurrah for the lee yard arm! That was where all wanted to be, and but one could be: Grey was as anxious as the rest; but officers of his rank seldom go aloft, and soon fall out of their catlike habits. He had done about six ratlines, when instead of going hand over head, he spread his arms to seize a shroud on each side of him: by this he weakened his leverage, and the wind just then came fiercer, caught him, and flattened him against the rigging as tight as if Nature had caught up a mountain for a hammer and nailed him with a cedar; he was spread-eagled. The men accepted him at once as a new patent ratline with a fine resisting power: they went up him, and bounded three ordinary ratlines at a go off all his promontories, especially his shoulders, and his head, receiving his compliments in the shape of hearty curses: they gained the top and lay out on the yard with their hair flying like streamers: and who got the place of honour, but Thompson, the jolly fore-topman, who couldn't stand smoked pea soup. So strong and so weak are men.

Thompson raised his knife high; there was a pause: then in went all their knives, and away went the sail into the night of the storm, and soon seemed a sheet of writing-paper and more likely to hit the sky than the sea. The men came down, picked their officer off the rigging, had a dram in the captain's cabin, and saw him enter their names in the log-book for good-service, and in the purser's for extra grog on Sundays from there to Gravesend.

The ship was relieved; and all looked well, till the chronometer, their only guide now, announced sunset: when the wind, incredible as it may appear, increased, and one frightful squall dipped the muzzles of the lee carronades in the water

Then was heard the first cry of distress: an appalling sound; the wail of brave men. And they had borne it all so bravely, so cheerfully, till now. But now they knew something must go, or else the ship; the suspense was awful, but very short. Crack! crash! the fore and main topmast both gone short off by the caps; and the ship recovered slowly, hesitatingly, tremblingly.

Relieving her from one danger this subjected her to another and a terrible one. The heavy spars that had fallen, unable to break loose from the rigging, pounded the ship so savagely as to threaten to stave in her side. Add to this that with labouring so long and severely some of the ship's seams began now to open and shut and discharge the oakum, which is terrible to the bravest seamen. Yet neither this stout captain nor his crew shirked any danger men had ever grappled with since men were; Dodd ordered them to cut away the wreck to leeward: it was done: then to windward: this, the more ticklish operation, was also done smartly: the wreck passed under the ship's quarter, and she drifted clear of it. They breathed again.

At eight bells in the first watch it began to thunder and lighten furiously; but the thunder, though close, was quite inaudible in the tremendous uproar of the wind and sea. It blew a hurricane: there were no more squalls now; but one continuous tornado, which in its passage through that great gaunt skeleton, the ship's rigging and bare poles, howled and yelled and roared so terrifically, as would have silenced a salvo of artillery fired alongside. The overwhelming sea ran in dark watery mountains crested with devilish fire. The inky blackness added supernatural horror; the wrath of the Almighty seemed upon them: and His hand to drop the black sky down on them for their funeral pall. Surely Noah from his ark saw nothing more terrible.

What is that? close on the lee bow: close: the flash of a gun: another; another; another. A ship in distress firing minute guns in their ears; yet no sound: human thunder silenced, as God's thunder was silenced, by the uproar of his greater creatures in their mad rage. The Agra fired two minute guns to let the other poor ship know she had a companion in her helplessness, and her distress; and probably a companion in her fate. Even this companionship added its mite of danger: for both ships were mere playthings of the elements; they might be tossed together; and then, what would be their fate? Two eggs clashed together in a great boiling caldron, and all the life spilt out.

Yet did each flash shoot a ray of humanity and sympathy into the thick black supernatural horror.

And now came calamity upon calamity. A tremendous sea broke the tiller at the rudderhead, and not only was the ship in danger of falling off and shipping the sea; but the rudder hammered her awfully, and bade fair to stave in her counter, which is another word for Destruction. Thus death came at them with two hands open at once.

These vessels always carry a spare tiller: they tried to ship it; but the difficulty was prodigious. No light but the miserable deck-lantern (one glowworm in Egypt supernaturally darkened—the Agra never on an even keel, and heeling over like a seesaw more than a ship; and then every time they did place the tiller, and get the strain on with their luff tackles, the awful sea gave it a blow and knocked it away like a hair.

At last they hit it off, or thought they had, for the ponderous thumps of the rudder ceased entirely. However, the ship did not obey this new tiller like the old one: her head fell off in an unlucky moment when seven waves were rolling in one, and, on coming to the windward again, she shipped a sea. It came in over her bow transversely; broke as high as the mainstay, and hid and buried the whole ship before the mast: carried away the waist bulwarks on both sides, filled the launch, and drowned the live stock which were in it: swept four water-butts and three men away into the sea, like corns and straws; and sent tons of water down the forescuttle and main hatchway, which was partly opened not to stifle the crew; and flooded the gun deck ankle deep.

Dodd, who was in his cabin, sent the whole crew to the pumps, except the men at the wheel; and prepared for the worst.

In men so brave as he was, when Hope dies, Fear dies. His chief care now was to separate the fate of those he loved from his own. He took a bottle, inserted the fatal money in it, with a few words of love to his wife, and of direction to any stranger that should fall in with it: secured the cork with melted sealing-wax, tied oilskin over it and melted wax on that; applied a preparation to the glass to close the pores: and to protect it against other accidents, and attract attention, fastened a black painted bladder to it by a stout tarred twine, and painted "Agra, lost at sea," in white on the bladder. He had logged each main incident of the storm with that curt, business-like accuracy which reads so cold and small a record of these great and terrible tragedies. He now made a final entry a little more in character with the situation: "About eight bells in the morning watch shipped a heavy sea forward. The rudder being now damaged, and the ship hardly manageable, brought the log and case on deck, expecting to founder shortly. Sun and moon hidden this two days, and no observation possible; but by calculation of wind and current, we should be about fifty miles to the southward of the Mauritius. God's will be done."

He got on deck with the bottle in his pocket, and the bladder peeping out: put the log, and its case, down on deck, and by means of the life-lines crawled along on his knees, and with great difficulty to the wheel. Finding the men could hardly hold on, and dreading another sea, Dodd, with his own hands, lashed them to the helm.

While thus employed, he felt the ship give a slight roll, a very slight roll to windward. His experienced eye lightened with hope, he cast his eager glance to leeward. There it is a sailor looks for the first spark of hope. Ay, thereaway was a little, little gleam of light. He patted the helmsman on the shoulder and pointed to it; for now neither could one man speak for the wind, nor another hear. The sailor nodded joyfully.

Presently the continuous tornado broke into squalls.

Hope grew brighter.

But, unfortunately, in one furious squall the ship broke round off so as to present her quarter to the sea at an unlucky moment: for it came seven deep again, a roaring mountain, and hurled itself over her stern and quarter. The mighty mass struck her stern frame with the weight of a hundred thousand tons of water, and drove her forward as a boy launches his toy-boat on a pond; and, though she made so little resistance, stove in the dead lights and the port frames, burst through the

cabin bulkheads, and washed out all the furniture, and Colonel Kenealy in his nightgown with a table in his arms borne on water three feet deep; and carried him under the poop awning away to the lee quarter-deck scuppers; and flooded the lower deck. Above, it swept the quarter-deck clean of everything except the shrieking helmsmen; washed Dodd away like a cork, and would have carried him overboard if he had not brought up against the mainmast and grasped it like grim death, half drowned, half stunned, sorely bruised, and gasping like a porpoise ashore.

He held on by the mast in water and foam, panting. He rolled his despairing eyes around: the bulwarks fore and aft were all in ruins, with wide chasms, as between the battlements of some decayed castle: and through the gaps he saw the sea yawning wide for him. He dare not move: no man was safe a moment unless lashed to mast or helm. He held on, expecting death. But presently it struck him he could see much farther than before. He looked up: it was clearing overhead; and the uproar abating visibly. And now the wind did not decline as after a gale; extraordinary to the last, it blew itself out.

Sharpe came on deck, and crawled on all fours to his captain, and helped him to a life-line. He held on by it, and gave his orders. The wind was blown out; but the sea was as dangerous as ever. The ship began to roll to windward. If that was not stopped, her fate was sealed. Dodd had the main trysail set, and then the fore trysail, before he would yield to go below, though drenched, and sore, and hungry, and worn out. Those sails steadied the ship; the sea began to go down by degrees; the celestial part of nature was more generous: away flew every cloud, out came the heavenly sky bluer and lovelier than ever they had seen it: the sun flamed in its centre. Nature, after three days' eclipse, was so lovely, it seemed a new heavens and a new earth. If there was an infidel on board who did not believe in God, now his soul felt Him, in spite of the poor little head: as for Dodd, who was naturally pious, he raised his eyes towards that lovely sky in heartfelt, though silent, gratitude to its Maker for saving the ship and cargo and her people's lives, not forgetting the private treasure he was carrying home to his dear wife and children.

With this thought, he naturally looked down; but missed the bladder that had lately protruded from his pocket; he clapped his hand to his pocket all in a flutter. The bottle was gone. In a fever of alarm and anxiety, but with good hopes of finding it, he searched the deck: he looked in every cranny, behind every coil of rope the sea had not carried away.

In vain.

The sea, acting on the buoyant bladder attached, had clearly torn the bottle out of his pocket, when it washed him against the mast. His treasure then must have been driven much farther: and how far? Who could tell?

It flashed on the poor man with fearful distinctness that it must either have been picked up by somebody in the ship ere now, or else carried out to sea.

Strict inquiry was made amongst the men.

No one had seen it

The fruit of his toil and prudence, the treasure Love, not Avarice, had twined with his heartstrings; was gone. In its defence he had defeated two pirates, each his superior in force; and now conquered the elements at their maddest. And in the very moment of that great victory—It was gone.

## CHAPTER XII.

In the narrative of home events I skipped a little business, not quite colourless, but irrelevant to the love passages then on hand. It has however a connexion with the curious events now converging to a point: so, with the reader's permission, I will place it in logical sequence, disregarding the order of time. The day Dr. Sampson splashed among the ducks and, one of them hid till dinner, the rest were seated at luncheon, when two patients were announced as waiting—Mr. and Mrs. Maxley. Sampson refused to see them, on this ground: "I will not feed and heal." But Mrs. Dodd interceded, and he yielded. "Well, then, show them in here; they are better cracters than pashints." On this, a stout fresh-coloured woman, the picture of health, was ushered in, and curtseyed all round. "Well, what is the matter now?" inquired Sampson, rather roughly. "Be seated, Mrs. Maxley," said Mrs. Dodd, benignly.

"I thank ye kindly, ma'am;" and she sat down. "Doctor, it is that pain."

"Well, don't say 'that pain.' Describe it. Now listen all of ye; ye're goen' to get a clinical lecture."

"If *you* please, ma'am," said the patient, "it takes me here under my left breest, and runs right to my elbow, it do: and bitter bad 'tis while it do last; chokes me, mostly; and I feel as I *must* die: and if I was to move hand or fut, I think I *should* die, that I do."

"Poor woman," said Mrs. Dodd.

"Oh, she isn't dead yet," cried Sampson cheerfully. "She'll sell addled eggs over all our tombstones: that is to say, if she minds what I bid her. When was your last spasm?"

"No longer agone than yestereen, ma'am; and so I said to my master, 'The doctor he is due to-morrow Sally up at Albion tells me; and——'"

"Whisht! whisht! who cares what you said to Jack, and Jill said to you? What was the cause?"

"The cause! What, of my pain? He says, 'What was the cause?'"

"Ay, the cause. Just obsairve, jintlemen," said Sampson, addressing imaginary students, "how startled they all are if a docker deviates from profissional habits into sceince, and takes the right eend of the stick for once b' asking for the cause."

"The cause was the will of God, I do suppose," said Mrs. Maxley.

"Stuff!" shouted Sampson, angrily. "Then why come to mortal me to cure you?"

Alfred put in his oar. "He does not mean the 'final cause;' he means the 'proximate cause.'"

"My poor dear creature, I baint no Latiner," objected the patient.

Sampson fixed his eyes sternly on the slippery dame. "What I want to know is, had you been running up-stairs? or eating fast? or drink-

ing fast? or grizzling over twopence? or quarrelling your husband? Come now, which was it?'"

"Me quarrel with my man! We haven't never been disagreeable, not once, since we went to church a pair and came back a couple. I don't say but what we mayn't have had a word or two at odd times, as married folk will."

"And the last time you had a word or two—y' infairnal quibbler—was it just before your last spasm, eh?"

"Well, it might; I am not gainsaying that: but you said quarrel, says you; 'quarrel' it were your word; and I defy all Barkton, gentle and simple, to say as how me and my master——"

"Whisht! whisht! Now jintlemen, ye see what the great coming sceince—the sceince of Healing—has to contind with. The dox are all fools; but one: and the pashints are lyres, ivery man Jack. N' listen me; y' have got a disease that you can't eradicate; but you may muzzle it for years, and die of something quite different when your time's up."

"Like enough, sir. If *you* please, ma'am, Dr. Stephenson do blame my indigestion for it."

"Dr. Stephenson's an ass."

"Dear heart, how cantankerous you be. To be sure Dr. Osmond he says no: it's muscular, says he."

"Dr. Osmond's an ijjit. List *me;* You mustn't grizzle about money; you mustn't gobble, nor drink your beer too fast."

"You are wrong, doctor; I never drink no beer: it costs."

"Your catlap, then. And, above all, no grizzling! Go to church whenever you can without losing a farthing. It's medicinal; soothes the brain, and takes it off worldly cares. And have no words with your husband: or he'll outlive you; it's his only chance of getting the last word. Care killed a cat, a nanimal with eight lives more than a chatterbox. If you worry or excite your brain, little Maxley, you will cook your own goose—by a quick fire."

"Dear heart, these be unked sayings. Won't ye give me nothing to make me better, sir?"

"No; I never tinker; I go to the root: you may buy a vile of chlorofm and take a puff if you feel premonory symps: but a quite brain is your only real chance. Now slope; and send the male screw."

"Anan?"

"Your husband."

"That I will, sir. Your sarvant, doctor; your sarvant ma'am; sarvant all the company."

Mrs. Dodd hoped the poor woman had nothing very serious the matter.

"Oh, it is a mortal disease," replied Sampson, as cool as a cucumber. "She has got angina pictoris, or brist-pang, a disorder that admirably eximplifies the pretinsions of midicine t' a sceince." And with this he dashed into monologue.

Maxley's tall gaunt form came slouching in, and traversed the floor, pounding it with heavy nailed boots. He seated himself gravely at Mrs. Dodd's invitation, took a handkerchief out of his hat, wiped his face, and surveyed the company, grand and calm. In James Maxley all was ponderous; his head was huge; his mouth, when it fairly opened, revealed

a chasm, and thence issued a voice naturally stentorian by its volume and native vigour. But, when the owner of this incarnate bassoon had a mind to say something sagacious, he sank at once from his habitual roar to a sound scarce above a whisper; a contrast mighty comical to hear, though on paper nil.

"Well, what is it, Maxley? Rheumatism again?"

"No, that it ain't," bellowed Maxley, defiantly.

"What then? Come, look sharp."

"Well, then, doctor, I'll tell you. I'm sore troubled — with — a — mouse."

This malady, announced in the tone of a proclamation, and coming after so much solemn preparation, amused the party considerably, although parturient mountains had ere then produced muscipular abortions.

"A mouse!" inquired Sampson, disdainfully. "Where? up your sleeve? Don't come to me: go t' a sawbones and have your arm cut off. I've seen 'em mutilate a pashint for as little."

Maxley said it was not up his sleeve, worse luck.

On this, Alfred hazarded a conjecture. Might it not have gone down his throat? "Took his potato-trap for the pantry-door. Ha! ha!"

"Ay, I hear ye, young man, a laughing at your own sport," said Maxley, winking his eye; "but 'tain't the biggest mouth as catches the most: you sits yander fit to bust: but (with a roar like a lion) ye never offers *me* none on't, neither sup nor bit."

At this sudden turn of Mr. Maxley's wit, light and playful as a tap of the old English quarter-staff, they were a little staggered, all but Edward, who laughed and supplied him zealously with sandwiches.

"You're a gentleman, you are," said Maxley, looking full at Sampson and Alfred to point the contradistinction.

Having thus disposed of his satirists, he contemplated the sandwiches with an inquiring and philosophic eye. "Well," said he, after long and thoughtful inspection, "you gentlefolks won't die of hard work; your sarvants must cut the very meat to fit your mouths." And not to fall behind the gentry in a great and useful department of intelligence, he made precisely one mouthful of each sandwich.

Mrs. Dodd was secretly amazed, and taking care not to be noticed by Maxley, said confidentially, "Monsieur avait bien raison; le souris a passé par là."

The plate cleared, and washed down with a tumbler of port, Maxley resumed, and informed the doctor that the mouse was at this moment in his garden eating his bulbs. "And I be come here to put an end to her, if I've any luck at all."

Sampson told him he needn't trouble. "Nature has put an end to her as long as her body."

Mr. Maxley was puzzled for a moment; then opened his mouth from ear to ear in a guffaw that made the glasses ring. His humour was perverse: he was wit-proof and fun-proof; but at a feeble jest would sometimes roar like a lion inflated with laughing-gas. Laughed he ever so loud and long, he always ended abruptly and without gradation; his laugh was a clean spadeful dug out of Merriment. He resumed his gravity and his theme all in an instant, "White arsenic she won't look

at, for I've tried her; but they tell me there's another sweetmeat come up: which they call it strick-nine."

"Hets! let the poor beasty alone. Life's as sweet tit as tus."

"If *you* was a *gardener*, you'd feel for the bulbs, not for the varmin," remonstrated Maxley, rather arrogantly.

"But bein' a man of sceince, I feel for th' higher organisation. Mice are a part of Nature, as much as market-gardeners."

"So be stoats; and adders; and doctors."

Sampson appealed; "Jintlemen, here's a pretty pashint: reflects on our lairned profission, and it never cost him a guinea; for the dog never pays."

"Don't let my chaff choke ye, doctor. That warn't meant for *you* altogether. So if ye *have* got a little bit of that 'ere about you ——"

"I'm not a ratcatcher, my man: I don't go with dith in my pocket, like the surgeons that carry a lancet. And if I had Murder in both pockets, you shouldn't get any. Here's a greedy dog! got a thousand pounds in the bank; and grudges his Healer a guinea, and his mouse a stand-up bite."

"Now, who have been a telling you lies?" inquired Maxley, severely.

"My missus, for a farthing. I'm not a thousand pound man; I'm a nine hundred pound man: and it's all safe at Hardie's:" here he went from his roar to his whisper, "I don't hold with Lunnon banks; they be like my missus's eggs: all one outside, and the rotten ones only known by breaking. Well (loud) I *be* pretty close, I don't deny it; but (confidentially) my missus beats me. I look twice at a penny; but she looks twice at both sides of a halfpenny before she will let him go: and it's her being so close have raised all this here bobbery; and so I told her; says I, 'Missus,—If you would but leave an end of a dip, or a paring of cheese, about your cupboard, she would bide at home; but you hungers her so, you drives her afield right on atop o' my roots.' 'Oh,' says my missus, 'if *I* was to be as wasteful as *you* be, where should *we* be, come Christmas day? Every tub on its own bottom,' says she; 'man and wife did ought to keep theirselves *to* theirselves, she to the house, and I to the garden;' 'so be it,' says I, 'and by the same token, don't let me catch them "Ns" in my garden again, or I'll spoil their clucking and scratching,' says I, 'for I'll twist their dalled necks: ye've got a yard,' says I, 'and a roost, and likewise a turnpike, you and your poultry: so bide at home the lot; and don't come a scratching o' me. and with that we had a ripput; and she took one of her pangs; and then I behoved to knock under; and that is allus the way if ye quarrel with women folk; they are sworn to get the better of ye by hook or by crook, now dooe give me a bit of that ere, to quiet this here, as eats me up by the roots and sets my missus and me by the ears."

"Justum ac tenacem propositi virum," whispered Alfred to Edward.

Sampson told him angrily to go to a certain great personage.

"Not afore my betters," whispered Mr. Maxley, smit with a sudden respect for etiquette. "Won't ye now?"

"I'll see ye hanged first, ye miserly old assassin."

"Then I have nothing to thank *you* for," roared Maxley, and made his adieux, ignoring with marked contempt the false physician who declined to doctor the foe of his domestic peace and crocuses.

"Quite a passage of arms," said Edward.

"Yes," said Mrs. Dodd, "and of bludgeons and things, rather than the polished rapier. What expressions to fall from two highly educated gentlemen! Slope—Potato-trap—Sawbones—Catlap—je n'en finirais pas."

She then let them know that she meditated a "dictionary of jargon;" in hopes that its bulk might strike terror into honest citizens, and excite an anti-jargon league to save the English language, now on the verge of dissolution.

Sampson was pleased with this threat. "Now, that is odd," said he. "Why I am compilin a vocablary myself. I call 't th' ass-ass-ins' dick-shinary; showing how, by the use of mealy-mouthed an d'exotic phrases, knaves can lead fools by th' ear t' a vilent dith. F'r instance; if one was to say to John Bull, 'Now I'll cut a great gash in your arm and let your blood run till ye drop down senseless,' he'd take fright and say, 'Call another time!' So the profissional ass-ass-in words it thus; 'I'll bleed you from a large orifice till th' occurrence of syncope.' All right, sis John: he's bled from a lar j'orifice and dies three days after of th' ass-assin's knife hid in a sheath o' goose grease. But I'll blow the gaff with my dickshinary."

"Meantime *there* is another contribution to mine," said Mrs. Dodd.

And they agreed in the gaiety of their hearts to compare their rival Lexicons.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE subsiding sea was now a liquid Paradise: its great pellucid braes and hillocks shone with the sparkle, and the hues, of all the jewels in an emperor's crown. Imagine—after three days of inky sea, and pitchy sky, and Death's deep jaws snapping and barely missing—ten thousand great slopes of emerald, aquamarine, amethyst, and topaz, liquid, alive, and dancing jocundly beneath a gorgeous sun: and you will have a faint idea of what met the eyes and hearts of the rescued looking out of that battered, jagged, ship, upon ocean smiling back to smiling Heaven.

Yet one man felt no buoyancy, nor gush of joy. He leaned against a fragment of the broken bulwark, confused between the sweetness of life preserved, and the bitterness of treasure lost, his wife's and children's treasured treasure; benumbed at heart, and almost weary of the existence he had battled for so stoutly. He looked so moody, and answered so grimly and unlike himself, that they all held aloof from him; heavy heart among so many joyful ones, he was in true solitude; the body in a crowd, the soul alone. And he was sore as well as heavy; for of all the lubberly acts he had ever known, the way he had lost his dear ones' fortune seemed to him the worst.

A voice sounded in his ear: "Poor thing; she has foundered."

It was Fullalove scanning the horizon with his famous glass.

"Foundered? Who?" said Dodd; though he did not care much who sank, who swam. Then he remembered the vessel, whose flashing guns had shed a human ray on the unearthly horror of the black hurricane. He looked all round.

Blank!

Ay, she had perished with all hands. The sea had swallowed her, and spared him; ungrateful.

This turned his mind sharply. Suppose the Agra had gone down, the money would be lost as now, and his life into the bargain, a life dearer to all at home than millions of gold: he prayed inwardly to Heaven for gratitude, and goodness to feel its mercy. This softened him a little; and his heart swelled so, he wished he was a woman to cry over his children's loss for an hour, and then shake all off and go through his duty somehow; for now he was paralysed, and all seemed ended. Next, nautical superstition fastened on him. That pocket-book of his was Jonah; It had to go or else the ship; the moment It did go, the storm had broken as by magic.

Now Superstition is generally stronger than rational Religion, whether they lie apart, or together in one mind: and this superstitious notion did something toward steeling the poor man. "Come," said he to himself, "my loss has saved all these poor souls on board this ship. So be it! Heaven's will be done! I must bustle, or else go mad."

He turned to and worked like a horse: and with his own hands helped the men to rig parallel ropes—a substitute for bulwarks—till the perspiration ran down him.

Bayliss now reported the well nearly dry, and Dodd was about to bear up and make sail again, when one of the ship-boys, a little fellow with a bright eye and a chin like a monkey's, came up to him and said,

"Please, captain!" Then glared with awe at what he had done, and broke down.

"Well, my little man?" said Dodd, gently.

Thus encouraged, the boy gave a great gulp, and burst in a brogue: "Och your arnr, sure there's no rudder on her at all barrin the tiller."

"What d'ye mean?"

"Don't murrder me, your arnr, and I'll tell ye. It's meself looked over the starrn just now; and I seen there was no rudder at all at all: Mille diaoul, sis I; ye old bitch I'll tell his arnr what y'are after, slipping your rudder like my granny's list shoe, I will."

Dodd ran to the helm and looked down; the brat was right: the blows which had so endangered the ship, had broken the rudder, and the sea had washed away more than half of it. The sight and the reflection made him faintish for a moment. Death passing so very close to a man sickens him *afterwards;* unless he has the luck to be brainless.

"What is your name, urchin?"

"Ned Murphy, sir."

"Very well, Murphy, then you are a fine little fellow, and have wiped all our eyes in the ship: run and send the carpenter aft."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The carpenter came. Like most artisans he was clever in a groove: take him out of that, and lo! a mule, a pig, an owl. He was not only unable to invent, but so stiffly disinclined: a makeshift rudder was clean out of his way; and, as his whole struggle was to get away from every suggestion Dodd made back to groove aforesaid, the thing looked hopeless. Then Fullalove, who had stood by grinning, offered to make a bunkum rudder, provided the carpenter and mates were put under his

orders. But, said he, I must bargain they shall be disrated if they attempt to reason. "That is no more than fair," said Dodd. The Yankee inventor demanded a spare maincap, and cut away one end of the square piece, so as to make it fit the stern-post: through the circle of the cap he introduced a spare mizen topmast: to this he seized a length of junk, another to that, and so on: to the outside junk he seized a spare maintop-gallant mast, and this conglomerate being now nearly as broad as a rudder, he planked over all. The sea by this time was calm; he got the machine over the stern, and had the square end of the cap bolted to the stern-post. He had already fixed four spans of nine-inch hawser to the sides of the makeshift, two fastened to tackles, which led into the gunroom ports, and were housed taut—these kept the lower part of the makeshift close to the stern post—and two, to which guys were now fixed and led through the aftermost ports on to the quarter-deck, where luff tackles were attached to them, by means of which the makeshift was to be worked as a rudder.

Some sail was now got on the ship, and she was found to steer very well. Dodd tried her on every tack; and at last ordered Sharpe to make all sail, and head for the Cape.

This electrified the first mate. The breeze was very faint but southerly, and the Mauritius under their lee. They could make it in a night, and there refit, and ship a new rudder. He suggested the danger of sailing sixteen hundred miles steered by a Gimcrack; and implored Dodd to put into port. Dodd answered with a roughness and a certain wildness never seen in him before: "Danger, sir! There will be no more foul weather this voyage; Jonah is overboard." Sharpe stared an inquiry. "I tell you we shan't lower our topgallants once from this to the Cape: Jonah is overboard:" and he slapped his forehead in despair; then, stamping impatiently with his foot, told Sharpe his duty was to obey orders, not discuss them. "Certainly, sir," said Sharpe, sullenly, and went out of the cabin with serious thoughts of communicating to the other mates an alarming suspicion about Dodd, that now, for the first time, crossed his mind. But long habit of discipline prevailed, and he made all sail on the ship, and bore away for the Cape; with a heavy heart: the sea was like a mill-pond, but in that he saw only its well-known treachery, to lead them on to this unparalleled act of madness: each sail he hoisted seemed one more agent of Destruction rising at his own suicidal command.

Towards evening it became nearly dead calm. The sea heaved a little, but was waveless, glassy, and the colour of a rose, incredibly brave and delicate.

The look-out reported pieces of wreck to windward. As the ship was making so little way, Dodd beat up towards them: he feared it was a British ship that had foundered in the storm, and thought it his duty to ascertain and carry the sad news home. In two tacks they got near enough to see with their glasses that the fragments belonged, not to a stranger, but to the Agra herself; there was one of her waterbutts, and a broken mast with some rigging: and as more wreck was descried coming in at a little distance, Dodd kept the ship close to the wind to inspect it: on drifting near it proved to be several pieces of the bulwark, and a mahogany table out of the cuddy. This sort of flotsom was not

worth delaying the ship to pick it up; so Dodd made sail again, steering now S.E.

He had sailed about half a mile when the look-out hailed the deck again.

"A man in the water!"

"Whereabouts?"

"A short league on the weather quarter."

"Oh, we can't beat to windward for *him*," said Sharpe. "He is dead long ago."

"Holds his head very high for a corpse," said the look-out.

"I'll soon know," cried Dodd. "Lower the gig; I'll go myself."

The gig was lowered, and six swift rowers pulled him to windward; while the ship kept on her course.

It is most unusual for a captain to leave the ship at sea on such petty errands: but Dodd half hoped the man might be alive; and he was so unhappy; and, like his daughter, who probably derived the trait from him, grasped instinctively at a chance of doing kindness to some poor fellow alive or dead. That would soothe his own sore, good heart.

When they had pulled about two miles, the sun was sinking into the horizon: "Give way, men," said Dodd, "or we shall not be able to see him." The men bent to their oars, and made the boat fly.

Presently the coxswain caught sight of an object bobbing on the water abeam.

"Why, that must be it," said he: "the lubber! to take it for a man's head. Why, it is nothing but a thundering old bladder, speckled white."

"What?" cried Dodd: and fell a trembling, "Steer for it! Give way!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

They soon came alongside the bladder, and the coxswain grabbed it: "Hallo! here's something lashed to it: a bottle!"

"Give it me!" gasped Dodd, in a voice choked with agitation. "Give it me! Back to the ship! Fly! Fly! Cut her off, or she'll give us the slip, *now*."

He never spoke a word more, but sat in a stupor of joyful wonder.

They soon caught the ship: he got into his cabin, he scarce knew how: broke the bottle to atoms, and found the indomitable cash uninjured. With trembling hands he restored it to its old place in his bosom, and sewed it tighter than ever. Until he felt it there once more, he could hardly realise a stroke of good fortune that seemed miraculous —though, in reality, it was less strange than the way he had lost it—* but, now laid bodily on his heart, it set his bosom on fire: oh, the bright eye, the bounding pulse, the buoyant foot, the reckless joy! He slapped Sharpe on the back a little vulgarly, for him:

"Jonah is on board again, old fellow: look out for squalls."

He uttered this foreboding in a tone of triumph, and with a gay, elastic recklessness, which harmonised so well with his makeshift rudder, that Sharpe groaned aloud, and wished himself under any captain in the world but this, and in any other ship. He looked round to make sure he was not watched, and then tapped his forehead significantly: this somewhat relieved him, and he did his duty smartly for a man going to the bottom with his eyes open.

But ill luck is not to be bespoken any more than good: the Agra's

* The Agra, being much larger than the bottle, had drifted faster to leeward in the storm.

seemed to have blown itself out; the wind veered to the south-west, and breathed steadily in that quarter for ten days. The topgallant sails were never lowered nor shifted day nor night all that time: and not a single danger occurred between this and the Cape, except to a monkey, which I fear I must relate, on account of its remoter consequences. One fine afternoon, everybody was on deck amusing themselves as they could; Mrs. Beresford, to wit, was being flattered under the poop awning by Kenealy. The feud between her and Dodd continued; but under a false impression. The lady had one advantage over the gentler specimens of her sex; she was never deterred from a kind action by want of pluck, as they are. Pluck? Aquilina was brimful of it. When she found Dodd was wounded, she cast her wrongs to the wind, and offered to go and nurse him. Her message came at an unlucky moment, and by an unlucky messenger: the surgeon said, hastily, "I can't have him bothered." The stupid servant reported, "He can't be worried:" and Mrs. Beresford, thinking Dodd had a hand in this answer, was bitterly mortified; and with some reason. She would have forgiven him though, if he had died; but, as he lived, she thought she had a right to detest him; and did; and showed her sentiments like a lady, by never speaking to him, nor looking at him, but ignoring him with frigid magnificence on his own quarter deck.

Now, among the crew of this ship was a favourite goat, good tempered, affectionate, playful: but a single vice counterbalanced all his virtues: he took a drop. A year or two ago some light-hearted tempter taught him to sip grog; he took to it kindly, and was now arrived at such a pitch, that at grog time he used to butt his way in among the sailors, and get close to the canteen; and, by arrangement, an allowance was always served him; on imbibing it he passed, with quadrupedal rapidity, through three stages, the absurd, the choleric, the sleepy; and was never his own goat again until he awoke from the latter. Now Master Fred Beresford encountered him in the second stage of inebriety, and, being a rough playfellow, tapped his nose with a battledore. Instantly Billy butted at him; mischievous Fred screamed and jumped on the bulwarks. Pot-angry Billy went at him there; whereupon the young gentleman with an eldrich screech, and a comparative estimate of perils that smacked of inexperience, fled into the sea, at the very moment when his anxious mother was rushing to save him; she uttered a scream of agony, and would actually have followed him; but was held back uttering shriek after shriek, that pierced every heart within hearing.

But Dodd saw the boy go overboard, and vaulted over the bulwark near the helm, roared in the very air, "Heave the ship to!" and went splash into the water about ten yards from the place; he was soon followed by Vespasian, and a boat was lowered as quickly as possible. Dodd caught sight of a broad straw hat on the top of a wave, swam lustily to it, and found Freddy inside: it was tied under his chin, and would have floated Goliah. Dodd turned to the ship, saw the poor mother with white face and arms outstretched as if she would fly at them, and held the urchin up high to her with a joyful "hurrah." The ship seemed alive and to hurrah in return with giant voice: the boat soon picked them up, and Dodd came up the side with Freddy in his arms, and placed him in his mother's with honest pride and deep parental sympathy.

Guess how she scolded and caressed her child all in a breath, and

sobbed over him! For this no human pen has ever told, nor ever will. All I can just manage to convey is that, after she had all but eaten the little torment, she suddenly dropped him, and made a great maternal rush at Dodd. She flung her arms round him, and kissed him eagerly, almost fiercely: then, carried away wild by mighty Nature, she patted him all over in the strangest way, and kissed his waistcoat, his arms, his hands, and rained tears of joy and gratitude on them.

Dodd was quite overpowered: "No! no!" said he. "Don't now! pray don't! There, I know, my dear, I know; I'm a father." And he was very near whimpering himself; but recovered the man and the commander, and said, soothingly, "There! there!" and handed her tenderly down to her cabin.

All this time he had actually forgotten the packet. But now a horrible fear came on him. He hurried to his own cabin and examined it. A little salt water had oozed through the bullet-hole and discoloured the leather; but that was all. He breathed again.

"Thank Heaven I forgot all about it!" said he: "It would have made a cur of me."

La Beresford's petty irritation against Dodd melted at once before so great a thing: she longed to make friends with him; but for once felt timid: it struck her now all of a sudden that she had been misbehaving. However, she caught Dodd alone on the deck, and said to him softly, "I want so to end our quarrel."

"Our quarrel, madam!" said he; "why, I know of none: oh, about the light, eh? Well, you see the master of a ship is obliged to be a tyrant in some things."

"I make no complaint," said the lady, hastily, and hung her head. "All I ask you is to forgive one who has behaved like a fool, without even the excuse of being one; and—will you give me your hand, sir?"

"Ay, and with all my heart," said Dodd, warmly, enclosing the soft little hand in his honest grasp.

And with no more ado these two highflyers ended one of those little misunderstandings petty spirits nurse into a feud.

The ship being in port at the Cape, and two hundred hammers tapping at her, Dodd went ashore in search of Captain Robarts, and made the Agra over to him in the friendliest way, adding warmly that he had found every reason to be satisfied with the officers and the crew. To his surprise, Captain Robarts received all this ungraciously. "You ought to have remained on board, sir, and made me over the command on the quarter-deck." Dodd replied, politely, that it would have been more formal. "Suppose I return immediately, and man the side for you: and then you board her, say in half an hour."

"I shall come when I like," replied Robarts, crustily.

"And when will you like to come?" inquired Dodd, with imperturbable good-humour.

"Now: this moment: and I'll trouble you to come along with me."

"Certainly, sir."

They got a boat, and went out to the ship: on coming alongside, Dodd thought to meet his wishes by going first and receiving him; but the jealous, cross-grained fellow, shoved roughly before him and led the way

up the ship's side. Sharpe and the rest saluted him: he did not return the salute, but said hoarsely, "Turn the hands up to muster."

When they were all aft, he noticed one or two with their caps on. "Hats off, and be —— to you!" cried he. "Do you know where you are? Do you know who you are looking at? If not, I'll show you. I'm here to restore discipline to this ship: so mind how you run athwart my hawse: don't you play with the bull, my men; or you'll find his horns —— sharp. Pipe down! Now, you sir, bring me the log-book."

He ran his eye over it, and closed it contemptuously: "Pirates, and hurricanes! *I* never fell in with pirates nor hurricanes: I have heard of a breeze, and a gale, but I never knew a seaman worth his salt say 'hurricane.' Get another log-book, Mr. Sharpe; put down that it begins this day at noon; and enter, that Captain Robarts came on deck, found the ship in a miserable condition, took the command, mustered the officers and men, and stopped the ship's company's grog for a week, for receiving him with hats on."

Even Sharpe, that walking Obedience, was taken aback. "Stop—the ship's company's—grog—for a week, sir?"

"Yes, sir, for a week; and if you fling my orders back in my face instead of clapping on sail to execute them, I'll have you towed ashore on a grating: your name is Sharpe; well, my name is Damnedsharpe; and so you'll find."

In short, the new captain came down on the ship like a blight.

He was especially hard on Dodd: nothing that commander had done was right, nor, had he done the contrary, would that have been right: he was disgracefully behind time; and he ought to have put in to the Isle of France, which would have retarded him: his rope bulwarks were lubberly; his rudder a disgrace to navigation: he, Robarts, was not so green as to believe that any master had really sailed sixteen hundred miles with it, and, if he had, more shame for him. Briefly a marine criticaster.

All this was spoken *at* Dodd—a thing no male does unless he is an awful snob—and grieved him, it was so unjust. He withdrew wounded to the little cabin he was entitled to as a passenger, and hugged his treasure for comfort. He patted the pocket-book, and said to it, "Never *you* mind. The greater Tartar he is, the less likely to sink you, or run you on a lee shore."

With all his love of discipline, Robarts was not so fond of the ship as Dodd.

While his repairs were going on, he was generally ashore; and by this means missed a visit. Commodore Collier, one of the smartest sailors afloat, espied the Yankee makeshift from the quarter deck of his vessel, the Salamanca, fifty guns. In ten minutes he was under the Agra's stern inspecting it; then came on board, and was received in form by Sharpe and the other officers. "Are you the master of this ship, sir?" he asked.

"No, commodore. I am the first mate: the captain is ashore."

"I am sorry for it. I want to talk about his rudder."

"Oh, *he* had nothing to do with that," replied Sharpe, eagerly: "that was our dear old captain: he is on board. Young gentleman! ask Captain Dodd to oblige me by coming on deck! Hy! and Mr. Fullalove too."

"Young gentleman?" inquired Collier. "What the devil officer is that?"

"That is a name we give the middies; I don't know why."

"Nor I neither; ha! ha!"

Dodd and Fullalove came on deck, and Commodore Collier bestowed the highest compliments on the "makeshift." Dodd begged him to transfer them to the real inventor; and introduced Fullalove.

"Ay," said Collier, "I know you Yankees are very handy. I lost my rudder at sea once, and had to ship a makeshift: but it was a curs't complicated thing; not a patch upon yours, Mr. Fullalove. Yours is ingenious, and *simple*. Ship has been in action, I see: pray how was that, if I may be so bold?"

"Pirates, commodore," said Sharpe. "We fell in with a brace of Portugese devils, latine-rigged, and carried ten guns apiece, in the Straits of Gaspar: fought 'em from noon till sundown, riddled one, and ran down the other, and sunk her in a moment. That was all *your* doing, captain; so don't try to shift it on other people; for we won't stand it."

"If he denies it, I won't believe him," said Collier: "for he has got it in his eye. Gentlemen, will you do me the honour to dine with me to-day on board the flag-ship?"

Dodd and Fullalove accepted. Sharpe declined, with regret, on the score of duty. And as the cocked hat went down the side, after saluting him politely, he could not help thinking to himself what a difference between a real captain, who had something to be proud of, and his own unlicked cub of a skipper with the manners of a pilot-boat. He told Robarts the next day: Robarts said nothing; but his face seemed to turn greenish; and it embittered his hatred of Dodd the inoffensive.

It is droll, and sad, but true, that Christendom is full of men in a hurry to hate. And a fruitful cause is jealousy. The schoolmen, or rather certain of the schoolmen—for nothing is much shallower than to speak of all those disputants as one school—defined woman, "a featherless biped vehemently addicted to jealousy." Whether she is more featherless than the male can be decided at a trifling expense of time, money, and reason: you have but to go to court. But as for envy and jealousy, I think it is pure, unobservant, antique Cant which has fixed them on the female character distinctively. As a molehill to a mountain, is women's jealousy to men's. Agatha may have a host of virtues and graces, and yet her female acquaintance will not hate her, provided she has the moderation to abstain from being downright pretty. She may sing like an angel, paint like an angel, talk, write, nurse the sick,—all like an angel, and not rouse the devil in her fair sisters: so long as she does not dress like an angel. But, the minds of men being much larger than women's, yet very little greater, they hang jealousy on a thousand pegs. Where there was no peg, I have seen them do with a pin.

Captain Robarts took a pin: ran it into his own heart, and hung that sordid passion on it.

He would get rid of all the Dodditos before he sailed. He insulted Mr. Tickell, so that he left the service, and entered a mercantile house ashore: he made several of the best men desert: and the ship went to sea short of hands. This threw heavier work on the crew; and led to many punishments, and a steady current of abuse. Sharpe became e

mere machine, always obeying, never speaking: Grey was put under arrest for remonstrating against ungentlemanly language: and Bayliss, being at bottom of the same breed as Robarts, fell into his humour, and helped hector the petty officers and men. The crew, depressed and irritated, went through their duties pully-hauly-wise. There was no song under the forecastle in the first watch, and often no grog on the mess table at one bell. Dodd never came on the quarter-deck without being reminded he was only a passenger, and the ship was now under naval discipline. "*I* was reared in the royal navy, sir," would Robarts say: "second lieutenant aboard the Atalanta: that is the school, sir; that is the only school that breeds seamen." Dodd bore scores of similar taunts as a Newfoundland puts up with a terrier in office: he seldom replied, and, when he did, in a few quiet dignified words that gave no handle.

Robarts, who bore the name of a lucky captain, had fair weather all the way to St. Helena.

The guard-ship at this island was the Salamanca. She had left the Cape a week before the Agra. Captain Robarts, with his characteristic good breeding, went to anchor in-shore of Her Majesty's ship: the wind failed at a critical moment, and a foul became inevitable: Collier was on his quarter-deck, and saw what would happen long before Robarts did; he gave the needful orders, and it was beautiful to see how in half a minute the frigate's guns were run in, her ports lowered, her yards toppled on end, and a spring carried out and hauled on.

The Agra struck abreast her own forechains on the Salamanca's quarter.

(Pipe.) "Boarders away. Tomahawks! cut everything that holds!" was heard from the frigate's quarter-deck. Rush came a boarding party on to the merchant ship and hacked away without mercy all her lower rigging that held on to the frigate, signal halyards and all; others boomed her off with capstan bars, &c., and in two minutes the ships were clear. A lieutenant and boat's crew came for Robarts, and ordered him on board the Salamanca, and, to make sure of his coming, took him back with them. He found Commodore Collier standing stiff as a ramrod on his quarter-deck. "Are you the master of the Agra?" (His quick eye had recognised her in a moment.)

"I am, sir."

"Then she was commanded by a seaman: and is commanded by a lubber. Don't apply for your papers this week; for you won't get them. Good morning. Take him away."

They returned Robarts to his ship; and a suppressed grin on a score of faces showed him the clear commanding tones of the commodore had reached his own deck. He soothed himself by stopping the men's grog and mast-heading three midshipmen that same afternoon.

The night before he weighed anchor this disciplinarian was drinking very late in a low public-house. There was not much moon, and the officer in charge of the ship did not see the gig coming till it was nearly alongside: then all was done in a flurry.

"Hy! man the side! Lanterns there! Jump, you boys! or you'll catch pepper."

The boys did jump, and little Murphy, not knowing the surgeon had ordered the ports to be drooped, bounded over the bulwarks like ar

antelope, lighted on the midship port, which stood at this angle /, and glanced off into the ocean, lantern foremost: he made his little hole in the water within a yard of Captain Robarts. That Dignity, though splashed, took no notice of so small an incident as a gone ship-boy: and if Murphy had been wise and stayed with Nep. all had been well. But the poor urchin inadvertently came up again, and without the lantern. One of the gig's crew grabbed him by the hair, and prolonged his existence by an inconsiderate impulse.

"Where is the other lantern?" was Robarts's first word on reaching the deck: as if he didn't know.

"Gone overboard, sir, with the boy Murphy."

"Stand forward, you sir," growled Robarts.

Murphy stood forward, dripping and shivering with cold and fear.

"What d'ye mean by going overboard with the ship's lantern?"

"Och your arnr sure some unasy divil drooped the port; and the lantern and me we had no foothold at all at all, and the lantern went into the say, bad luck to ut; and I went afther to try and save ut—for your arnr."

"Belay all that!" said Robarts; "do you think you can blarney me, you young monkey? Here, Bosen's mate, take a rope's-end and start him!—Again!—Warm him well!—That's right."

As soon as the poor child's shrieks subsided into sobs, the disciplinarian gave him Explanation, for Ointment. "I can't have the company's stores expended this way."

"The force of discipline could no farther go" than to flog zeal for falling overboard: so, to avoid anticlimax in that port, Robarts weighed anchor at daybreak; and there was a south-westerly breeze waiting for this favourite of fortune, and carried him past the Azores. Off Ushant it was westerly; and veered to the nor-west just before they sighted the Land's End: never was such a charming passage from the Cape. The sailor, who had the luck to sight Old England first, nailed his starboard shoe to the mainmast for contributions; and all hearts beat joyfully: none more than David Dodd's. His eye devoured the beloved shore: he hugged the treasure his own ill luck had jeopardised—but Robarts had sailed it safe into British waters—and forgave the man his ill manners for his good luck.

Robarts steered in for the Lizard; but, when abreast the Point, kept well out again, and opened the Channel, and looked out for a pilot.

One was soon seen working out towards him, and the Agra brought to; the pilot descended from his lugger into his little boat, rowed alongside, and came on deck; a rough, tanned sailor, clad in flushing; and in build and manner might have passed for Robarts's twin brother.

"Now then, you sir, what will you take this ship up to the Downs for?"

"Thirty pounds."

Robarts told him roughly he would not get thirty pounds out of *him*.

"Thyse and no higher my Bo," answered the pilot, sturdily: he had been splicing the main brace, and would have answered an admiral.

Robarts swore at him lustily: Pilot discharged a volley in return with admirable promptitude. Robarts retorted, the other rough customer rejoined, and soon all Billingsgate thundered on the Agra's quarter-deck.

Finding, to his infinite disgust, his visitor as great a blackguard as himself, and not to be outsworn, Robarts ordered him to quit the ship on pain of being man-handled over the side.

"Oh, that is it, is it?" growled the other: "here's fill and be off then." He prudently bottled the rest of his rage till he got safe into his boat: then shook his fist at the Agra, and cursed her captain sky high. "You see the fair wind, but you don't see the Channel fret a coming, ye greedy gander. Downs! You'll never see them: you have saved your —— money, and lost your —— ship, ye —— lubber."

Robarts hurled back a sugar-plum or two of the same kind, and then ordered Bayliss to clap on all sail, and keep a mid channel course through the night.

At four bells in the middle watch Sharpe, in charge of the ship, tapped at Robarts's door. "Blowing hard, sir, and the weather getting thickish."

"Wind fair still?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then call me if it blows any harder," grunted Robarts.

In two hours more, tap, tap, came Bayliss, in charge. "If we don't take sail in, they'll take themselves out."

"Furl to-gallen'sels, and call me if it gets any worse."

In another hour Bayliss was at him again. "Blowing a gale, sir, and a Channel fog on."

"Reef taupsles, and call me if it gets any worse."

At daybreak Dodd was on deck, and found the ship flying through a fog so thick, that her forecastle was invisible from the poop, and even her foremast loomed indistinct and looked distant. "You'll be foul of something or other, Sharpe," said he.

"What is that to you?" inquired a loud rough voice behind him. "I don't allow passengers to handle my ship."

"Then do pray handle her yourself, captain! Is this weather to go tearing happy-go-lucky up the Channel?"

"I mean to sail her without your advice, sir: and, being a seaman, I shall get all I can out of a fair wind."

"That is right, Captain Robarts; if you had but the British Channel all to yourself."

"Perhaps you will leave me my deck all to myself."

"I should be delighted: but my anxiety will not let me." With this Dodd retired a few steps, and kept a keen look out.

At noon, a lusty voice cried "Land on the weather beam!"

All eyes were turned that way, and saw nothing.

Land in sight was reported to Captain Robarts.

Now that worthy was in reality getting secretly anxious: so he ran on deck crying, "Who saw it?"

"Captain Dodd, sir."

"Ugh! Nobody else?"

Dodd came forward, and, with a respectful air, told him that, being on the look out, he had seen the coast of the Isle of Wight in a momentary lift of the haze.

"Isle of Fiddlestick!" was the polite reply; "Isle of Wight is eighty miles astern by now."

Dodd answered firmly that he was well acquainted with every outline in the Channel, and the land he had seen was St. Katharine's Point.

Robarts deigned no reply; but had the log heaved: it showed the vessel to be running twelve knots an hour. He then went to his cabin and consulted his chart; and, having worked his problem, came hastily on deck, and went from rashness to wonderful caution. "Turn the hands out, and heave the ship to!"

The manœuvre was executed gradually and ably, and scarce a bucketful of water shipped. "Furl taupsels and set the main trysail! There, Mr. Dodd, so much for you and your Isle of Wight. The land you saw was Dungeness, and *you* would have run on into the North Sea, I'll be bound."

When a man, habitually calm, turns anxious, he becomes more irritable: and the mixture of timidity and rashness he saw in Robarts made Dodd very anxious.

He replied angrily: "At all events I should not make a foul wind out of a fair one by heaving to; and if I did, I would heave to on the right tack."

At this sudden facer—one, too, from a patient man—Robarts staggered a moment. He recovered, and, with an oath, ordered Dodd to go below, or he would have him chucked into the hold.

"Come, don't be an ass, Robarts," said Dodd, contemptuously. Then, lowering his voice to a whisper: "Don't you know the men only want such an order as that, to chuck you into the sea?"

Robarts trembled. "Oh, if you mean to head a mutiny!——"

"Heaven forbid, sir! But I won't leave the deck in dirty weather like this, till the captain knows where he is."

Towards sunset it got clearer, and they drifted past a Revenue cutter, who was lying to with her head to the Northward. She hoisted no end of signals, but they understood none of them; and her captain gesticulated wildly on her deck.

"What is that Fantoccini dancing at?" inquired Captain Robarts, brutally.

"To see a first-class ship drift to leeward in a narrow sea, with a fair wind," said Dodd, bitterly.

At night it blew hard, and the sea ran high and irregular. The ship began to be uneasy: and Robarts very properly ordered the top-gallant and royal yards to be sent down on deck. Dodd would have had them down twelve hours ago. The mate gave the order: no one moved. The mate went forward angry. He came back pale. The men refused to go aloft: they would not risk their lives for Captain Robarts.

The officers all assembled and went forward: they promised and threatened; but all in vain. The crew stood sullen together, as if to back one another, and put forward a spokesman to say that "there was not one of them the captain hadn't started, and stopped his grog a dozen times: he had made the ship hell to them; and now her masts and yards and hull might go there along with her skipper, for them."

Robarts received this tidings in sullen silence. "Don't tell that Dodd, whatever you do," said he. "They will come round now they have had their growl: they are too near home to shy away their pay."

Robarts had not sufficient insight into character to know that Dodd would instantly have sided with him against mutiny.

But at this juncture the ex-captain of the Agra was down in the cabin with his fellow-passengers, preparing a general remonstrance: he had a chart before him, and a pair of compasses in his hand.

"St. Katharine's Point lay about eight miles to windward at noon; and we have been drifting South and East this twelve hours, through lying to on the starboard tack: and besides, the ship has been conned as slovenly as she is sailed. I've seen her allowed to break off a dozen times, and gather more leeway: ah, here *is* Captain Robarts: Captain, you saw the rate we passed the Revenue cutter. That vessel was nearly stationary; so what we passed her at was our own rate of drifting, and our least rate; putting all this together, we can't be many miles from the French coast, and, unless we look sharp and beat to windward, I pronounce the ship in danger."

A horselaugh greeted this conclusion.

"We are nearer Yarmouth sands than France, I promise you: and nothing under our lee nearer than Rotterdam."

A loud cry from the deck above, "A LIGHT ON THE LEE BOW!"

"There!" cried Robarts, with an oath: "foul of *her* next! through me listening to your nonsense." He ran upon deck, and shouted through his trumpet, "All hands wear ship!"

The crew, who had heard the previous cry, obeyed orders in the presence of an immediate danger; and perhaps their growl had really relieved their ill-humour. Robarts with delight saw them come tumbling up, and gave his orders lustily: "Brail up the trysel! Up with the helm! in with the weather main brace! square the after yards!"

The ship's bow turned from the wind, and, as soon as she got way on her, Robarts ran below again; and entered the cabin triumphant.

"That is all right: and now, Captain Dodd, a word with you: you will either retire at once to your cabin, or will cease to breed disaffection in my crew, and groundless alarm in my passengers, by instilling your own childish, ignorant fears. The ship has been underlogged a hundred miles, sir, and but for my caution in lying to for clear weather we should be groping among the Fern Isl——"

CRASH!

An unheard-of shock threw the speaker and all the rest in a mass on the floor, smashed every lamp, put out every light: and, with a fierce grating noise, the ship was hard and fast on the French coast, with her stern to the sea.

One awful moment of silence; then amidst shrieks of agony, the sea struck her like a rolling rock, solid to crush, liquid to drown: and the comb of a wave smashed the cabin windows and rushed in among them as they floundered on the floor; and wetted and chilled them to the marrow; a voice in the dark cried, "Oh God! we are dead men."

## CHAPTER XIV.

"ON deck for your lives!" cried Dodd, forgetting in that awful moment he was not the captain; and drove them all up, Robarts included, and caught hold of Mrs. Beresford and Freddy at their cabin door and half carried them with him. Just as they got on deck the third wave, a high

one, struck the ship and lifted her bodily up, canted her round, and lashed her down again some yards to leeward, throwing them down on the hard and streaming deck.

At this tremendous shock the ship seemed a live thing shrieking and wailing, as well as quivering with the blow.

But one voice dissented loudly from the general dismay. "All right, men," cried Dodd, firm and trumpet-like. "She is broadside on now. Captain Robarts, look alive, sir! Speak to the men! don't go to sleep!"

Robarts was in a lethargy of fear. At this appeal he started into a fury of ephemeral courage: "Stick to the ship," he yelled; "there is no danger if you stick to the ship," and with this snatched a life buoy, and hurled himself into the sea.

Dodd caught up the trumpet that fell from his hand, and roared "I command this ship. Officers come round me! Men to your quarters! Come, bear a hand here, and fire a gun! That will show us where we are, and let the Frenchmen know."

The carronade was fired, and its momentary flash revealed that the ship was ashore in a little bay; the land abeam was low and some eighty yards off; but there was something black and rugged nearer the ship's stern.

Their situation was awful. To windward huge black waves rose like tremendous ruins, and came rolling, fringed with devouring fire; and each wave, as it charged them, curled up to an incredible height and dashed down on the doomed ship—solid to crush, liquid to drown—with a ponderous stroke that made the poor souls stagger; and sent a sheet of water so clean over her that part fell to leeward, and only part came down on deck, foretaste of a watery death; and each of these fearful blows drove the groaning, trembling vessel farther on the sand, bumping her along as if she had been but a skiff.

Now it was men showed their inner selves.

Seeing Death so near on one hand, and a chance of escape on the other, seven men proved unable to resist the two great passions of Fear and Hope on a scale so gigantic, and side by side. Bayliss, a midshipman, and five sailors, stole the only available boat and lowered her.

She was swamped in a moment.

Many of the crew got to the rum, and stupified themselves to their destruction.

Others rallied round their old captain, and recovered their native courage at the brave and hopeful bearing he wore over a heart full of anguish. He worked like a horse, encouraging, commanding, doing: he loaded a carronade with 1 lb. of powder and a coil of rope, with an iron bar attached to a cable, and shot the rope and bar ashore.

A gun was now fired from the guard-house, whose light Robarts had taken for a ship. But, no light being shown any nearer on the coast, and the ship expected every minute to go to pieces, Dodd asked if any one would try to swim ashore with a line, made fast to a hawser on board.

A sailor offered to go if any other man would risk his life along with him. Instantly Fullalove stripped, and Vespasian next.

"Two is enough on such a desperate errand," said Dodd, with a groan.

But now emulation was up, and neither Briton, Yankee, nor negro,

would give way: a line was made fast to the sailor's waist, and he was lowered to leeward; his venturesome rivals followed. The sea swallowed those three heroes like crumbs: and small was the hope of life for them.

The three heroes being first-rate swimmers and divers, and going with the tide, soon neared the shore on the ship's lee quarter; but a sight of it was enough: to attempt to land on that rock with such a sea on, was to get their skulls smashed like eggshells in a moment. They had to coast it, looking out for a soft place.

They found one; and tried to land; but so irresistible was the suction of the retiring wave, that, whenever they got foot on the sand, and tried to run, they were wrenched out to sea again, and pounded black and blue and breathless by the curling breaker they met coming in.

After a score of vain efforts, the negro, throwing himself on his back, went in with a high wave, and, on touching the sand, turned, dug all his ten claws into it, clenched his teeth, and scrambled like a cat at a wall: having more power in his toes than the Europeans, and luckily getting one hand on a firm stone, his prodigious strength just enabled him to stick fast while the wave went back; and then, seizing the moment, he tore himself ashore, but bleeding and bruised all over, and with a tooth actually broken by clenching in the convulsive struggle.

He found some natives dancing about in violent agitation with a rope, but afraid to go in and help him; and no wonder, not being sea-gulls. By the light of their lanterns, he saw Fullalove washing in and out like a log. He seized one end of the rope, dashed in and grabbed his friend, and they were hauled ashore together, both breathless, and Fullalove speechless.

The negro looked round for the sailor, but could not see him. Soon, however, there was a cry from some more natives about fifty yards off, and lanterns held up; away he dashed with the rope, just in time to see Jack make a last gallant attempt to land. It ended in his being flung up like a straw into the air on the very crest of a wave fifteen feet high, and out to sea with his arms whirling, and a death shriek which was echoed by every woman within hearing.

In dashed Vespasian with the rope, and gripped the drowning man's long hair with his teeth: then jerked the rope, and they were both pulled ashore with infinite difficulty. The good-natured Frenchmen gave them all three lots of vivats and brandy and pats on the back: and carried the line for them to a flagstaff on the rocks nearer the stern of the ship.

The ship began to show the first signs of breaking up: hammered to death by the sea, she discharged the oakum from her opening seams, and her decks began to gape and grin fore and aft. Corpses of drunken sailors drowned between decks now floated up amidships, and washed and rolled about among the survivors' feet. These, seeing no hope, went about making up all quarrels, and shaking hands in token of a Christian end. One or two came to Dodd with their hands out.

"Avast, ye lubbers!" said he, angrily; "do you think I have time for nonsense? Folksel ahoy! axes, and cut the weather shrouds!"

It was done: the foremast went by the board directly, and fell to leeward: a few blows of the axe from Dodd's own hand sent the mainmast after it.

The Agra rose a streak; and the next wave carried her a little farther in shore.

And now the man in charge of the hawser reported with joy that there was a strain on it.

This gave those on board a hope of life. Dodd bustled and had the hawser carefully payed out by two men, while he himself secured the other end in the mizen top: he had left that mast standing on purpose.

There was no fog here; but great heavy black clouds flying about with amazing swiftness extinguished the moon at intervals: at others she glimmered through a dull mist in which she was veiled, and gave the poor souls on the Agra a dim peep of the frail and narrow bridge they must pass to live. A thing like a black snake went down from the mizen top, bellying towards the yawning sea, and soon lost to sight: it was seen rising again among some lanterns on the rock ashore: but what became of it in the middle? The darkness seemed to cut it in two; the sea to swallow it. Yet, to get from a ship going to pieces under them, the sailors precipitated themselves eagerly on that black thread bellying to the sea and flickering in the wind. They went down it, one after another, and anxious eyes straining after them saw them no more: but this was seen, that scarce one in three emerged into the lights ashore.

Then Dodd got an axe, and stood in the top, and threatened to brain the first man who attempted to go on the rope.

"We must make it taut first," said he; "bear a hand here with a tackle."

Even while this was being done, the other rope, whose end he had fired ashore, was seen moving to windward. The natives, it seems, had found it, half buried in sand.

Dodd unlashed the end from the bulwarks and carried it into the top, and made it fast: and soon there were two black snakes dipping shorewards and waving in the air side by side.

The sailors scrambled for a place, and some of them were lost by their own rashness. Kenealy waited coolly: and went by himself.

Finally, Dodd was left in the ship with Mr. Sharpe and the women, and little Murphy, and Ramgolam, whom Robarts had liberated to show his contempt of Dodd.

He now advised Mrs. Beresford to be lashed to Sharpe and himself, and venture the passage; but she screamed and clung to him, and said, "I dare not, oh I dare not."

"Then I must lash you to a spar," said he, "for she can't last much longer." He ordered Sharpe ashore. Sharpe shook hands with him; and went on the rope with tears in his eyes.

Dodd went hard to work, lashed Mrs. Beresford to a piece of broken water-butt: filled Fred's pockets with corks and sewed them up: (you never caught Dodd without a needle; only, unlike the women's, it was always kept threaded). Mrs. Beresford threw her arms round his neck and kissed him wildly: a way women have in mortal peril: it is but their homage to courage. "All right!" said Dodd, interpreting it as an appeal to his protection, and affecting cheerfulness: "we'll get ashore together on the poop awning, or somehow; never you fear. I'd give a thousand pounds to know when high water is."

At this moment, with a report like a cannon, the lower decks burst fore and aft: another still louder, and the *Agra's* back broke. She parted amidships with a fearful yawn, and the waves went toppling and curling clean through her.

At this appalling sound and sight, the few creatures left on the poop cowered screaming and clinging at Dodd's knees, and fought for a bit of him.

Yes, as a flood brings incongruous animals together on some little isle, in brotherhood of fear—creatures who never met before without one eating the other; and there they cuddle—so the thief Ramgolam clung to the man he had tried to rob; the Hindoo Ayah and the English maid hustled their mistress, the haughty Mrs. Beresford, and were hustled by her, for a bit of this human pillar; and little Murphy and Fred Beresford wriggled in at him where they could: and the poor goat crept into the quivering mass trembling like an aspen, and not a butt left either in his head or his heart. Dodd stood in the middle of these tremblers, a rock of manhood: and when he was silent and they heard only the voice of the waves, they despaired; and, whenever he spoke, they started at the astounding calmness of his voice, and words: and life sounded possible.

"Come," said he, "this won't do any longer. All hands into the mizen top!"

He helped them all up, and stood on the ratlines himself: and, if you will believe me, the poor goat wailed like a child below. He found in that new terror and anguish a voice goat was never heard to speak in before. But they had to leave him on deck: no help for it. Dodd advised Mrs. Beresford once more to attempt the rope: she declined. "I dare not! I dare not!" she cried, but she begged Dodd hard to go on it and save himself.

It was a strong temptation: he clutched the treasure in his bosom, and one sob burst from the strong man.

That sob was but the tax paid by Nature: for pride, humanity, and manhood stood staunch in spite of it. "No no, I can't," said he: "I mustn't. Don't tempt me to leave you in this plight, and be a cur! Live or die, I must be the last man on her. Here's something coming out to us, the Lord in Heaven be praised!"

A bright light was seen moving down the black line that held them to the shore; it descended slowly within a foot of the billows, and lighting them up showed their fearful proximity to the rope in mid passage: they had washed off many a poor fellow at that part.

"Look at that! Thank Heaven you did not try it!" said Dodd to Mrs. Beresford.

At this moment a higher wave than usual swallowed up the light: there was a loud cry of dismay from the shore, and a wail of despair from the ship.

No! not lost after all! The light emerged: and mounted, and mounted towards the ship.

It came near and showed the black shiny body of Vespasian with very little on but a handkerchief and a lantern, the former round his waist, and the latter lashed to his back: he arrived with a "Yah! yah!" and showed his white teeth in a grin.

Mrs. Beresford clutched his shoulder, and whimpered, "Oh, Mr Black!"

"Iss, Missy, dis child bring good news. Cap'n! Massah Fullalove send you his congratulations, and the compliments of the season; and take the liberty to observe the tide am turn in twenty minutes."

The good news thus quaintly announced, caused an outburst of joy from Dodd, and sailor-like, he insisted on all hands joining in a cheer. The shore re-echoed it directly. And this encouraged the forlorn band still more; to hear other hearts beating for them so near. Even the intervening waves could not quite annul the sustaining power of sympathy.

At this moment came the first faint streaks of welcome dawn, and revealed their situation more fully.

The vessel lay on the edge of a sand-bank. She was clean in two, the stern lying somewhat higher than the stem. The sea rolled through her amidships six feet broad, frightful to look at; and made a clean breach over her forward, all except the bowsprit, to the end of which three poor sailors were now discovered to be clinging. The afterpart of the poop was out of water, and in a corner of it the goat crouched like a rabbit: four dead bodies washed about beneath the party trembling in the mizen top, and one had got jammed in the wheel, face uppermost, and glared up at them, gazing terror-stricken down.

No sign of the tide turning yet: and much reason to fear it would turn too late for them, and the poor fellows shivering on the bowsprit.

These fears were well founded.

A huge sea rolled in, and turned the forepart of the vessel half over, buried the bowsprit, and washed the men off into the breakers.

Mrs. Beresford sank down, and prayed, holding Vespasian by the knee.

Fortunately, as in that vessel wrecked long syne on Melita, "the hind part of the ship stuck fast and remained immovable."

But for how long?

Each wave now struck the ship's weather quarter with a sound like a cannon fired in a church, and sent the water clean into the mizen top. It hit them like strokes of a whip. They were drenched to the skin, chilled to the bone, and frozen to the heart with fear. They made acquaintance that hour with Death. Ay, Death itself has no bitterness that forlorn cluster did not feel: only the insensibility that ends that bitterness was wanting.

Now the sea, you must know, was literally strewed with things out of the Agra; masts, rigging, furniture, tea-chests, bundles of canes, chairs, tables: but, of all this jetsom, Dodd's eye had been for some little time fixed on one object; a live sailor drifting ashore on a great wooden case: it struck him after a while that the man made very little way; and at last seemed to go up and down in one place. By-and-by he saw him nearer and nearer, and recognised him. It was one of the three washed off the bowsprit.

He cried joyfully: "The tide has turned! here's Thompson coming out to sea."

Then there ensued a dialogue, incredible to landsmen, between these two sailors, the captain of the ship and the captain of the foretop; one

perched on a stationary fragment of that vessel, the other drifting on a pianoforte; and both bawling at one another across the jaws of death.

"Thompson ahoy!"

"Hal-lo!"

"Whither bound?"

"Going out with the tide, and be d——d to me."

"What, can't ye swim?"

"Like a brass figure-head. It's all over with poor Jack, sir."

"All over? Don't tell me! Look out now as you drift under our stern, and we'll lower you the four-inch hawser."

"Lord bless you, sir; do, pray!" cried Thompson, losing his recklessness with the chance of life.

By this time the shore was black with people, and a boat was brought down to the beach, but to attempt to launch it was to be sucked out to sea.

At present all eyes were fixed on Thompson drifting to destruction.

Dodd cut the four-inch hawser, and Vespasian, on deck, lowered it with a line, so that Thompson presently drifted right athwart it: "All right, sir!" said he, grasping it: and amidst thundering acclamations was drawn to land full of salt water and all but insensible. The piano landed at Dunkirk, three weeks later.

In the bustle of this good and smart action, the tide retired perceptibly.

By-and-by the sea struck lower and with less weight.

At nine P.M. Dodd took his little party down on deck again, being now the safest place; for the mast might go.

It was a sad scene: the deck was now dry, and the dead bodies lay quiet around them, with glassy eyes: and, grotesquely horrible, the long hair of two or three was stiff and crystallized with the saltpetre in the ship.

Mrs. Beresford clung to Vespasian: she held his bare black shoulder with one white and jewelled hand, and his wrist with the other, tight. "Oh, Mr. Black," said she, "how brave you are! It is incredible. Why you came back. I must feel a brave man with both my hands, or I shall die. Your skin is nice and soft too. I shall never outlive this dreadful day."

And, now that the water was too low to wash them off the hawser several of the ship's company came back to the ship to help the women down.

By noon the Agra's deck was thirty feet from the sand. The rescued ones wanted to break their legs and necks: but Dodd would not permit even that. He superintended the whole manœuvre, and lowered, first the dead, then the living, not omitting the poor goat, who was motionless and limp with fright.

When they were all safe on the sand, Dodd stood alone upon the poop a minute, cheered by all the sailors, French and English, ashore: then slid down a rope and rejoined his companions.

To their infinite surprise, the undaunted one was found to be snivelling.

"Oh dear, what is the matter?" said Mrs. Beresford, tenderly.

"The poor Agra, ma'am! She was such a beautiful sea-boat: and

just look at her now! Never sail again: never! never! She was a little crank in beating, I can't deny it: but how she did fly with the wind abaft. She sank a pirate in the straits, and weathered a hurricane off the Mauritius; and after all for a lubber to go and lay her bones ashore in a fair wind: poor dear beauty."

He maundered thus, and kept turning back to look at the wreck, till he happened to lay his hand on his breast. He stopped in the middle of his ridiculous lament, wore a look of self-reproach, and cast his eyes upward in heartfelt gratitude.

The companions of so many adventures dispersed.

A hospitable mayoress entertained Mrs. Beresford and suite: and she took to her bed: for she fell seriously ill as soon as ever she could do it with impunity.

Colonel Kencaly went off to Paris: "I'll gain that any way by being wrecked," said he.

If there be a lover of quadrupeds here, let him know that Billy's weakness proved his strength. Being brandied by a good-natured French sailor, he winked his eye; being brandied greatly he staggered up; and butted his benefactor, like a man.

Fullalove had dry clothes and a blazing fire ready for Dodd at a little rude auberge: he sat over it and dried a few bank-notes he had loose about him, and examined his greater treasure, his children's. The pocket-book was much stained, but no harm whatever done to the contents.

In the midst of this employment the shadow of an enormous head was projected right upon his treasure.

Turning with a start he saw a face at the window; one of those vile mugs which are found to perfection amongst the canaille of the French nation; bloated, blear-eyed, grizzly, and wild-beast like. The ugly thing, on being confronted, passed slowly out of the sun, and Dodd thought no more of it.

The owner of this sinister visage was André Thibout, of whom it might be said, like face like life; for he was one of those ill-omened creatures who feed upon the misfortunes of their kind, and stand on shore in foul weather hoping the worst, instead of praying for the best: briefly, a wrecker. He and his comrade, Jacques Moinard, had heard the Agra's gun fired, and come down to batten on the wreck: but lo! at the turn of the tide, there were gendarmes and soldiers lining the beach; and the Bayonet interposed between Theft and Misfortune. So now the desperate pair were prowling about like hungry, baffled wolves, curses on their lips, and rage at their hearts.

Dodd was extremely anxious to get to Barkington before the news of the wreck; for otherwise he knew his wife and children would suffer a year's agony in a single day. The only chance he saw was to get to Boulogne in time to catch the Nancy sailing packet; for it was her day. But then Boulogne was eight leagues distant, and there was no public conveyance going. Fullalove, entering heartily into his feelings, was gone to look for horses to hire, aided by the British Consul. The black hero was upstairs clearing out with a pin two holes that had fallen into decay for want of use. These holes were in his ears.

And now, worn out by anxiety and hard work, Dodd began to nod in his chair by the fire.

He had not been long asleep when the hideous face of Thibout reappeared at the window, and watched him: presently a low whistle was uttered outside, and soon the two ruffians entered the room, and, finding the landlady there as well as Dodd, called for a little glass apiece of absinthe: while drinking it they cast furtive glances towards Dodd, and waited till she should go about her business, and leave them alone with him.

But the good woman surprised their looks, and knowing the character of the men, poured out a cup of coffee from a great metal reservoir by the fire, and waked Dodd without ceremony: "Voici votre café, Monsieur!" making believe he had ordered it.

"Merci, Madame!" replied he, for his wife had taught him a little French.

"One may sleep mal à propos," muttered the woman in his ear. "My man is at the fair, and there are people here who are not worth any great things."

Dodd rubbed his eyes and saw those two foul faces at the end of the kitchen: for such it was, though called salle à manger. "Humph!" said he; and instinctively buttoned his coat.

At that Thibout touched Moinard's knee under the table.

Fullalove came in soon after, to say he had got two horses, and they would be here in a quarter of an hour.

"Well, but Vespasian? how is he to go?" inquired Dodd.

"Oh, we'll send him on ahead, and then ride and tie."

"No, no," said Dodd, "I'll go ahead. That will shake me up. I think I should tumble off a horse; I'm so dead sleepy."

Accordingly he started to walk on the road to Boulogne.

He had not been gone three minutes when Moinard sauntered out.
Moinard had not been gone two minutes when Thibout strolled out.
Moinard kept Dodd in sight, and Thibout kept Moinard.

The horses were brought soon after; but unfortunately the pair did not start immediately; though, had they known it, every moment was precious. They wasted time in argument. Vespasian had come down with a diamond ring in one ear, and a ruby in the other. Fullalove saw this retrograde step, and said grimly: "Have you washed but half your face, or—is this a return to savagery?"

Vespasian wore an air of offended dignity: "No, sar, these yar decorations come off a lady ob i cibilisation: Missy Beresford donated em me. Says she, 'Massah Black'—yah! yah! She always nicknominates dis child Massa Black—'while I was praying Goramighty for self and pickaninny, I seen you out of one corner of my eye admirationing my rings; den just you take 'em,' says dat ar aristocracy: 'for I don't admirationise 'em none: I've been shipwrecked.' So I took 'em wid incredible condescension; and dat ar beautiful lady says to me, 'Oh, get along wid your nonsense about coloured skins! I have inspectionated your conduct, Massa Black, and likewise your performances on the slack rope,' says she, 'in time of shipwreck: and darn me,' says

she, 'but you are a man, you are.' 'No, Missy,' says I, superciliously, 'dis child am not a man if you please, but a coloured gemman.'" He added, he had put them in his ears because the biggest would not go on his little finger.

Fullalove groaned. "And, of course, the next thing, you'll ring your snout like a pig, or a Patagonian; there, come along, ye darn'd—Anomaly."

He was going to say "Cuss," but remembering his pupil's late heroic conduct, softened it down to Anomaly.

But Vespasian always measured the force of words by their length or obscurity. "Anomaly" cut him to the heart: he rode off in moody silence and dejection, asking himself sorrowfully what he had done that such a mountain of vituperation should fall on him. "Anomaly! !"

They cantered along in silence; for Fullalove was digesting this new trait in his pupil; and asking himself could he train it out; or must he cross it out. Just outside the town they met Captain Robarts walking in; he had landed three miles off down the coast. "Hallo!" said Fullalove.

"I suppose you thought I was drowned?" said Robarts spitefully; "but you see I'm alive still."

Fullalove replied: "Well, captain, that is only one mistake more you've made I reckon."

About two English miles from the town, they came to a long strait slope up and down, where they could see a league before them; and there they caught sight of David Dodd's tall figure mounting the opposite rise.

Behind him at some little distance were two men going the same way but on the grass by the roadside, whereas David was on the middle of the road.

"He walks well for Jacky Tar," said Fullalove.

"Iss, sar," said Vespasian, sulkily; "but dis 'analogy' tink he not walk so fast as those two behind him, cos they catch him up."

Now Vespasian had hardly uttered these words when a thing occurred, so sudden and alarming, that the speaker's eyes protruded, and he was dumbfounded a moment; the next a loud cry burst from both him and his companion at once; and they lashed their horses to the gallop and went tearing down the hill in a fury of rage and apprehension.

Mr. Fullalove was right, I think; a sailor is seldom a smart walker; but Dodd was a cricketer, you know, as well: he swung along at a good pace, and in high spirits. He had lost nothing but a few clothes, and a quadrant, and a chronometer; it was a cheap wreck to him and a joyful one: for peril past is present delight. He had saved his life; and what he valued more, his children's money. Never was that dear companion of his perils so precious to him as now. One might almost fancy that, by some strange sympathy, he felt the immediate happiness of his daughter depended on it. Many in my day believe that human minds can thus communicate, overleaping material distances. Not knowing, I can't say. However, no such solution is really needed here. All the members of an united and loving family feel together, and work together —without specific concert—though hemispheres lie between: it is one

of the beautiful traits of true family affection: now the Dodds, father mother, sister, brother, were more one in heart and love than any othe family I ever saw: woe to them if they had not.

David, then, walked towards Boulogne that afternoon a happy mar Already he tasted by anticipation the warm caresses of his wife and children, and saw himself seated at the hearth, with those beloved one clustering close round him. How would he tell them Its adventures— Its dangers from pirates—Its loss at sea—Its recovery—Its wreck—It coming ashore dry as a bone: and conclude by taking It out of h bosom, and dropping It in his wife's lap with cheer boys cheer!

Trudging on in this delightful reverie, his ear detected a pit-pat a some distance behind him: he looked round with very slight curiosit and saw two men coming up: even in that hasty glance he recognised the foul face of André Thibout: a face not to be forgotten in a day. don't know how it was, but he saw in a moment that face was after him to rob him: and he naturally enough concluded It was their object.

And he was without a weapon; and they were doubtless armed. Indeed, Thibout was swinging a heavy cudgel.

Poor Dodd's mind went into a whirl, and his body into a cold sweat In such moments men live a year. To gain a little time he walked swiftly on, pretending not to have noticed them: but oh his eyes rove wildly to each side of the road for a chance of escape. He saw none To his right was a precipitous rock; to his left a profound ravine with torrent below, and the sides scantily clothed with fir-trees and bushes he was, in fact, near the top of a long rising ground called "la mauvaise côte," on account of a murder committed there two hundred years ago.

Presently he heard the men close behind him. At the same momen he saw at the side of the ravine a flint stone about the size of two fists he made but three swift strides, snatched it up, and turned to meet the robbers, drawing himself up high, and showing fight in every inch.

The men were upon him. His change of attitude was so sudden and fiery that they recoiled a step. But it was only for a moment: they had gone too far to retreat; they divided, and Thibout attacked him on h left with uplifted cudgel, and Moinard on his right with a long glittering knife: the latter, to guard his head from the stone, whipped off his hat and held it before his head: but Dodd was what is called "left handed:" "ambidexter" would be nearer the mark (he carved and wrote with his right hand, heaved weights and flung cricket balls with his left). He stepped forward, flung the stone in Thibout's face with perfect precision and that bitter impetus a good thrower lends at the moment of delivery and almost at the same moment shot out his right hand and caught Moinard by the throat. Sharper and fiercer collision was never seen than of these three.

Thibout's face crashed; his blood squirted all round the stone; and eight yards off lay that assailant on his back.

Moinard was more fortunate: he got two inches of his knife into Dodd's left shoulder, at the very moment Dodd caught him in his right hand vice. And now one vengeful hand of iron grasped him fully by the throat; another seized his knife arm and twisted it back like a child's: he kicked and struggled furiously: but in half a minute the mighty English arm, and iron fingers, held the limp body of Jacques Moinard

with its knees knocking, temples bursting, throat relaxed, eyes protruding, and livid tongue lolling down to his chin: a few seconds more, and with the same stalwart arm that kept his relaxed and sinking body from falling, Dodd gave him one fierce whirl round to the edge of the road, then put a foot to his middle, and spurned his carcase with amazing force and fury down the precipice. Crunch! crunch! it plunged from tree to tree, from bush to bush, and at last rolled into a thick bramble and there stuck in the form of a crescent. But Dodd had no sooner sent him headlong by that mighty effort, than his own sight darkened, his head swam, and, after staggering a little way, he sank down in a state bordering on insensibility. Meantime Fullalove and Vespasian were galloping down the opposite hill to his rescue.

Unfortunately, André Thibout was not dead; nor even mortally wounded. He was struck on the nose and mouth: that nose was flat for the rest of his life, and half his front teeth were battered out of their sockets: but he fell, not from the brain being stunned, but the body driven to earth by the mere physical force of so momentous a blow: knocked down like a ninepin. He now sat up bewildered, and found himself in a pool of blood, his own. He had little sensation of pain; but he put his hand to his face, and found scarce a trace of his features; and his hand came away gory. He groaned.

Rising to his feet, he saw Dodd sitting at some distance: his first impulse was to fly from so terrible an antagonist: but, as he made for the ravine, he observed that Dodd was in a helpless condition: wounded perhaps by Moinard. And where was Moinard?

Nothing visible of him, but his knife: that lay glittering in the road.

Thibout, with anxious eye turned towards Dodd, kneeled to pick it up: and in the act a drop of his own blood fell on the dust beside it. He snarled like a wounded tiger; spat out half a dozen teeth: and crept on tiptoe to his safe revenge.

Awake from your lethargy, or you are a dead man!

No. Thibout got to him unperceived, and the knife glittered over his head.

At this moment the air seemed to fill with clattering hoofs and voices, and a pistol-shot rang. Dodd heard and started, and so saw his peril. He put up his left hand to parry the blow; but feebly. Luckily for him Thibout's eyes were now turned another way, and glaring with stupid terror out of his mutilated visage: a gigantic, mounted, fiend, with black face and white gleaming, rolling, eyes, was coming at him like the wind, uttering horrid howls; Thibout launched himself at the precipice with a shriek of dismay, and went rolling after his comrade: but, ere he had gone ten yards, he fell across a young larch-tree, and hung balanced. Up came the foaming horses: Fullalove dismounted hastily and fired three deliberate shots down at Thibout from his revolver. He rolled off, and never stopped again till he splashed into the torrent, and lay there staining it with blood from his battered face, and perforated shoulder.

Vespasian jumped off, and with glistening eyes administered some good brandy to Dodd. He, unconscious of his wound, a slight one, relieved their anxiety by assuring them somewhat faintly he was not hurt, but that, ever since that "tap on the head" he got in the Straits of

Gaspar, any angry excitement told on him, made his head swim, and his temples seem to swell from the inside.

"I should have come off second-best but for you, my dear friends. Shake hands over it, do! Oh, Lord bless you! Lord bless you both! As for you, Vespasian, I do think you are my guardian angel. Why this is the second time you've saved It. No it isn't: for it's the third."

"Now you git along, Massa Cap'n," said Vespasian. "You bery good man, ridicalous good man: and dis child arn't no gardening angel at all; he ar a darned Anatomy" (with such a look of offended dignity at Fullalove).

After examining the field of battle, and comparing notes, they mounted Dodd on Vespasian's horse, and walked quietly till Dodd's head got better; and then they cantered on three abreast, Vespasian in the middle with one sinewy hand on each horse's mane; and such was his muscular power that he often relieved his feet by lifting himself clean into the air: and the rest of the time his toe but touched the ground: and he sailed like an ostrich: and grinned and chattered like a monkey.

Sad to relate, neither Thibout nor Moinard was ended. The guillotine stood on its rights. Meantime, what was left of them crawled back to the town stiff and sore; and supped together—Moinard on liquids only—and vowed revenge on all wrecked people.

The three reached Boulogne in time for the Nancy, and put Dodd on board: the pair decided to go to the Yankee Paradise—Paris.

They parted with regret and tenderly like old tried friends; and Vespasian told Dodd, with the tears in his eyes, that, though he was in point of fact only a darned Anemone, he felt like a coloured Gemman, at parting from his dear old captain.

The master of the Nancy knew Dodd well, and gave him a nice cot to sleep in. He tumbled in with a bad headache, and quite worn out; and never woke for fifteen hours.

And when he did wake he was safe at Barkington.

He and It landed on the quay. He made for home.

On the way, he passed Hardie's Bank; a firm synonymous in his mind with the Bank of England.

A thrill of joy went through him. Now It *was* safe. When he first vewed It on in China, It seemed secure nowhere except on his own person. But, since then, the manifold perils by sea and land It had encountered through being on him, had caused a strong reaction in his mind on that point. He longed to see It safe out of his own hands, and in good custody.

He made for Hardie's door with a joyful rush, waved his cap over his head in triumph, and entered the Bank with It.

Ah!

## CHAPTER XV.

CHRONOLOGY.

The Hard Cash sailed from Canton months before the boat race at Henley recorded in Chapter I.; but it landed in Barkington a fortnight after the last home event I recorded in its true series.

Now this fortnight, as it happens, was fruitful of incidents; and must be dealt with at once. After that, "Love" and "Cash," the converging branches of this story, will flow together in one stream.

Alfred Hardie kept faith with Mrs. Dodd, and, by an effort she appreciated, forbore to express his love for Julia except by the pen. He took in Lloyd's shipping news, and got it down by rail in hopes there would be something about the Agra; then he could call at Albion Villa; Mrs. Dodd had given him that loophole: meantime he kept hoping for an invitation: which never came.

Julia was now comparatively happy: and so indeed was Alfred: but then the male of our species likes to be superlatively happy, not comparatively; and that Mrs. Dodd forgot, or perhaps had not observed.

One day Sampson was at Albion Villa, and Alfred knew it. Now, though it was a point of honour with poor Alfred not to hang about after Julia until her father's return, he had a perfect right to lay in wait for Sampson, and hear something about her; and he was so deep in love that even a word at second hand from her lips was a drop of dew to his heart.

So he strolled up towards the Villa. He had nearly reached it, when a woman ran past him making the most extraordinary sounds; I can only describe it as screaming under her breath. Though he only saw her back, he recognized Mrs. Maxley. One back differeth from another, whatever you may have been told to the contrary in novels and plays. He called to her: she took no notice, and darted wildly through the gate of Albion Villa. Alfred's curiosity was excited, and he ventured to put his head over the gate. But Mrs. Maxley had disappeared.

Alfred had half a mind to go in and inquire if anything was the matter: it would be a good excuse.

While he hesitated, the dining-room window was thrown violently up, and Sampson looked out: "Hy! Hardie! my good fellow! for Heaven's sake a fly! and a fast one!"

It was plain something very serious had occurred: so Alfred flew towards the nearest fly-stand. On the way, he fell in with a chance fly drawn up at a public-house; he jumped on the box and drove rapidly towards Albion Villa. Sampson was hobbling to meet him—he had sprained his ankle or would not have asked for a conveyance—to save time he got up beside Alfred, and told him to drive hard to Little Friar-street. On the way he explained hurriedly: Mrs. Maxley had burst in on him at Albion Villa to say her husband was dying in torment: and indeed the symptoms she gave were alarming, and, if correct, looked very like lock-jaw: but her description had been cut short by a severe attack, which choked her and turned her speechless and motionless, and white to the very lips:

"'Oho,' sis I, 'brist-pang!' And at such a time, ye know. But these women are as unseasonable as they are unreasonable. Now Angina pictoris, or brist-pang, is not curable through the lungs, nor the stomick, nor the liver, nor the stays, nor the saucepan, as the bunglintinkerindox of the schools pretind; but only through that mighty mainspring the Brain: and instid of going meandering to the Brain round by the stomick, and so giving the wumman lots o' time to die first, which is the

scholastic practice, I wint at the Brain direct, took a puff o' chlorofm, put m' arm round her neck, laid her back in a chair—she didn't struggle, for, when this disorrder grips ye, ye can't move hand nor foot—and had my lady into the land of Nod in half a minute; thin off t' her husband; so here's th' Healer between two stools—spare the whipcord, spoil the knacker!—it would be a good joke if I was to lose both pashints for want of a little unbeequity, wouldn't it—Lash the lazy vagabin!—Not that I care: what interest have I in their lives? they never pay: but ye see custom's second nature; an d'Ive formed a vile habit; I've got to be a Healer among the killers: an d'a Triton among—the millers: here we are at last, Hiven be praised." And he hopped into the house faster than most people can run on a good errand. Alfred flung the reins to a cad, and followed him.

The room was nearly full of terrified neighbours: Sampson shouldered them all roughly out of his way; and there, on a bed, lay Maxley's gaunt figure in agony.

His body was drawn up by the middle into an arch, and nothing touched the bed but the head and the heels; the toes were turned back in the most extraordinary contortion, and the teeth set by the rigour of the convulsion; and in the man's white face and fixed eyes were the horror and anxiety, that so often show themselves when the body feels itself in the gripe of Death.

Mr. Osmond the surgeon was there; he had applied a succession of hot cloths to the pit of the stomach, and was trying to get laudanum down the throat; but the clenched teeth were impassable.

He now looked up and said politely: "Ah! Dr. Sampson, I am glad to see you here. The seizure is of a cataleptic nature, I apprehend. The treatment hitherto has been hot epithems to the abdomen, and——"

Here Sampson, who had examined the patient keenly and paid no more attention to Osmond than to a fly buzzing, interrupted him as unceremoniously:

"Poisoned," said he, philosophically.

"Poisoned!!" screamed the people.

"Poisoned!" cried Mr. Osmond, in whose little list of stereotyped maladies poisoned had no place. "Is there any one you have reason to suspect?"

"I don't suspect, nor conject, sir: I know. The man is poisoned, the substance strychnine; now stand out of the way you gaping gabies, and let me work: hy, young Oxford! you are a man: get behind and hold both his arms, for your life! That's you."

He whipped off his coat: laid hold of Osmond's epithems, chucked them across the room, saying, "You may just as well squirt rose-water at a house on fire;" drenched his handkerchief with chloroform, sprang upon the patient like a mountain cat, and chloroformed him with all his might.

Attacked so skilfully and resolutely, Maxley resisted little for so strong a man; but the potent poison within fought virulently: as a proof, the chloroform had to be renewed three times before it could produce any effect. At last the patient yielded to the fumes, and became insensible.

Then the arched body subsided, and the rigid muscles relaxed and

turned supple. Sampson kneaded the man like dough, by way of comment.

"It is really very extraordinary," said Osmond.

"Mai—dearr—sirr—nothing's extraornary; t' a man that knows the reason of iverything."

He then inquired if any one in the room had noticed at what intervals of time the pains came on.

'I am sorry to say it is continuous," said Osmond.

"Mai—dearr—sirr—nothing on airth is continuous: iverything has paroxysms and remissions—from a toothache t' a cancer."

He repeated his query in various forms, till at last a little girl squeaked out: "If—*you*—please, sir, the throes do come about every ten minutes, for I was a looking at the clock; I carries father his dinner at twelve."

"If you please, ma'am, there's half a guinea for you for not being such a n' ijjit as the rest of the world, especially the Dockers." And he jerked her half a sovereign.

A stupor fell on the assembly. They awoke from it to examine the coin, and see if it was real; or only yellow air.

Maxley came to, and gave a sigh of relief. When he had been sensible, yet out of pain, nearly eight minutes by the clock, Sampson chloroformed him again. "I'll puzzle ye, my friend strych," said he. "How will ye get your perriodical paroxysm when the man is insensible? The Dox say y' act direct on the spinal marrow. Well, there's the spinal marrow where you found it just now. Act on it again, my lad! I give ye leave—if ye can. Ye can't; bekase ye must pass through the Brain to get there: and I occupy the Brain with a swifter ajint than y' are, and mean to keep y' out of it till your power to kill evaporates, being a vigitable."

With this his spirits mounted, and he indulged in a harmless and favourite fiction: he feigned the company were all males and medical students, Osmond included, and he the lecturer: "Now, jintlemen," said he, "obsairve the great Therey of the Perriodecity and Remittency of all disease; in conjunckshin with its practice. All diseases have paroxysms, and remissions, which occur at intervals; sometimes it's a year, sometimes a day, an hour, ten minutes; but whatever th' interval, they are true to it: they keep time. Only when the Disease is retirin, the remissions become longer, the paroxysms return at a greater interval: and just the revairse when the pashint is to die. This, jintlemen, is man's life from the womb to the grave: the throes that precede his birth are remittent like ivery thing else, but come at diminished intervals when he has really made up his mind to be born (his first mistake, sirs, but not his last); and the paroxysms of his mortal disease come at shorter intervals when he is really goon off the hooks: but still chronometrically; just as watches keep time whether they go fast or slow. Now, jintlemen, isn't this a beautiful Therey?"

"Oh mercy! Oh good people help me! Oh Jesus Christ have pity on me!" And the sufferer's body was bent like a bow, and his eyes filled with horror, and his toes pointed at his chin.

The Doctor hurled himself on the foe: "Come," said he, "smoll to this, lad! That's right! He is better already, jintlemen, or he couldn't

howl, ye know. Deevil a howl in um before I gave um puff chlorofin. Ah! would ye? would ye?"

"Oh! oh! oh! oh! ugh!——ah!"

The Doctor got off the insensible body, and resumed his lecture calmly, like one who has disposed of some childish interruption; "and now to th' application of the Therey: if the poison can reduce the tin minutes' interval to five minutes, this pashint will die: and if I can get the tin minutes up t' half hour, this pashint will live. Any way, jintlemen, we won't detain y' unreasonably: the case shall be at an end by one o'clock."

On hearing this considerate stipulation, up went three women's aprons to their eyes.

"Alack! poor James Maxley! he is at his last hour: it be just gone twelve, and a dies at one."

Sampson turned on the weepers: "Who says that, y' ijjits? I said the case would end at one: a case ends when the pashint gets well, or dies."

"Oh, that is good news for poor Susan Maxley; her man is to be well by one o'clock, Doctor says."

Sampson groaned, and gave in. He was strong, but not strong enough to make the populace suspend an opinion.

Yet, methinks, it might be done: by chloroforming them.

The spasms came at longer intervals and less violent: and Maxley got so fond of the essence of Insensibility, that he asked to have some in his own hand to apply at the first warning of the horrible pains.

Sampson said, "Any fool can complete the cure;" and, by way of practical comment, left him in Mr. Osmond's charge: but with an understanding that the treatment should not be varied: that no laudanum should be given: but, in due course, a stiff tumbler of brandy and water; or two. "If he gets drunk, all the better; a little intoxication weakens the body's memory of the pain it has endured, and so expedites the cure. Now off we go to th' other."

"The body's memory!" said Mr. Osmond to himself: "what on earth does the Quack mean?"

The driver, de jure, of the fly, was not quite drunk enough to lose his horse and vehicle without missing them. He was on the look out for the robber, and, as Alfred came round the corner full pelt, darted at the reins with a husky remonstrance, and Alfred cut into him with the whip: an angry explanation—a guinea—and behold the driver sitting behind complacent, and nodding.

Arrived at Albion Villa, Alfred asked Sampson submissively if he might come in and see the wife cured.

"Why of course," said Sampson, not knowing the delicate position.

"Then ask me in before Mrs. Dodd," murmured Alfred, coaxingly.

"Oo, ay," said the Doctor, knowingly. "I see."

Mrs. Maxley was in the dining-room: she had got well of herself: but was crying bitterly, and the ladies would not let her go home yet; they feared the worst, and that some one would blurt it out of her.

To this anxious trio entered Sampson, radiant: "There, it's all right. Come, little Maxley, ye needn't cry, he has got lots more mischief to do in the world yet: but, oh, wumman, it is lucky you came to me and not

to any of the tinkering dox. No more cat and dog for you and him, but for the Chronothairmal Therey: and you may bless my puppy's four bones too: he ran and stole a fly like a man, and drove hilter-skilter: now, if I had got to your house two minutes later, your Jamie would have lairned the great secret ere this." He threw up the window. "Haw you! come away and receive the applause due from beauty t' ajeelity."

Alfred came in timidly, and was received with perfect benignity, and self-possession, by Mrs. Dodd; but Julia's face was dyed with blushes, and her eyes sparkled the eloquent praise she was ashamed to speak before them all. But such a face as hers scarce needed the help of a voice at such a time. And, indeed, both the lovers' faces were a pretty sight, and a study. How they stole loving glances! but tried to keep within bounds, and not steal more than three per minute! and how unconscious they endeavoured to look, the intervening seconds! and what windows were the demure complacent visages they thought they were making shutters of! Innocent love has at least this advantage over melodramatic, that it can extract exquisite sweetness out of so small a thing. These sweethearts were not alone, could not open their hearts, must not even gaze too long; yet to be in the same room even on such terms was a taste of Heaven.

"But, dear heart!" said Mrs. Maxley, "ye don't tell me what he ailed. Ma'am, if you had seen him you would have said he was taken for death."

"Pray what *is* the complaint?" inquired Mrs. Dodd.

"Oh, didn't I tell ye? poisoned."

This intelligence was conveyed with true scientific calmness, and received with feminine ejaculations of horror. Mrs. Maxley was indignant into the bargain: "Don't ye go giving my house an ill-name! We keeps no poison."

Sampson fixed his eyes sternly on her: "Wumman, ye know better: ye keep strychnine: for th' use and delectation of your domistic animal."

"Strychnine! I never heard tell of it. Is that Latin for arsenic?"

"Now isn't this lamentable? Why arsenic is a mital: strychnine a vigitable. Nlist me! Your man was here seeking strychnine to poison his mouse; a harmless, domistic, necessary mouse: I told him mice were a part of Nature as much as Maxleys, and life as sweet tit as tim: but he was dif to sceintific and chrischin preceps; so I told him to go to the Deevil: 'I will,' sis he, and went t' a docker. The two assassins have poisoned the poor beastie between 'em: and thin, been the greatest miser in the world, except one, he will have roasted his victim, and ato her on the sly, imprignated with strychnine. 'I'll steal a march on t'other miser,' sis he; and that's you: t' his brain flew the strychnine: his brain sint it to his spinal marrow: and we found my lorrd bent like a bow, and his jaw locked, and nearer knowin the great secret than any man in England will be this year to live: and sairves the assassinating old vagibin right."

"Heaven forgive you, Doctor," said Mrs. Maxley, half mechanically.

"For curin a murrderer? Not likely."

Mrs. Maxley, who had shown signs of singular uneasiness during Sampson's explanation, now rose, and said in a very peculiar tone, she must go home directly.

Mrs. Dodd seemed to enter into her feelings, and made her go in the fly, taking care to pay the fare and the driver out of her own purse. As the woman got into the fly, Sampson gave her a piece of friendly and practical advice. "Nixt time he has a mind to breakfast on strychnine, you tell me; and I'll put a pinch of arsenic in the saltcellar, and cure him safe as the Bank. But this time he'd have been did, and stiff, long before such a slow ajint as arsenic could get a hold on um."

They sat down to luncheon: but neither Alfred nor Julia fed much, except upon sweet stolen looks; and soon the active Sampson jumped up, and invited Alfred to go round his patients. Alfred could not decline, but made his adieux with regret so tender, and undisguised, that Julia's sweet eyes filled, and her soft hand instinctively pressed his at parting to console him. She blushed at herself afterwards; but at the time she was thinking only of him.

Maxley and his wife came up in the evening with a fee. They had put their heads together; and proffered one guinea. "Man and wife be one flesh, you know, Doctor," said the rustic miser.

Sampson, whose natural choler was constantly checked by his humour, declined this profuse proposal. "Here's vanity!" said he: "now do you really think your two lives are worth a guinea? Why it's 252 pence! 1,008 farthings!"

The pair affected disappointment; vilely.

At all events he must accept this basket of gudgeons Maxley had brought along. Being poisoned was quite out of Maxley's daily routine, and had so unsettled him, that he had got up, and gone fishing to the amazement of the parish.

Sampson inspected the basket: "Why they are only fish!" said he; "*I was in hopes they were pashints.*" He accepted the gudgeons, and inquired how Maxley got poisoned. It came out that Mrs. Maxley, seeing her husband set apart a portion of his Welsh rabbit, had "grizzled," and asked what that was for: and being told "for the mouse," and to "mind her own business," had grizzled still more, and furtively conveyed a portion back into the pan for her master's own use. She had been quaking dismally all the afternoon at what she had done; but finding Maxley—hard but just—did not attack her for an involuntary fault, she now brazened it out, and said, "Men didn't ought to have poison in the house unbeknown to their wives. Jem had got no more than he worked for, &c." But, like a woman, she vowed vengeance on the mouse: whereupon Maxley threatened her with the marital correction of neck-twisting, if she laid a finger on it.

"My eyes be open now to what a poor creature do feel as dies poisoned. Let her a be: there's room in our place for her and we."

Next day he met Alfred, and thanked him with warmth, almost with emotion: "There ain't many in Barkington as ever done me a good turn, Master Alfred; you be one on em: you comes after the captain in my book now."

Alfred suggested that his claims were humble compared with Sampson's.

"No, no," said Maxley, going down to his whisper, and looking monstrous wise: "Doctor didn't go out of his business for me: you did."

The sage miser's gratitude had not time to die a natural death before circumstances occurred to test it. On the morning of that eventful day, which concluded my last chapter, he received a letter from Canada. His wife was out with eggs; so he caught little Rose Sutton, that had more than once spelled an epistle for him; and she read it out in a loud and reckless whine: "'At—noon—this—very—daie—Muster—Hardie's a-g-e-n-t—aguent—d-i-s dis, h-o-n—Honour*ed*—dis-Honour*ed*—a—bill; and sayed.'" Here she made a full stop. Then on to the next verse.

"'There—were no—more—asses.'"

"Mercy on us! but it can't be asses, wench: drive your spe-ad into't again."

"'A-s-s-e-t-s. Assets.'"

"Ah! Go an! go an!"

"'Now—Fatther—if—you—leave—a s-h-i-l-l-i-n-g, shilling—at—Hardie's—after—this—b-l-a-m-e—ble-am—your—self—not—me—for—this—is—the—waie—the—r-o-g-u-e-s—rogews—all—bre-ak—they—go—at—a—d-i-s-t-a-n-c-e—distance—first—and—then—at—h-o-m-e—whuoame.—Dear—fatther'—Lawk o' daisy what ails you, Daddy Maxley? You be as white as a Sunday smock. Be you poisoned, again, if *you* please?"

"Worse than that—worse!" groaned Maxley, trembling all over. "Hush!—hold your tongue! Give me that letter! Don't you never tell nobody nothing of what you have been a reading to me, and I'll—I'll—It's only Jem's fun: he is allus running his rigs—that's a good wench now, and I'll give ye a halfpenny."

"La, Daddy," said the child, opening her eyes, "I never heeds what I *re-ads:* I be wrapped up in the spelling. Dear heart, what a sight of long words folks puts in a letter, more than ever drops out of their mouths; which their fingers be longer than their tongues I do suppose."

Maxley hailed this information characteristically. "Then we'll say no more about the halfpenny."

At this, Rose raised a lamentable cry, and pearly tears gushed forth.

"There, there," said Maxley, deprecatingly; "here's two apples for ye; ye can't get them for less: and a halfpenny or a haporth, is all one to you; but it is a great odds to me. And apples they rot; halfpence don't."

It was now nine o'clock. The Bank did not open till ten; but Maxley went and hung about the door, to be the first applicant.

As he stood there trembling with fear lest the Bank should not open at all, he thought hard; and the result was a double resolution; he would have his money out to the last shilling; and, this done, would button up his pockets and padlock his tongue. It was not his business to take care of his neighbours; nor to blow the Hardies, if they paid him his money on demand. "So not a word to my missus, nor yet to the town-crier," said he.

Ten o'clock struck, and the Bank shutters remained up. Five minutes more, and the watcher was in agony. Three minutes more, and up came a boy of sixteen whistling, and took down the shutters with an indifference that amazed him. "Bless your handsome face!" said Maxley, with a sigh of relief.

He now summoned all his firmness, and, having recourse to an art,

in which these shrewd rustics are supreme, made his face quite inexpressive, and so walked into the Bank the every-day Maxley, externally; but, within, a volcano ready to burst if there should be the slightest hesitation to pay him his money.

"Good morning, Mr. Maxley," said young Skinner.

"Good morning, sir."

"What can we do for you?"

"Oh, I'll wait my turn, sir."

"Well, it is your turn now, if you like."

"How much have you got of mine, if you please, sir."

"Your balance? I'll see. Nine hundred and four pounds."

"Well, sir, then, if *you* please, I'll draa *that*."

"It has come!" thought Skinner. "What, going to desert us?" he stammered.

"No," said the other, trembling inwardly, but not moving a facial muscle: "it is only for a day or two, sir."

"Ah! I see, going to make a purchase. By-the-by, I believe Mr. Hardie means to offer you some grounds he is buying outside the town: will that suit your book?"

"I dare say it will, sir."

"Then perhaps you will wait till our governor comes in?"

"I have no objection."

"He won't be long. Fine weather for the gardens, Mr. Maxley."

"Moderate, sir. I'll take my money if you please. Counting of it out, that will help pass the time till Muster Hardie comes. You han't made away with it?"

"What d' ye mean, sir?"

"Hardies bain't turned thieves, be they?"

"Are you mad, or intoxicated, Mr. Maxley?"

"Neither, sir: but I wants my own: and I wool have it too: so count out on this here counter, or I'll cry the town round that there door."

"Henry, score James Maxley's name off the books," said Skinner, with cool dignity. But, when he had said this, he was at his wits' end: there were not nine hundred pounds of hard cash in the Bank; nor anything like it.

## CHAPTER XVI.

SKINNER—called "young" because he had once had a father on the premises—was the mole-catcher. The feelings, with which he had now for some months watched his master grubbing, were curiously mingled. There was the grim sense of superiority every successful Detective feels as he sees the watched one working away unconscious of the eye that is on him; but this was more than balanced by a long habit of obsequious reverence. When A. has been looking up to B. for thirty years, he cannot look down on him all of a sudden, merely because he catches him falsifying accounts. Why, Man is a cooking animal: bankrupt Man especially.

And then Richard Hardie overpowered Skinner's senses: he was Dignity in person: he was six feet two and always wore a black surtout buttoned

high, and a hat with a brim a little broader than his neighbours, yet not broad enough to be eccentric or slang. He moved down the street touching his hat—while other hats were lifted high to him—a walking column of cash. And when he took off this ebon crown, and sat in the Bank parlour, he gained in appearance more than he lost; for then his whole head was seen, long, calm, majestic: that senatorial front, and furrowed face, overawed all comers: even the little sharp-faced clerk would stand and peep at it utterly puzzled between what he knew and what he eyed: nor could he look at that head and face without excusing them; what a lot of money they must have sunk before they came down to fabricating a balance-sheet!

And by-and-by custom somewhat blunted his sense of the dishonesty: and he began to criticise the thing arithmetically instead of morally: that view once admitted, he was charmed with the ability and subtlety of his dignified sharper: and so the mole-catcher began gradually, but effectually, to be corrupted by the mole. He who watches a dishonest process and does not stop it, is half way towards conniving: who connives, is half way towards abetting.

The next thing was, Skinner felt mortified at his master not trusting him. Did he think old Bob Skinner's son would blow on Hardie after all these years?

This rankled a little, and set him to console himself by admiring his own cleverness in penetrating this great distrustful man. Now of all sentiments Vanity is the most restless and the surest to peep out; Skinner was no sooner inflated, than his demure obsequious manner underwent a certain change; slight and occasional only: but Hardie was a subtle man, and the perilous path he was treading made him wonderfully watchful, suspicious, and sagacious: he said to himself, "What has come to Skinner? I must know." So he quietly watched his watcher; and soon satisfied himself he suspected something amiss. From that hour Skinner was a doomed clerk.

It was two o'clock: Hardie had just arrived, and sat in the parlour Cato-like, and cooking.

Skinner was in high spirits: it was owing to his presence of mind the Bank had not been broken some hours ago by Maxley; so now while concluding his work, he was enjoying by anticipation his employer's gratitude: "he can't hold aloof after this," said Skinner; "he must honour me with his confidence. And I will deserve it. I do deserve it."

A grave, calm, passionless voice invited him into the parlour.

He descended from his desk and went in, swelling with demure complacency.

He found Mr. Hardie seated garbling his accounts with surpassing dignity. The great man handed him an envelope, and cooked majestic on. A wave of that imperial hand, and Skinner had mingled with the past.

For know that the envelope contained three things: a check for a month's wages; a character; and a dismissal, very polite, and equally peremptory.

Skinner stood paralysed: the complacency died out of his face, and rueful wonder came instead: it was some time before he could utter a word: at last he faltered: "Turn me away, sir? turn away Noah

Skinner! your father would never have said such a word to *my* father." Skinner uttered this his first remonstrance in a voice trembling with awe; but gathered courage when he found he had done it, yet lived.

Mr. Hardie evaded his expostulation by a very simple means: he made no reply; but continued his work, dignified as Brutus, inexorable as Fate, cool as Cucumber.

Skinner's anger began to rise. He watched Mr. Hardie in silence, and said to himself, "Curse you! you were born without a heart!"

He waited, however, for some sign of relenting; and, hoping for it, the water came into his own eyes. But Hardie was impassive as ice.

Then the little clerk, mortified to the core, as well as wounded, ground his teeth, and drew a little nearer to this incarnate Arithmetic; and said with an excess of obsequiousness: "Will you condescend to give me a reason for turning me away all in a moment, after five and thirty years' faithful services?"

"Men of business do not deal in reasons," was the cool reply: "it is enough for you that I give you an excellent character, and that we part good friends."

"That we do not," replied Skinner, sharply: "if we stay together we are friends; but we part enemies, if we do part."

"As you please, Mr. Skinner. I will detain you no longer."

And Mr. Hardie waved him away so grandly, that he started and almost ran to the door. When he felt the handle, it acted like a prop to his heart. He stood firm; and rage supplied the place of steady courage. He clung to the door, and whispered at his master; such a whisper; so loud, so cutting, so full of meaning and malice; it was like a serpent hissing at a man. "But I'll give *you* a reason, a good reason, why you had better not insult me so cruel: and what is more, I'll give you two: and one is that but for me the Bank must have closed this day at ten o'clock—ay, you may stare; it was I saved it, not you—and the other is that, if you make an enemy of me, you are done for. I know too much to be made an enemy of, sir: a great deal too much."

At this, Mr. Hardie raised his head from his book and eyed his crouching venemous assailant full in the face, majestically, as one can fancy a lion rearing his ponderous head, and looking lazily and steadily at a snake that has just hissed in a corner. Each word of Skinner's was a barbed icicle to him; yet not a muscle of his close countenance betrayed his inward suffering.

One thing, however, even he could not master; his blood: it retired from that stoical cheek to the chilled and foreboding heart; and the sudden pallor of the resolute face told Skinner his shafts had gone home: "Come, sir," said he, affecting to mingle good fellowship with his defiance; "why bundle me off these premises, when you will be bundled off them yourself before the week is out?"

"You insolent scoundrel! Humph. Explain, Mr. Skinner."

"Ah, what have I warmed your marble up a bit? Yes, I'll explain. The Bank is rotten, and can't last forty-eight hours."

"Oh, indeed! blighted in a day—by the dismissal of Mr. Noah Skinner. Do not repeat that after you have been turned into the streets; or you will be indicted: at present we are confidential. Anything more before you quit the rotten Bank?"

"Yes, sir, plenty. I'll tell you your own history, past, present, and to come. The road to riches is hard and rugged to the likes of me; but your good father made it smooth and easy to you, sir; you had only to take the money of a lot of fools that fancy they can't keep it themselves; invest it in Consols and Exchequer bills, live on half the profits, put by the rest, and roll in wealth. But this was too slow, and too sure, for you; you must be Rothschild in a day; so you went into blind speculation, and flung old Mr. Hardie's savings into a well. And now for the last eight months you have been doctoring the ledger;" Hardie winced just perceptibly; "you have put down our gains in white, our losses in black, and so you keep feeding your pocket-book and emptying our tills: the pear will soon be ripe, and then you will let it drop, and into the Bankruptcy Court we go. But, what you forget, fraudulent Bankruptcy isn't the turnpike way of trade: it is a broad road, but a crooked one: skirts the prison wall, sir, and sights the herring pond."

An agony went across Mr. Hardie's great face; and seemed to furrow as it ran.

"Not but what *you* are all right, sir," resumed his little cat-like tormentor, letting him go a little way, to nail him again by-and-by: "you have cooked the books in time; and Cocker was a fool to you. 'Twill be all down in black and white. Great sacrifices: no reserve: creditors take everything; dividend fourpence in the pound, furniture of house and bank, Mrs. Hardie's portrait, and down to the coalscuttle. Bankrupt saves nothing but his honour, and —— the six thousand pounds or so he has stitched into his old great-coat: hands his new one to the official assignees, like an honest man."

Hardie uttered something between a growl and a moan.

"Now comes the per contra: poor little despised Noah Skinner has kept genuine books, while you have been preparing false ones. I took the real figures home every afternoon on loose leaves: and bound 'em: and very curious they will read in Court alongside of yours. I did it for amusement o' nights; I'm so solitary, and so fond of figures: I must try and turn them to profit; for I'm out of place now in my old age. Deareo me! how curious that you should go and pick out me of all men, to turn into the street like a dog—like a dog—like a dog."

Hardie turned his head away; and, in that moment of humiliation and abject fear, drank all the bitterness of moral death.

His manhood urged him to defy Skinner and return to the straight path, cost what it might. But how could he? His own books were all falsified. He could place a true *total* before his creditors by simply adding the contents of his secret hoard to the assets of the Bank; but with this true arithmetical result he could not square his books, except by conjectural and fabricated details, which would be detected, and send him to prison; for who would believe he was lying in figures only to get back to the truth? No, he had entangled himself in his own fraud, and was at the mercy of his servant. He took his line. "Skinner, it was your interest to leave me whilst the Bank stood; then you would have got a place directly; but since you take umbrage at my dismissing you for your own good, I must punish you—by keeping you."

"I am quite ready to stay and serve you, sir," replied Skinner hastily.

"and as for my angry words, think no more of them! it went to my heart to be turned away at the very time you need me most."

("Hypocritical rogue!") thought Hardie. "That is true, Skinner," said he; "I do indeed need a faithful and sympathising servant, to advise, support, and aid me. Ask yourself whether any man in England needs a confidant more than I! It was bitter at first to be discovered even by you: but now I am glad you know all; for I see I have undervalued your ability as well as your zeal."

Thus Mr. Hardie bowed his pride to flatter Skinner: and soon saw by the little fellow's heightened colour that this was the way to make him a clerk of wax.

The Banker and his clerk were reconciled. Then the latter was invited to commit himself by carrying on the culinary process in his own hand. He trembled a little: but complied, and so became an accomplice; on this his master took him into his confidence, and told him everything it was impossible to hide from him.

"And now, sir," said Skinner, "let me tell you what I did for you this morning. Then perhaps you won't wonder at my being so peppery. Maxley *suspects:* he came here and drew out every shilling. I was all in a perspiration what to do. But I put a good face on, and——"

Skinner then confided to his principal how he had evaded Maxley, and saved the Bank; and the stratagem seemed so incredible and droll, that they both laughed over it long and loud. And in fact it turned out a first-rate practical jest; cost two lives.

While they were laughing, the young clerk looked in, and said, "Captain Dodd, to speak with you, sir!"

"Captain Dodd!!!" And all Mr. Hardie's forced merriment died away, and his face betrayed his vexation for once. "Did you go and tell him I was here?"

"Yes, sir: I had no orders; and he said you would be sure to see *him*."

"Unfortunate! Well, you may show him in when I ring your bell."

The youngster being gone, Mr. Hardie explained to his new ally in a few hurried words the danger that threatened him from Miss Julia Dodd. "And now," said he, "the women have sent her father to soften his. I shall be told his girl will die if she can't have my boy, &c. As if I care who lives or dies."

On this Skinner got up all in a hurry, and offered to go into the office.

"On no account," said Mr. Hardie, sharply. "I shall make my business with you the excuse for cutting this love-nonsense mighty short. Take your book to the desk, and seem buried in it."

He then touched the bell, and both confederates fell into an attitude: never were a pair so bent over their little accounts; lies, like themselves.

Instead of the heartbroken father their comedy awaited, in came the gallant sailor with a brown cheek reddened by triumph and excitement, and almost shouted in a genial jocund voice, "How d'ye do, sir? It is a long time since I came across your hawse." And with this he held out his hand cordially. Hardie gave his mechanically, and remained on his guard; but somewhat puzzled. Dodd shook his cold hand heartily. "Well, sir, here I am, just come ashore, and visiting you before my very wife: what d'ye think of that?"

"I am highly honoured, sir," said Hardie: then, rather stiffly and incredulously, "and to what may I owe this extraordinary preference? Will you be good enough to state the purport of this visit—briefly—as Mr. Skinner and I are much occupied."

"The purport? Why what does one come to a banker about? I have got a lot of money I want to get rid of."

Hardie stared; but was as much on his guard as ever; only more and more puzzled.

Then David winked at him with simple cunning, took out his knife, undid his shirt, and began to cut the threads which bound the Cash to his flannel.

At this Skinner wheeled round on his stool to look, and both he and Mr. Hardie inspected the unusual pantomime with demure curiosity.

Dodd next removed the oilskin cover, and showed the pocket-book, brought it down with a triumphant smack on the hollow of his hand, and, in the pride of his heart, the joy of his bosom, and the fever of his blood—for there were two red spots on his cheek all the time—told the cold pair Its adventures in a few glowing words; the Calcutta firm,—the two pirates,—the hurricane,—the wreck,—the land sharks,—he had saved It from. "And here It is, safe in spite of them all. But I won't carry It on me any more; it is unlucky: so you must be so good as to take charge of It for me, sir."

"Very well, Captain Dodd. You wish it placed to Mrs. Dodd's account, I suppose."

"No! no! I have nothing to do with that: this is between you and me."

"As you please."

"Ye see it is a good lump, sir."

"Oh, indeed!" said Hardie, a little sneeringly.

"I call it a thundering lot o' money. But I suppose it is not much to a rich banker like you." Then he lowered his voice, and said with a certain awe: "It's—fourteen—thousand—pounds."

"Fourteen thousand pounds!!!" cried Hardie. Then with sudden and consummate coolness, "Why certainly an established bank like this deals with more considerable deposits than that. Skinner, why don't you give the captain a chair?"

"No, no!" said Dodd. "I'll hea-o to till I get this off my mind; but I won't anchor anywhere but at home." He then opened the pocket-book and spread the contents out before Mr. Hardie, who ran over the notes and bills, and said the amount was 14,010*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Dodd asked for a receipt.

"Why, it is not usual, when there is an account."

Dodd's countenance fell: "Oh, I should not like to part with it, unless I had a receipt."

"You mistake me," said Hardie, with a smile. "An entry in your Banker's book is a receipt. However, you can have one in another form." He then unlocked a desk; took out a banker's receipt; and told Skinner to fill it in. This done, he seemed to be absorbed in some more important matter.

Skinner counted the notes and left them with Mr. Hardie: the bills he took to his desk to note them on the back of the receipt. Whilst he

was writing this with his usual slowness and precision, poor Dodd's heart overflowed: "It is my children's fortune, ye see: I don't look on a sixpence of it as mine: that it is what made me so particular. It belongs to my little Julia, bless her!—she is a rosebud if ever there was one; and oh, such a heart; and so fond of her poor father; but not fonder than he is of her—and to my dear boy Edward; he is the honestest young chap you ever saw: what he says, you may swear to, with your eyes shut; but how could they miss either good looks or good hearts; and *her* children? the best wife and the best mother in England! She has been a true consort to me this many a year, and I to her, in deep water and shoal, let the wind blow high or low. Here is a Simple Simon vaunting his own flesh and blood! No wonder that little gentleman there is grinning at me: well, grin away, lad! perhaps you haven't got any children. But you have, sir: and you know how it is with us fathers; our hearts are so full of the little darlings, out it must come. *You* can understand how joyful I feel at saving their fortune from land sharks and sea sharks, and landing it safe in an honest man's hands, like you, and your father before you."

Skinner handed him the receipt.

He cast his eye over it. "All right, little gentleman. Now my heart is relieved of such a weight: I feel to have just cleared out a cargo of bricks. Good-bye! shake hands! I wish you were as happy as I am. I wish all the world was happy. God bless you! God bless you both!"

And with this burst he was out of the room, and making ardently for Albion Villa.

The Banker and his clerk turned round on their seats and eyed one another a long time in silence, and amazement.

Was this thing a dream? their faces seemed to ask.

Then Mr. Hardie rested his senatorial head on his hand, and pondered deeply. Skinner too reflected on this strange freak of Fortune: and the result was that he burst in on his principal's reverie with a joyful shout: "The Bank is saved! Hardie's is good for another hundred years."

The Banker started, for Skinner's voice sounded like a pistol shot in his ear, so high strung was he with thought.

"Hush! hush!" he said: and pondered again in silence.

At last he turned to Skinner. "You think our course is plain? I tell you it is so dark and complicated it would puzzle Solomon to know what is best to be done."

"Save the Bank, sir! whatever you do."

"How can I save the Bank with a few thousand pounds, which I must refund when called on? You look keenly into what is under your eye, Skinner; but you cannot see a yard beyond your nose. Let me think."

After a while he took a sheet of paper, and jotted down "the materials," as he called them, and read them out to his accomplice:

"1. A bank too far gone to be redeemed. If I throw this money into it, I shall ruin Captain Dodd, and do myself no good, but only my creditors.

"2. Miss Julia Dodd, virtual proprietor of this 14 000*l*: or of the

greater part, if I choose. The child that marries first usually jockeys the other.

"3. Alfred Hardie, my son, and my creditor, deep in love with No. 2, and at present somewhat alienated from me by my thwarting a silly love affair; which bids fair to improve into a sound negotiation.

"4. The 14,000*l.* paid to me personally after Banking hours, and not entered on the banking books, nor known but to you and me.

"Now suppose I treat this advance as a personal trust? The Bank breaks: the money disappears. Consternation of the Dodds, who, until enlightened by the public settlement, will think it has gone into the well.

"In that interval I talk Alfred over: and promise to produce the 14,000*l.* intact, with my paternal blessing on him and Miss Dodd; provided he will release me from my debt to him, and give me a life interest in half the money settled on him by my wife's father to my most unjust and insolent exclusion. Their passion will soon bring the young people to reason: and then they will soon melt the old ones."

Skinner was struck with this masterly little sketch. But he detected one fatal flaw: "You don't say what is to become of me."

"Oh, I haven't thought of that yet."

"But do think of it, sir! that I may have the pleasure of co-operating. It would never do for you and me to be pulling two ways, you know."

"I will not forget you," said Hardie, wincing under the chain this little wretch held him with, and had jerked him by way of reminder.

"But surely, Skinner, you agree with me it would be a sin and a shame to rob this honest captain of his money—for my creditors; curse them! Ah, you are not a father. How quickly he found that out! Well, I am: and he touched me to the quick: I love my little Jane as dearly as he loves his Julia, every bit: and I feel for *him*. And then he put me in mind of my own father; poor man. That seems strange, doesn't it? a sailor; and a banker. Ah! it was because they were both honest men. Yes, it was like a wholesome flower coming into a close room, and then out again and leaving a whiff behind, was that sailor. He left the savour of Probity and Simplicity behind, though he took the things themselves away again. Why, why couldn't he leave us what is more wanted here than even his money? His integrity: the pearl of price, that my father, whom I used to sneer at, carried to his grave; and died simple, but wise; honest, but rich; rich in money, in credit, in honour, and eternal hopes: oh, Skinner! Skinner! I wish I had never been born."

Skinner was surprised: he was not aware that intelligent men, who sin, are subject to fits of remorse: nay, more, he was frightened; for the emotion of this iron man, so hard to move, was overpowering when it came: it did not soften, it convulsed him.

"Don't talk so, sir," said the little clerk. "Keep up your heart! Have a drop of something."

"You are right," said Mr. Hardie, gloomily; "it is idle to talk: we are all the slaves of circumstances."

With this, he unlocked a safe that stood against the wall, chucked the 14,000*l.* in, and slammed the iron door sharply; and, as it closed upon the Cash with a clang, the parlour door burst open as if by concert, and David Dodd stood on the threshold, looking terrible. His ruddy colour

was all gone, and he seemed black and white with anger and anxiety. And out of this blanched, yet lowering face, his eyes glowed like coals, and roved keenly to and fro between the Banker and the clerk.

A thunder-cloud of a man.

## CHAPTER XVII.

JAMES MAXLEY came out of the Bank that morning with nine hundred and four pounds buttoned up tight in the pocket of his leather breeches, a joyful man; and so to his work; and home at one o'clock to dinner.

At 2 P.M. he was thoughtful; uneasy at 3; wretched at 3·30.

He was gardener as well as capitalist: and Mr. Hardie owed him 30*s.* for work.

Such is human nature in general, and Maxley's in particular, that the 900*l.* in pocket seemed small, and the 30*s.* in jeopardy, large.

"I can't afford to go with the creditors," argued Maxley: "dividend on 30*s.*? why, that will be about thirty pence; the change for a hard* half-crown.

He stuck his spade in the soil and made for his debtor's house. As he came up the street, Dodd shot out of the Bank radiant, and was about to pass him without notice, full of his wife and children; but Maxley stopped him with a right cordial welcome, and told him he had given them all a fright this time.

"What, is it over the town already, that my ship has been wrecked?" And Dodd looked annoyed.

"Wrecked? No; but you have been due this two months, ye know. Wrecked? Why captain, you haven't ever been wrecked?" And he looked him all over as if he expected to see "WRECKED" branded on him by the elements.

"Ay, James, wrecked on the French coast, and lost my chronometer, and a tip-top sextant. But what of that? I saved *It*. I have just landed It in the Bank. Good-bye: I must sheer off; I long to be home."

"Stay a bit, captain," said Maxley: "I am not quite easy in my mind. I saw you come out of Hardie's; I thought in course you had been in to draa: but you says different. Now what was it you did leave behind you at that there shop, if *you* please: not money?"

"Not money? Only 14,000*l.* How the man stares! Why, it's not mine, James; it's my children's: there, good-bye;" and he was actually off this time. But Maxley stretched his long limbs, and caught him in two strides, and griped his shoulder without ceremony: "Be you mad?" said he, sternly.

"No, but I begin to think you are."

"That is to be seen," said Maxley, gravely. "Before I lets you go, you must tell me whether you be jesting, or whether you have really been so simple as to drop fourteen—thousand—pounds at Hardie's?" No judge upon the bench, nor bishop in his stall, could be more impressive than this gardener was, when he subdued the vast volume of his voice to a low grave utterance of this sort.

* *i. e.* a half-crown in one piece.

Dodd began to be uneasy: "Why, good Heavens, there is nothing wrong with the old Barkington Bank?"

"Nothing wrong?" roared Maxley: then whispered: "Holt! I was laad once for slander, and cost me thirty pounds: nearly killed my missus it did."

"Man!" cried Dodd, "for my children's sake tell me if you know anything amiss. After all, I'm like a stranger here; more than two years away at a time."

"I'll tell you all I know," whispered Maxley, "'tis the least I can do. What (roaring) do—you—think—I've forgotten you saving my poor boy out o' that scrape, and getting him a good place in Canada, and—why, he'd have been put in prison but for you, and that would ha broken my heart and his mother's—and——" The stout voice began to quaver.

"Oh, bother all that now," said Dodd, impatiently. "The Bank! you have grounded me on thorns."

"Well, I'll tell ye: but you must promise faithful not to go and say I told ye, or you'll get me laad again: and I likes to laa *them*, not for *they* to laa me."

"I promise, I promise."

"Well then, I got a letter to-day from my boy, him as you was so good to, and here 'tis in my breeches-pocket.—Laws! how things do come round sure*ly*: why, lookee here now; if so be *you* hadn't been a good friend to *he*, *he* wouldn't be where he is; and if so be *he* warn't where *he* is, *he* couldn't have writ *me* this here, and then where should *you* and *I* be?"

"Belay your jaw and show me this letter," cried David, trembling all over.

"That I wool," said Maxley, diving a hand into his pocket. "Hush! lookee yander now; if there ain't Master Alfred a watching of us two out of his window: and he have got an eye like a hawk, *he* have. Step in the passage, captain, and I'll show it you."

He drew him aside into the passage, and gave him the letter. Dodd ran his eye over it hastily, uttered a cry like a wounded lion, dropped it, gave a slight stagger, and rushed away.

Maxley picked up his letter and watched Dodd into the Bank again; and reflected on his work. His heart was warmed at having made a return to the good captain.

His head suggested that he was on the road which leads to libel.

But he had picked up at the assizes a smattering of the law of evidence; so he coolly tore the letter in pieces. "There now," said he to himself, "if Hardies do laa me for publishing of this here letter, why they pours their water into a sieve. Ugh!" And with this exclamation he started, and then put his heavy boot on part of the letter, and ground it furtively into the mud; for a light hand had settled on his shoulder, and a keen young face was close to his.

It was Alfred Hardie, who had stolen on him like a cat. "I'm laad,' thought Maxley.

"Maxley, old fellow," said Alfred, in a voice as coaxing as a woman's, "are you in a good humour?"

"Well, Master Halfred, sight of you mostly puts me in one, especially after that there strychnine job."

"Then tell me," whispered Alfred, his eyes sparkling, and his face beaming, "who was that you were talking to just now?—was it?—wasn't it?—who was it?"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE Dodd stood lowering in the doorway, he was nevertheless making a great effort to control his agitation.

At last he said in a stern but low voice, in which, however, a quick ear might detect a tremor of agitation: "I have changed my mind, sir: I want my money back."

At this, though David's face had prepared him, Mr. Hardie's heart sank: but there was no help for it: he said faintly: "Certainly. May I ask——?" and there he stopped; for it was hardly prudent to ask anything.

"No matter," replied Dodd, his agitation rising even at this slight delay: "come! my money! I must and will have it."

Hardie drew himself up majestically. "Captain Dodd, this is a strange way of demanding what nobody here disputes."

"Well, I beg your pardon," said Dodd, a little awed by his dignity and fairness: "but I can't help it."

The quick, supple, Banker, saw the slight advantage he had gained, and his mind went into a whirl: what should he do? It was death to part with this money and gain nothing by it: sooner tell Dodd of the love affair; and open a treaty on this basis: he clung to this money like limpet to its rock; and so intense and rapid were his thoughts and schemes how to retain it a little longer, that David's apologies buzzed in his ear like the drone of a beetle.

The latter went on to say: "You see, sir, it's my children's fortune, my boy Edward's, and my little Julia's: and so many have been trying to get it from me, that my blood boils up in a moment about it now.—My poor head!—You don't seem to understand what I am saying! there then, I am a sailor; I can't go beating and tacking, like you landsmen, with the wind dead astarn; the long and the short is, I don't feel It safe here: don't feel It safe anywhere, except in my wife's lap. So no more words: here's your receipt; give me my money."

"Certainly, Captain Dodd. Call to-morrow morning at the Bank, and it will be paid on demand in the regular way: the Bank opens at ten o'clock."

"No, no; I can't wait. I should be dead of anxiety before then. Why not pay it me here, and now? You took it here."

"We receive deposits till four o'clock; but we do not disburse after three. This is the system of all Banks."

"That is all nonsense: if you are open to receive money, you are open to pay it."

"My dear sir, if you were not entirely ignorant of business, you would be aware that these things are not done in this way: money received is passed to account, and the cashier is the only person who can honour your draft on it: but, stop; if the cashier is in the Bank, we may manage it for you yet: Skinner, run and see whether he has left: and, if not, send him to me directly." The cashier took his cue, and ran out.

David was silent.

The cashier speedily returned, saying, with a disappointed air: "The cashier has been gone this quarter of an hour."

David maintained an ominous silence.

"That is unfortunate," remarked Hardie. "But, after all, it is only till to-morrow morning: still I regret this circumstance, sir; and I feel that all these precautions we are obliged to take must seem unreasonable to you: but experience dictates this severe routine; and, were we to deviate from it, our friends' money would not be so safe in our hands as it always has been at present."

David eyed him sternly, but let him run on. When he had concluded his flowing periods, David said quietly: "So you can't give me my own because your cashier has carried it away?"

Hardie smiled: "No, no; but because he has locked it up; and carried away the key."

"It is not in this room, then?"

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"What, not in that safe of yours, there?"

"Certainly not," said Hardie, stoutly.

"Open the safe: the keys are in it."

"Open the safe? What for?"

"To show me It is not in the right hand partition of that safe; there: there." And David pointed at the very place where it was.

The dignified Mr. Hardie felt ready to sink with shame: a kind of shudder passed through him, and he was about to comply, heart-sick: but then wounded pride and the rage of disappointment stung him, and he turned in defiance: "You are impertinent, sir: and I shall not reward your curiosity and your insolence by showing you the contents of my safes."

"My money! my money!" cried David, fiercely: "no more words, for I sha'n't listen to them: I know you now for what you are! a thief. I *saw* you put It into that safe: a liar is always a thief. You want to steal my children's money: I'll have your life first. My money! ye pirate! or I'll strangle you." And he advanced upon him purple with rage, and shot out his long threatening arm, and brown fingers working in the air. "D'ye know what I did to a French land shark that tried to rob me of It? I throttled him with these fingers till his eyes and his tongue started out of him; he came for my children's money, and I killed him so—so—so—as I'll kill you, you thief! you liar! you scoundrel!"

His face black and convulsed with rage, and his outstretched fingers working convulsively, and hungering for a rogue's throat, made the resolute Hardie quake; he whipped out of the furious man's way, and got to the safe, pale and trembling. "Hush! no violence!" he gasped: "I'll give you your money this moment, you ruffian."

While he unlocked the safe with trembling hands, Dodd stood like a man petrified; his arm and fingers stretched out and threatening; and Skinner saw him pull at his necktie furiously, like one choking.

Hardie got the notes and bills all in a hurry, and held them out to Dodd

In which act, to his consternation and surprise, and indignation, he received a back-handed blow on the eye that dazzled him for an instant; and there was David with his arms struggling wildly, and his fists clenched, his face purple, and his eyes distorted so that little was seen but the whites; the next moment his teeth gnashed loudly together, and he fell head-long on the floor with a concussion so momentous, that the windows rattled, and the room shook violently; the dust rose in a cloud.

A loud ejaculation burst from Hardie and Skinner.

And then there was an awful silence.

## CHAPTER XIX.

When David fell senseless on the floor Mr. Hardie was somewhat confused by the back-handed blow from his convulsed and whirling arm. But Skinner ran to him, held up his head, and whipped off his neck-cloth.

Then Hardie turned to seize the bell and ring for assistance; but Skinner shook his head and said it was useless; this was no faint: old Betty could not help him.

"It is a bad day's work, sir," said he, trembling: "he is a dead man."

"Dead? Heaven forbid!"

"Apoplexy!" whispered Skinner.

"Run for a doctor then: lose no time: don't let us have his blood on our hands.—Dead?"

And he repeated the word this time in a very different tone; a tone too strange and significant to escape Skinner's quick ear. However, he laid David's head gently down, and rose from his knees to obey.

What did he see now, but Mr. Hardie, with his back turned, putting the notes and bills softly into the safe again out of sight. He saw, comprehended, and took his own course with equal rapidity.

"Come, run!" cried Mr. Hardie; "I'll take care of him; every moment is precious."

("Wants to get rid of me!") thought Skinner. "No, sir," said he, "be ruled by me: let us take him to his friends: he won't live; and we shall get all the blame if we doctor him."

Already egotism had whispered Hardie, "How lucky if he should die!" and now a still guiltier thought flashed through him: he did not try to conquer it; he only trembled at himself for entertaining it.

"At least give him air!" said he, in a quavering voice, consenting in a crime, yet compromising with his conscience, feebly.

He threw the window open with great zeal, with prodigious zeal; for he wanted to deceive himself as well as Skinner. With equal parade he helped carry Dodd to the window; it opened on the ground: this done, the self-deceivers put their heads together, and soon managed matters so that two porters, known to Skinner, were introduced into the garden, and informed that a gentleman had fallen down in a fit, and they were to take him home to his friends, and not talk about it: there might be an inquest, and that was so disagreeable to a gentleman like Mr. Hardie. The men agreed at once for a sovereign apiece. It was all done in a

great hurry and agitation, and while Skinner accompanied the men to see that they did not blab, Mr. Hardie went into the garden to breathe and think. But he could do neither.

He must have a look at It.

He stole back, opened the safe, and examined the notes and bills.

He fingered them.

They seemed to grow to his finger.

He lusted after them.

He said to himself, "The matter has gone too far to stop; I *must* go on borrowing this money of the Dodds; and make it the basis of a large fortune: it will be best for all parties in the end."

He put It into his pocket-book; that pocket-book into his breast-pocket; and passed by his private door into the house: and to his dressing-room.

Ten minutes later he left the house with a little black bag in his hand.

## CHAPTER XX.

"WHAT will ye give me, and I'll tell ye," said Maxley to Alfred Hardie.

"Five pounds."

"That is too much."

"Five shillings, then."

"That is too little. Lookee here; your garden owes me thirty shillings for work: suppose you pays me, and that will save me from going to your Dad for it."

Alfred consented readily, and paid the money. Then Maxley told him it was Captain Dodd he had been talking with.

"I thought so! I thought so!" cried Alfred, joyfully, "but I was afraid to believe it: it was too delightful: Maxley, you're a trump: you don't know what anxiety you have relieved me of; some fool has gone and reported the Agra wrecked; look here!" and he showed him his Lloyd's; "luckily it has only just come: so I haven't been miserable long."

"Well, to be sure, news flies fast now-a-days. He *have* been wrecked, for that matter." He then surprised Alfred by telling him all he had just learned from Dodd; and was going to let out about the 14,000*l.*, when he recollected this was the Banker's son, and while he was talking to him, it suddenly struck Maxley that this young gentleman would come down in the world, should the bank break: and then the Dodds, he concluded, judging others by himself, would be apt to turn their backs on him. Now he liked Alfred, and was disposed to do him a good turn, when he could without hurting James Maxley. "Mr. Alfred," said he, "I know the world better than you do: you be ruled by me, or you'll rue it: you put on your Sunday coat this minute; and off like a shot to Albyn Villee; you'll get there before the captain: he have got a little business to do first; that is neither here nor there: besides, you are young and lissom. You be the first to tell Missus Dodd the good news; and, when the captain comes, there sets you aside Miss Julee: and don't you be shy and shamefaced: take him when his heart is warm, and tell him why you are there: 'I love her dear,' says you. He be only a sailor

and they never has no sense nor prudence: he is a'most sure to take you by the hand, at such a time: and once you get his word, he'll stand good, to his own hurt; he's one of that sort, bless his silly old heart."

A good deal of this was unintelligible to Alfred; but the advice seemed good; advice generally does when it squares with our own wishes: he thanked Maxley, left him, made a hasty toilet, and ran to Albion Villa.

Sarah opened the door to him; in tears.

The news of the wreck had come to Albion Villa just half an hour ago; and in that half hour they had tasted more misery than hitherto their peaceful lot had brought them in years. Mrs. Dodd was praying and crying in her room; Julia had put on her bonnet, and was descending in deep distress and agitation, to go down to the quay and learn more if possible.

Alfred saw her on the stairs, and at sight of her pale, agitated face, flew to her.

She held out both hands piteously to him: "Oh Alfred!"

"Good news!" he panted. "He is alive; Maxley has seen him—I have seen him—He will be here directly—my own love dry your eyes—calm your fears—He is safe; he is well: hurrah! hurrah!"

The girl's pale face flushed red with hope, then pale again with emotion, then rosy red with transcendent joy: "Oh, bless you! bless you!" she murmured, in her sweet gurgle so full of heart: then took his head passionately with both her hands, as if she was going to kiss him: uttered a little inarticulate cry of love and gratitude over him, then turned and flew up the stairs, crying "Mamma! mamma!" and burst into her mother's room. When two such Impetuosities meet, as Alfred and Julia, expect quick work.

What happened in Mrs. Dodd's room may be imagined: and soon both ladies came hastily out to Alfred, and he found himself in the drawing-room seated between them, and holding a hand of each, and playing the man delightfully, soothing and assuring them; Julia believed him at a word, and beamed with unmixed delight and anticipation of the joyful meeting; Mrs. Dodd cost him more trouble: her soft hand trembled still in his; and she put question upon question. But, when he told her he with his own eyes had seen Captain Dodd talking to Maxley, and gathered from Maxley he had been shipwrecked on the coast of France, and lost his chronometer and his sextant, these details commanded credit; bells were rung: the captain's dressing-room ordered to be got ready; the cook put on her mettle, and Alfred invited to stay and dine with the long-expected one: and the house of mourning became the house of joy.

"And then it was he who brought the good news," whispered Julia to her mother; "and that is so sweet."

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Dodd, "he will make even me love him. The 14,000*l.*! I hope that was not lost in the wreck."

"Oh, mamma! who cares? when his own dear, sweet, precious life has been in danger, and is mercifully preserved. Why does he not come? I shall scold him for keeping us waiting: you know I am not a bit afraid of him, though he is papa: indeed, I am ashamed to say, I govern him with a rod of, no matter what. Do, do, do let us all three put on our bonnets, and run and meet him. I want him so to love somebody the very first day."

Mrs. Dodd, said, "Well: wait a few minutes, and then, if he is not here, you two shall go. I dare hardly trust myself to meet my darling husband in the open street."

Julia ran to Alfred: "If he does not come in ten minutes, you and I may go and meet him."

"You are an angel," murmured Alfred.

"You are another," said Julia, haughtily. "Oh dear, I can't sit down: and I don't want flattery, I want papa. A waltz! a waltz! then one can go mad with joy without startling propriety; I can't answer for the consequences if I don't let off a little, little, happiness."

"That I will," said Mrs. Dodd; "for I am as happy as you, and happier." She played a waltz.

Julia's eyes were a challenge: Alfred started up and took her ready hand, and soon the gay young things were whirling round, the happiest pair in England.

But in the middle of the joyous whirl, Julia's quick ear on the watch all the time, heard the gate swing to: she glided like an eel from Alfred's arm, and ran to the window. Arrived there, she made three swift vertical bounds like a girl with a skipping rope, only her hands were clapping in the air at the same time; then down the stairs, screaming: "His chest! his chest! he is coming, coming, come."

Alfred ran after her.

Mrs. Dodd, unable to race with such antelopes, slipped quietly out into the little balcony.

Julia had seen two men carrying a trestle with a tarpauling over it, and a third walking beside. Dodd's heavy sea chest had been more than once carried home this way. She met the men at the door, and overpowered them with questions:

"Is it his clothes? then he wasn't so much wrecked after all. Is he with you? is he coming directly? Why don't you tell me?"

The porters at first wore the stolid impassive faces of their tribe: but, when this bright young creature questioned them, brimming over with ardour and joy, their countenances fell, and they hung their heads.

The little sharp-faced man, who was walking beside the other, stepped forward to reply to Julia.

He was interrupted by a terrible scream from the balcony.

Mrs. Dodd was leaning wildly over it, with dilating eyes, and quivering hand that pointed down to the other side of the trestle: "Julia!! Julia!!"

Julia ran round, and stood petrified, her pale lips apart, and all her innocent joy frozen in a moment.

The tarpauling was scanty there, and a man's hand and part of his arm dangled helpless out.

The hand was blanched: and wore a well-known ring.

## CHAPTER XXI.

In the terror and confusion no questions were then asked: Alfred got to David's head, and told Skinner to take his feet; Mrs. Dodd helped, and they carried him up and laid him on her bed. The servant girls cried, and wailed, and were of little use; Mrs. Dodd hurried them off for

medical aid, and she and Julia, though pale as ghosts, and trembling in every limb, were tearless, and almost silent, and did all for the best: they undid a shirt button, that confined his throat: they set his head high, and tried their poor little eau-de-Cologne and feminine remedies: and each of them held an insensible hand in both hers, clasping it piteously and trying to hold him tight, so that Death should not take him away from them.

"My son, where is my son?" sighed Mrs. Dodd.

Alfred threw his arm round her neck: "You have one son here: what shall I do?"

The next minute he was running to the telegraph office for her.

At the gate he found Skinner hanging about, and asked him hurriedly how the calamity had happened. Skinner said Captain Dodd had fallen down senseless in the street, and he had passed soon after, recognised him, and brought him home; "I have paid the men, sir; I wouldn't let them ask the ladies at such a time."

"Oh, thank you! thank you, Skinner! I will repay you; it is me you have obliged." And Alfred ran off with the words in his mouth.

Skinner looked after him and muttered: "I forgot *him*. It is a nice mess. Wish I was out of it." And he went back, hanging his head, to Alfred's father.

Mr. Osmond met him; Skinner turned and saw him enter the villa.

Mr. Osmond came softly into the room, examined Dodd's eye, felt his pulse, and said he must be bled at once.

Mrs. Dodd was averse to this: "Oh, let us try everything else first," said she; but Osmond told her there was no other remedy: "All the functions we rely on in the exhibition of medicines are suspended."

Dr. Short now drove up, and was ushered in.

Mrs. Dodd asked him imploringly whether it was necessary to bleed. But Dr. Short knew his business too well to be entrapped into an independent opinion where a surgeon had been before him. He drew Mr. Osmond apart, and inquired what he had recommended: this ascertained, he turned to Mrs. Dodd, and said, "I advise venesection or cupping."

"Oh, Dr. Short, pray have pity and order something less terrible. Dr. Sampson is so averse to bleeding."

"Sampson? Sampson? never heard of him."

"It is the chronothermal man," said Osmond.

"Oh, ah! but this is too serious a case to be quacked. Coma, with stertor, and a full, bounding pulse, indicates liberal blood-letting. I would try venesection; then cup, if necessary, or leech the temple: I need not say, sir, calomel must complete the cure. The case is simple; and, at present, surgical: I leave it in competent hands." And he retired, leaving the inferior practitioner well pleased with him and with himself; no insignificant part of a physician's art.

When he was gone, Mr. Osmond told Mrs. Dodd that however crotchety Dr. Sampson might be, he was an able man, and had very properly resisted the indiscriminate use of the lancet: the profession owed him much. "But in apoplexy the leech and the lancet are still our sheet anchors."

Mrs. Dodd uttered a faint shriek: "Apoplexy! Oh, David! Oh, my darling; have you come home for this?"

Osmond assured her apoplexy was not necessarily fatal; provided the cerebral blood-vessels were relieved in time by depletion.

The fixed eye, and terrible stertorous breathing on the one hand, and the promise of relief on the other, overpowered Mrs. Dodd's reluctance. She sent Julia out of the room on a pretext; and then consented with tears to David's being bled. But she would not yield to leave the room; no; this tender woman nerved herself to see her husband's blood flow, sooner than risk his being bled too much by the hard hand of custom. Let the peevish fools, who make their own troubles in love, compare their slight and merited pangs with this; she was his true lover and his wife; yet there she stood with eye horror-stricken yet unflinching, and saw the stab of the little lancet, and felt it deeper than she would a javelin through her own body; and watched the blood run that was dearer to her than her own.

At the first prick of the lancet David shivered, and, as the blood escaped, his eye unfixed, and the pupils contracted and dilated, and once he sighed. "Good sign that!" said Osmond.

"Oh, that is enough, sir," said Mrs. Dodd: "we shall faint if you take any more."

Osmond closed the vein, observing that a local bleeding would do the rest. When he had stanched the blood, Mrs. Dodd sank half fainting in her chair; by some marvellous sympathy it was she who had been bled, and whose vein was now closed. Osmond sprinkled water in her face: she thanked him, and said sweetly, "You see I could not have lost any more."

When it was over she came to tell Julia; she found her sitting on the stairs crying, and pale as marble. She suspected. And there was Alfred hanging over her, and in agony at her grief; out came his love for her in words and accents unmistakable, and this in Osmond's hearing and the maid's.

"Oh, hush! hush!" cried poor Mrs. Dodd, and her face was seen to burn through her tears.

And this was the happy, quiet, little villa of my opening chapters.

Ah, Richard Hardie! Richard Hardie!

The patient was cupped on the nape of the neck by Mr. Osmond, and, on the glasses drawing, showed signs of consciousness, and the breathing was relieved: these favourable symptoms were neither diminished nor increased by the subsequent application of the cupping needles.

"We have turned the corner," said Mr. Osmond, cheerfully.

Rap! rap! rap! came a telegraphic message from Dr. Sampson, and was brought up to the sick room.

"Out visiting patients when yours came. In apoplexy with a red face and stertorous breathing put the feet in mustard bath and dash much cold water on the head from above. On revival give emetic: cure with sulphate of quinine. In apoplexy with a white face treat as for a simple faint: here emetic dangerous. In neither apoplexy bleed. Coming down by train."

This message added to Mrs. Dodd's alarm; the whole treatment varied so from what had been done She faltered her misgivings; Osmond

reassured her. "Not bleed in apoplexy!" said he, superciliously; "why it is the universal practice. Judge for yourself. You see the improvement."

Mrs. Dodd admitted it.

"Then as to the cold water," said Osmond, "I would hardly advise so rough a remedy. And he is going on so well. But you can send for ice; and, meantime, give me a good-sized stocking."

He cut and fitted it adroitly to the patient's head: then drenched it with eau-de-Cologne, and soon the head began to steam.

By-and-by, David muttered a few incoherent words: and the anxious watchers thanked God aloud for them.

At length Mr. Osmond took leave with a cheerful countenance, and left them all grateful to him, and with a high opinion of his judgment and skill; especially Julia. She said Dr. Sampson was very amusing to talk to; but she should be sorry to trust to that rash, reckless, boisterous man, in time of danger.

About two in the morning a fly drove rapidly up to the villa, and Sampson got out.

He found David pale and muttering, and his wife and children hanging over him in deep distress.

He shook hands with them in silence, and eyed the patient keenly. He took the nightcap off, removed the pillows, lowered his head, and said quietly, "This is the cold fit come on: we must not shut our eyes on the pashint. Why, what is this? he has been cupped!" And Sampson changed colour, and his countenance fell.

Mrs. Dodd saw and began to tremble: "I could not hear from you; and Dr. Short and Mr. Osmond felt quite sure: and he seems better. Oh, Doctor Sampson, why were you not here? We have bled him as well. Oh, don't, don't, don't say it was wrong! He would have died; they said so. Oh, David! David! your wife has killed you." And she knelt and kissed his hand and implored his pardon, insensible.

Julia clung sobbing to her mother, in a vain attempt to comfort her.

Sampson groaned:

"No no," said he: "don't go on so, my poor soul; you did all for the best; and now we must make the best of what is done. Hartshorn! brandy! and caution! For those two assassins have tied my hands."

While applying these timid remedies, he inquired if the cause was known. They told him they knew nothing; but that David had been wrecked, on the coast of France, and had fallen down senseless in the street: a clerk of Mr. Hardie's had recognized him, and brought him home: so Alfred said.

"Then the cause is mintal," said Sampson; "unless he got a blow on the hid in bein' wrecked."

He then examined David's head carefully, and found a long scar:

"But this is not it," said he; "this is old."

Mrs. Dodd clasped her hands, and assured him it was new to her: her David had no scar there when he left her last.

Pursuing his examination, Sampson found an open wound in his left shoulder.

He showed it them; and they were all as pale as the patient in a

moment. He then asked to see his coat, and soon discovered a corresponding puncture in it, which he examined long and narrowly.

"It is a stab—with a one-edged knife."

There was a simultaneous cry of horror.

"Don't alarm yourselves for that," said Sampson, "it is nothing: a mere flesh-wound. It is the vein-wound that alarms me. This school knows nothing about the paroxysms and remissions of disease. They have bled and cupped him for *a passing fit*. It has passed into the cold stage, but no quicker than it would have done without stealing a drop of blood. To-morrow, by Disease's nature, he will have another hot fit in spite of their bleeding. Then those ijjits would leech his temples; and on that paroxysm remitting by the nature of Disease, would fancy their leeches had cured it."

The words were the old words, but the tone and manner were so different: no shouting, no anger: all was spoken low and gently, and with a sort of sad and weary and worn-out air.

He ordered a kettle of hot water and a quantity of mustard, and made his preparations for the hot fit as he called it, maintaining the intermittent and febrile character of all disease.

The patient rambled a good deal, but quite incoherently, and knew nobody.

But about eight o'clock in the morning he was quite quiet, and apparently sleeping: so Mrs. Dodd stole out of the room to order some coffee for Sampson and Edward. They were nodding, worn out with watching.

Julia, whose high-strung nature could dispense with sleep on such an occasion, was on her knees praying for her father.

Suddenly there came from the bed, like a thunder-clap, two words uttered loud and furiously:

"HARDIE! VILLAIN!"

Up started the drowsy watchers, and rubbed their eyes. They had heard the sound but not the sense.

Julia rose from her knees bewildered and aghast: she had caught the strange words distinctly; words that were to haunt her night and day.

They were followed immediately by a loud groan: and the stertorous breathing recommenced, and the face was no longer pale, but flushed and turgid. On this Sampson hurried Julia from the room, and, with Edward's help, placed David on a stool in the bath, and getting on a chair, discharged half a bucket of cold water on his head: the patient gasped: another; and David shuddered, stared wildly, and put his hand to his head; a third, and he staggered to his feet.

At this moment Mrs. Dodd coming hastily into the room, he looked steadily at her, and said, "Lucy!"

She ran to throw her arms round him, but Sampson interfered: "Gently! gently!" said he; "we must have no violent emotions."

"Oh no! I will be prudent." And she stood quiet with her arms still extended, and cried for joy.

They got David to bed again, and Sampson told Mrs. Dodd there was no danger now from the malady, but only from the remedies.

And in fact David fell into a state of weakness and exhaustion; and kept muttering unintelligibly.

Dr. Short called in the morning, and was invited to consult with Dr. Sampson. He declined. "Dr. Sampson is a notorious quack: no physician of any eminence will meet him in consultation."

"I regret that resolution," said Mrs. Dodd, quietly, "as it will deprive me of the advantage of your skill."

Dr. Short bowed stiffly: "I shall be at your service, madam, when that empiric has given the patient up." And he drove away.

Osmond, finding Sampson installed, took the politic line; he contrived to glide by fine gradations into the empiric's opinions, without recanting his own, which were diametrically opposed.

Sampson, before he shot back to town, asked him to provide a good reliable nurse.

He sent a young woman of iron: she received Sampson's instructions, and assumed the command of the sick room; and was jealous of Mrs. Dodd and Julia; looked on them as mere rival nurses, amateurs, who, if not snubbed, might ruin the professionals; she seemed to have forgotten in the hospitals all about the family affections, and their power of turning invalids themselves into nurses.

The second night she got the patient all to herself for four hours; from eleven till two.

The ladies having consented to this arrangement, in order to recruit themselves for the work they were not so mad as to intrust wholly to a hireling, nurse's feathers smoothed themselves perceptibly.

At twelve the patient was muttering and murmuring incessantly about wrecks, and money, and things: of which vain babble nurse showed her professional contempt by nodding.

At 12·30 she slept.

At 1·20 she snored very loud, and woke instantly at the sound.

She took the thief out of the candle, and went like a good sentinel to look at her charge.

He was not there.

She rubbed her eyes, and held the candle over the place where he ought to be; where, in fact, he must be; for he was far too weak to move.

She tore the bedclothes down: she beat and patted the clothes with her left hand, and the candle began to shake violently in her right.

The bed was empty.

Mrs. Dodd was half asleep, when a hurried tap came to her door: she started up in a moment, and great dread fell on her; was David sinking?

"Ma'am! Ma'am! Is he here?"

"He! Who?" cried Mrs. Dodd, bewildered.

"Why *him*! he can't be far off."

In a moment Mrs. Dodd had opened the door; and her tongue and the nurse's seemed to clash together, so fast came the agitated words from each in turn; and crying "Call my son! Alarm the house!" Mrs. Dodd darted into the sick room. She was out again in a moment, and up in the attics rousing the maids, while the nurse thundered at Edward's door, and Julia's, and rang every bell she could get at. The inmates were soon alarmed, and flinging on their clothes: meantime Mrs. Dodd

and the nurse scoured the house and searched every nook in it down to the very cellar; they found no David.

But they found something.

The street door ajar.

It was a dark drizzly night.

Edward took one road, Mrs. Dodd and Elizabeth another.

They were no sooner gone, than Julia drew the nurse into a room apart, and asked her eagerly if her father had said nothing.

"Said nothing, Miss? Why he was a talking all the night incessant."

"Did he say anything particular? think now."

"No, Miss: he went on as they all do just before a change. I never minds 'em; I hear so much of it."

"Oh nurse! nurse! have pity on me; try and recollect."

"Well, Miss, to oblige you then; it was mostly fights this time—and wrecks—and villains—and bankers—and sharks."

"Bankers??!" asked Julia, eagerly.

"Yes, Miss, and villains, they come once or twice, but most of the time it was sharks, and ships, and money, and—hotch-potch I call it the way they talk: bless your heart, they know no better: everything they ever saw, or read, or heard tell of, it all comes out higgledy-piggledy just before they goes off: we that makes it a business never takes no notice of what they says, Miss: and never repeats it out of one sick house into another: that you *may* rely on."

Julia scarcely heard this: her hands were tight to her brow as if to aid her to think with all her force.

The result was, she told Sarah to put on her bonnet: and rushed upstairs.

She was not gone three minutes; but in that short interval the nurse's tongue and Sarah's clashed together swiftly and incessantly.

Julia heard them. She came down with a long cloak on, whipped the hood over her head, beckoned Sarah quickly, and darted out. Sarah followed instinctively, but, ere they had gone many yards from the house, said, "Oh, Miss, nurse thinks you had much better not go."

"Nurse thinks! Nurse thinks! What does she know of me and my griefs?"

"Why, Miss, she is a very experienced woman, and she says——Oh dear! oh dear! And such a dark cold night for you to be out!"

"Nurse? Nurse? What did she say?"

"Oh, I haven't the heart to tell you: if you would but come back home with me! She says as much as that poor master's troubles will be over long before we can get to him." And with this Sarah burst out sobbing.

"Come quicker," cried Julia, despairingly. But after a while she said, "Tell me; only don't stop me."

"Miss, she says she nursed Mr. Campbell, the young curate that died last harvest-time but one, you know; and he lay just like master, and she expecting a change every hour: and oh, Miss, she met him coming down stairs in his nightgownd: and he said, 'Nurse, I am all right now,' says he, and died momently in her arms at the stair-foot. And she nursed an old farmer that lay as weak as master, and, just when they

looked for him to go, lo and behold him dressed and out digging potatoes, and fell down dead before they could get hands on him mostly: and nurse have a friend, that have seen more than she have, which she is older than nurse, and says a body's life is all one as a rushlight, flares up strong momently, justly before it goes out altogether. Dear heart, where ever are we going to in the middle of the night?"

"Don't you see? to the quay."

"Oh, don't go there, Miss, whatever! I can't abide the sight of the water; when a body's in trouble." Here a drunken man confronted them, and asked them if they wanted a beau: and, on their slipping past him in silence, followed them, and offered repeatedly to treat them. Julia moaned, and hurried faster. "Oh, Miss," said Sarah, "what could you expect, coming out at this time of night? I'm sure the breath is all out of me; you do tear along so."

"Tear? we are crawling. Ah, Sarah, you are not his daughter. There, follow me! I cannot go so slow." And she set off to run.

Presently she passed a group of women standing talking at a corner of the street; and windows were open with nightcapped heads framed in them.

She stopped a moment to catch the words; they were talking about a ghost which was said to have just passed down the street; and discussing whether it was a real ghost, or a trick to frighten people.

Julia uttered a low cry, and redoubled her speed, and was soon at Mr. Richard Hardie's door: but the street was deserted, and she was bewildered, and began to think she had been too hasty in her conjecture. A chill came over her impetuosity. The dark, drizzly, silent night, the tall masts, the smell of the river, how strange it all seemed: and she to be there alone at such an hour.

Presently she heard voices somewhere near. She crossed over to a passage that seemed to lead towards them; and then she heard the voices plainly, and among them one that did not mingle with the others, for it was the voice she loved. She started back and stood irresolute. Would he be displeased with her?

Feet came trampling slowly along the passage.

His voice came with them.

She drew back and looked round for Sarah.

While she stood fluttering, the footsteps came close, and there emerged from the passage into the full light of the gas-lamp Alfred and two policemen carrying a silent, senseless, figure, in a night-gown, with a great-coat thrown over part of him.

It was her father; mute and ghastly.

The policemen still tell of that strange meeting under the gas-light by Hardie's Bank; and how the young lady flung her arms round her father's head, and took him for dead, and kissed his pale cheeks, and moaned over him; and how the young gentleman raised her against her will, and sobbed over her; and how they, though policemen, cried like children. And to them I must refer the reader: I have not the skill to convey the situation.

They got more policemen to help, and carried him to Albion Villa.

On the way something cold and mysterious seemed to have come between Julia and Alfred. They walked apart in gloomy silence broken only by foreboding sighs.

I pass over the tempest of emotions under which that sad burden entered Albion Villa; and hurry to the next marked event.

Next day the patient had lost his extreme pallor, and wore a certain uniform sallow hue; and at noon, just before Sampson's return, he opened his eyes wide, and fixed them on Mrs. Dodd and Julia, who were now his nurses. They hailed this with delight, and held their breath to hear him speak to them the first sweet words of reviving life and love.

But soon to their surprise and grief they found he did not know them. They spoke to him, each in turn, and told him piteously who they were, and implored him with tears to know them, and speak to them. But no, he fixed a stony gaze on them, that made them shudder; and their beloved voices passed over him like an idle wind.

Sampson, when he came, found the ladies weeping by the bedside.

They greeted him with affection, Julia especially: the boisterous controversialist had come out a gentle, zealous, artist, in presence of a real danger.

Dr. Sampson knew nothing of what had happened in his absence. He stepped to the bedside cheerfully; and the ladies' eyes were bent keenly on his face in silence.

He had no sooner cast eyes on David than his countenance fell, and his hard but expressive features filled with concern.

That was enough for Mrs. Dodd; "And he does not know me," she cried: "he does not know my voice. *His* voice would call me back from the grave itself. He is dying. He will never speak to me again. Oh, my poor orphan girl!"

"No! no!" said Sampson, "you are quite mistaken: he will not die. But——."

His tongue said no more. His grave and sombre face spoke volumes.

## CHAPTER XXII.

To return to the Bank: Skinner came back from the Dodd's that miserable afternoon, in a state of genuine agitation, and regret. He was human and therefore mixed; and their desolation had shocked him.

The footman told him Mr. Hardie was not at home; gone to London, he believed. Skinner walked away dejected. What did this mean? Had he left the country?

He smiled at his fears, and felt positive Mr. Hardie had misled the servants, and was quietly waiting for him in the Bank parlour.

It was now dusk: he went round to that little dark nook of the garden the parlour window opened on, and tapped: there was no reply; the room looked empty. He tried the sash: it yielded: Mr. Hardie had been too occupied with embezzling another's property to take common precautions in defence of his own; never in his life before had he neglected to fasten the iron shutters with his own hand, and to-day he had left the very window unfastened. This augured ill. "He is off: he has done me along with the rest," thought Skinner. He stepped into

the room, found a lucifer-box, shut the shutters, lighted a candle, and went peering about amongst the banker's papers, to see if he could find a clue to his intentions: and, as he pottered and peered, he quaked as well: a detector by dishonest means feels thief-like: and is what he feels. He made some little discoveries, that guided him in his own conduct; he felt more and more sure his employer would outwit him if he could; and resolved it should be diamond cut diamond.

The church clock struck one.

He started at the hour, crept out, and closed the window softly: then away by the garden gate.

A light was still burning in Alfred's room: and at this Skinner had another touch of compunction; "There is one won't sleep this night along of our work," thought he.

At three next afternoon Mr. Hardie reappeared.

He had gone up to town to change the form of the deposit:—He took care to think of it as a deposit still, the act of deposit having been complete, the withdrawal incomplete, and by no fault of his, for he had offered it back; but Fate and Accident had interposed—He had converted the notes into gold direct, and the bills into gold through notes; this was like going into the river to hide his trail. Next process: he turned his gold into 500*l.* notes; and came flying home with them.

His return was greeted by Skinner with a sigh of relief. Hardie heard it, interpreted it aright, and sent for him into the parlour: and there told him with a great affectation of frankness what he had done: then asked significantly if there was any news at Albion Villa.

Skinner in reply told Mr. Hardie of the distress he had witnessed up at Albion Villa: "And, sir," said he, lowering his voice, "Mr. Alfred helped carry the body up-stairs.—It is a nice mess altogether, sir, when you come to think."

"Ah! all the better," was the cool reply: "he will be useful to let us know what we want; he will tell Jane, and Jane me. You don't think he will live, do you?"

"Live! no: and then who will know the money is here?"

"Who should know? Did not he say he had just landed, and been shipwrecked? Shipwrecked men do not bring fourteen thousand pounds ashore." The speaker's eyes sparkled; Skinner watched him demurely. "Skinner," said he, solemnly, "I believe my daughter Jane is right; and that Providence really interferes sometimes in the affairs of this world: you know how I have struggled, to save my family from disgrace and poverty: those struggles have failed in a great degree: but Heaven has seen them, and saved this money from the sea, and dropped it into my very hands to retrieve my fortunes with. I must be grateful: spend a portion of it in charity; and rear a noble fortune on the rest. Confound it all!"

And his crestfallen countenance showed some ugly misgiving had flashed on him quite suddenly.

"What, sir? what?" asked Skinner, eagerly.

"The Receipt?!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

"THE receipt? Oh, is that all? *you* have got that," said Skinner, very coolly.

"What makes you think so?" inquired the other, keenly. He instantly suspected Skinner of having it.

"Why, sir, I saw it in his hand."

"Then it has got to Albion Villa; and we are ruined."

"No, no, sir; you won't hear me: I am sure I saw it fall out of his hand when he was taken ill: and, I think, but I won't be sure, he fell on it. Any way, there was nothing in his hands when I delivered him at Albion Villa; so it must be here: I dare say you have thrown it into a drawer or somewhere, promiscuously."

"No, no, Skinner," said Mr. Hardie, with increasing alarm: "it is useless for us to deceive ourselves: I was not three minutes in the room, and thought of nothing but getting to town and cashing the bills."

He rang the bell sharply, and on Betty coming in, asked her what she had done with that paper that was on the floor?

"Took it up and put it on the table, sir. This was it, I think." And she laid her finger upon a paper.

"No, no!" said Mr. Hardie: "the one I mean was much smaller than that."

"What," said she, with that astonishing memory for trifles people have who never read, "was it a little crumpled up paper? lying by the basket?"

"Yes! yes! that sounds like it."

"Oh, I put that *into* the basket."

Mr. Hardie's eye fell directly on the basket, but it was empty. She caught his glance, and told him she had emptied it in the dust-hole as usual. Mr. Hardie uttered an angry exclamation. Betty, an old servant of his wife's, resented it with due dignity by tossing her head as she retired.

"There is no help for it," said Mr. Hardie, bitterly; "we must go and grub in the dust-hole now."

"Why, sir, your name is not on it, after all."

"What does that matter? A man is bound by the act of his agent: besides, it is my form, and my initials on the back. Come, let us put a good face on the thing." And he led the way to the kitchen; and got up a little laugh, and asked the scullery-maid if she could show Mr. Skinner and him the dust-hole. She stared, but obeyed, and the pair followed her, making merry.

The dust-hole was empty.

The girl explained: "It is the dustman's day: he came at eleven o'clock in the morning and carr'd all the dust away: and grumbled at the paper and the bones, he did. So I told him beggars musn't be choosers: just like his impudence! when he gets it for nothing, and sells it for a mint outside the town." The unwonted visitors left her in dead silence almost before she had finished her sentence.

Mr. Hardie sat down in his parlour thoroughly discomposed; Skinner watched him furtively.

At last the former broke out: "This is the devil's doing; the devil in

person. No intelligence nor ability can resist such luck. I almost wish we had never meddled with it: we shall never feel safe, never be safe."

Skinner made light of the matter, treated the receipt as thrown into the sea. "Why, sir," said he, "by this time it will have found its way to that monstrous heap of ashes on the London road; and who will ever look for it there? or notice it if they find it?" Hardie shook his head: "That monstrous heap is all sold every year to the farmers. That Receipt, worth, 14,000*l.* to me, will be strewed on the soil for manure: then some farmer's man, or farmer's boy that goes to the Sunday-school, will read it, see Captain Dodd's name, and bring it to Albion Villa, in hopes of a sixpence: a sixpence. Heaven help the man who does a doubtful act, and leaves damnatory evidence on paper, kicking about the world."

From that hour the cash Hardie carried in his bosom, without a right to it, began to blister.

He thought of telling the dustman he had lost a paper, and setting him to examine the mountain of ashes on the London road: but here caution stepped in; how could he describe the paper without awakening curiosity and defeating his own end? He gave that up. It was better to let the sleeping dog lie.

Finally, he resolved to buy security in a world where after all one has to buy everything: so he employed an adroit agent, and quietly purchased that mountain, the refuse of all Barkington. But he felt so ill used, he paid for it in his own notes; by this means the treaty reverted to the primitive form of barter:* ashes for rags.

This transaction he concealed from his confederate.

When he had completed it, he was not yet secure; for another day had passed, and Captain Dodd alive still. Men often recover from apoplexy, especially when they survive the first twenty-four hours. Should he live, he would not now come into any friendly arrangement with the man who had so nearly caused his death. So then good-bye to the matrimonial combination Hardie had at first relied on to patch his debt to Alfred, and his broken fortunes. Then as to keeping the money and defying Dodd, that would be very difficult and dangerous; mercantile bills are traceable things: and criminal prosecutions awkward ones. He found himself in a situation he could not see his way through by any mental effort; there were so many objections to every course, and so many to its opposite. "He walked among fires," as the Latins say. But the more he pondered on the course to be taken should Dodd live, the plainer did this dilemma stare him in the face; either he must refund or fly the country with another man's money, and leave behind him the name of a thief. Parental love, and the remains of self-respect, writhed at this thought; and with these combined a sentiment less genuine, but by no means feeble; the love of reputation. So it was with a reluctant and sick heart he went to the shipping office, and peered at the posters, to see when the next ship sailed for the United States. Still he did go.

Intent on his own schemes, and expecting every day to be struck in front, he did not observe that a man in a rusty velveteen coat followed him, and observed this act; and indeed all his visible acts.

* Or exchange of commodities without the aid of money; see Homer, and Welsh Villages, passim.

Another perplexity was, when he should break. There were objections to doing it immediately; and objections to putting it off.

With all this the man was in a ferment: by day he sat waiting and fearing, by night he lay sleepless and thinking; and, though his stoical countenance retained its composure, the furrows deepened in it, and the iron nerves began to twitch at times, from strain of mind and want of sleep, and that rack, suspense. Not a night that he did not awaken a dozen times from his brief dozes with a start, and a dread of exposure by some mysterious, unforeseen, means.

It is remarkable how truths sometimes flash on men at night in hours of nervous excitement; it was in one of these nightly reveries David Dodd's pocket-book flashed back upon Mr. Hardie. He saw it before his eyes quite plain, and on the inside of the leather cover a slip of paper pasted, and written on in pencil or pale ink, he could not recal which.

What was that writing? It might be the numbers of the notes, the description of the bills. Why had he not taken it out of the dying man's pocket? "Fool! fool!" he groaned; "to do anything by halves."

Another night he got a far severer shock. Lying in his bed dozing, and muttering, as usual, he was suddenly startled out of that uneasy slumber by three tremendous knocks at the street door.

He sprang out of bed, and in his confusion made sure the officers of justice were come for him: he began to huddle on his clothes with a vague notion of flight.

He had got on his trousers and slippers, and was looking under his pillow for the fatal cash, when he heard himself called loudly and repeatedly by name; but this time the sound came from the garden into which his bedroom looked. He opened it very softly, in trepidation and wonder, which were speedily doubled by what met his eyes; for there, right in front of his window, stood an unearthly figure; corresponding in every particular to that notion of a ghost in which we are reared, and which, when our nerves are healthy, we can ridicule as it deserves; but somehow it is never cleaned out of our imagination so thoroughly as it is out of our judgment.

The figure was white as a sheet, and seemed supernaturally tall; and it cried out in a voice like a wounded lion's, "You villain! you Hardie! give me back my money: my fourteen thousand pounds. Give me my children's money, or may your children die before your eyes: give me my darlings' money; or may the eternal curse of God light on you and yours, you scoundrel!"

And the figure kneeled on the grass, and repeated the terrible imprecation almost in the same words; that Hardie shrank back, and, resolute as he was, cowered with superstitious awe.

But this sentiment soon gave way to vulgar fears; the man would alarm the town. And in fact Mr. Hardie, in the midst of his agitation, was dimly conscious of hearing a window open softly, not very far from him. But it was a dark night. He put his head out in great agitation, and whispered, "Hush! hush! And I'll bring it you down directly."

Internally cursing his hard fate, he got the fatal cash, put on his coat: hunted for the key of the Bank parlour, and, having found it, went softly down the stairs, unlocked the door, and went to open the shutters.

At this moment his ear caught a murmur; a low buzzing of voices in the garden.

He naturally thought that Captain Dodd was exposing him to some of the townspeople; he was puzzled what to do; and like a cautious man as he was, remained passive, but on the watch.

Presently the voices were quiet, and he heard footsteps come very slowly towards the window at which he stood, and then make for the little gate. On this he slipped into the kitchen, which faced the street, and got to a window there, and listened. His only idea was to catch their intentions, if possible, and meet them accordingly. He dared not open the window; for above him on the pavement he saw a female figure half standing, half crouching: but soon that figure rushed wildly out of his sight to meet the footsteps, and then he ventured to open the window and, listening, heard cries of despair, and a young heartbroken voice say her father was dead.

"Ah!—that is all right," muttered Hardie.

Still even this profound egotist was not yet so hardened, but that he felt one chill of horror at himself for the thought; a passing chill.

He listened and listened; and by-and-by he heard the slow feet recommence their journey, amidst sobs and sighs; and those sorrowful feet, and the sobs and sighs of his causing, got fainter and fainter, retreated, and left him in quiet possession of the 14,000*l.* he had brought down to give it up: two minutes ago it was not worth as many pence to him.

He drew a long breath of relief. "It is mine; I am to keep it. It is the will of Heaven."

Poor Heaven!

He went to his bed again, and by a resolute effort composed himself, and determined to sleep. And in fact he was just dropping off, when suddenly he started wide awake again: for it recurred to him vividly that a window in his house had opened, while David was cursing him and demanding his children's money.

Whose window?

Half a dozen people and more slept on that side of the house.

Whose window could it be?

He walked among fires.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Not many days after this a crowd of persons stood in front of the old Bank, looking half stupified at the shutters, and at a piece of paper pasted on them announcing a suspension, only for a month or so, and laying the blame on certain correspondents not specified.

So great was the confidence inspired by the old Bank, that many said it would come round, it must come round, in a month: but other of Mr. Hardie's unfortunate clients recognised in the above a mere formula to let them down by degrees: they had seen many statements as hopeful end in a dividend of sixpence in the pound.

Before the day closed, the scene at the Bank door was heartrending: respectable persons, reduced to pauperism in that one day, kept arriving

and telling their fellow-sufferers their little all was with Hardie, and nothing before them but the workhouse or the almshouse: ruined mothers came and held up their ruined children for the Banker to see; and the doors were hammered at, and the house as well as the Bank was beleaguered by a weeping, wailing, despairing crowd.

But, like an idle wave beating on a rock, all this human misery dashed itself in vain against the Banker's brick walls and shutters, hard to them as his very heart.

The next day they mobbed Alfred and hissed him at the back door. Jane was too ashamed and too frightened to stir out. Mr. Hardie sat calmly putting the finishing strokes to his fabricated balance-sheet.

Some innocent and excited victims went to the mayor for redress; to the aldermen, the magistrates—in vain.

Towards afternoon the Banker's cool contempt for his benefactors, whose lives he had darkened, received a temporary check; a heavy stone was flung at the Bank shutters: this ferocious blow made him start, and the place rattle: it was the signal for a shower; and presently tink, tink, went the windows of the house, and in came the stones, starring the mirrors, upsetting the chairs, denting the papered walls, chipping the mantelpieces, shivering the bell glasses and statuettes, and strewing the room with dirty pebbles, and painted fragments, and glittering ruin.

Hardie winced: this was the sort of appeal to touch him. But soon he recovered his sang froid: "Thank you," said he, "I'm much obliged to you; now I'm in the right and you are in the wrong." And he put himself under protection of the police; and fee'd them so royally that they were zealous on his behalf, and rough and dictatorial even with those who thronged the place only to moan and lament and hold up their ruined children: "You *must* move on, you Misery," said the Police. And they were right; Misery gains nothing by stopping the way; nothing by bemoaning itself.

But if the Banker, naturally egotistical, and now entirely wrapped in his own plans, and fears, and well-earned torments, was deaf to the anguish of his clients, there were others in his house who felt it keenly and deeply. Alfred and Jane were heartbroken: they sat hand in hand in a little room, drawn closer by misfortune; and heard the groans at their door; and the tears of pity ran down their own cheeks hot with shame; and Alfred wrote on the fly-leaf of his "Ethics" a vow to pay every shilling his father owed these poor people—before he died. It was like him, and like his happy age, at which the just and the generous can command, in imagination, the means to do kindred deeds.

Soon he found to his horror, that he had seen but a small per-centage of the distress his father had caused; the greater griefs, as usual, stayed at home: behind the gadding woes lay a terrible number of silent, decent, ruined homes, and broken hearts, and mixed sorrows so unmerited, so complicated, so piteous, and so cruel, that he was ready to tear his hair, to know them and not be able to relieve them instantly.

Of that mere sample I give a mere sample: divine the bulk then; and revolve a page of human history often turned by the people, but too little studied by statisticians and legislators.

Mr. Esgar, a respectable merchant, had heavy engagements, to meet which his money lay at the old Bank. Living at a distance he did not

hear the news till near dinner-time: and he had promised to take his daughters to a ball that night. He did so; left them there; went home, packed up their clothes and valuables, and next day levanted with them to America, taking all the money he could scrape together in London; and so he passed his ruin on to others. Esgar was one of those who wear their honesty long; but loose: it was his first disloyal act in business: "Dishonesty made me dishonest," was his excuse. Valeat quantum.

John Shaw, a steady footman, had saved and saved, from twenty-one years old to thirty-eight, for "Footman's Paradise," a public-house. He was now engaged to a comely barmaid, who sympathized with him therein, and he had just concluded a bargain for the "Rose and Crown" in the suburbs. Unluckily—for him—the money had not been paid over. The blow fell: he lost his all; not his money only, but his wasted life. He could not be 21 again; so he hanged himself within forty-eight hours, and was buried by the parish, grumbling a little, pitying none.

James and Peter Gilpin, William Scott, and Joel Paton, were poor fishermen, and Anglo-Saxon heroes; that's heroes with an eye to the main chance; they risked their lives at sea to save a ship and get salvage; failing there, they risked their lives all the same, like fine fellows as they were, to save the crew. They succeeded, but ruined their old boat. A subscription was raised, and prospered so, that a boat-builder built them a new one on tick, price eighty-five pounds; and the publicans said, "Drink, boys, drink; the subscription will cover all; it is up to 120 already." The subscription money was swallowed with the rest, and the Anglo-Saxon heroes hauled to prison.

Doctor Phillips, aged 74, warned by growing infirmities, had sold a tidy practice, with house, furniture, and good-will, for a fair price; and put it in the bank, awaiting some investment. The money was gone now, and the poor old doctor, with a wife and daughter and a crutch, was at once a pauper and an exile: for he had sold under the usual condition, not to practise within so many miles of his successor. He went to that successor, and begged permission to be his assistant at a small, small, salary. "I want a younger man," was the reply. Then he went round to his old patients, and begged a few half guineas to get him a horse and chaise and keep him over the first month in his new place. They pitied him, but most of them were sufferers too by Hardie, and all they gave him did but buy a donkey and cart; and with that he and his went slowly and sadly to a village ten miles distant from the place, where all his life had been spent in comfort and good credit. The poor old gentleman often looked back from his cart at the church spires of Barkington.

> From seventeen till now almost four score
> There lived he, but now lived there no more.
> At seventeen many their fortunes seek;
> But at four score it is too old a week.

Arrived at his village, he had to sell his donkey and trust to his crutch. And so Infirmity crept about begging leave to cure Disease—with what success may be inferred from this: Miss Phillips, a lady-like girl of eighteen, was taken up by Farmer Giles before Squire Langton, for stealing turnips out of a field: the farmer was hard, and his losses in Hardie's

bank had made him bitter hard, so the poor girl's excuse, that she could not let her father starve, had no effect on him: to jail she should go.*

Took to the national vice, and went to the national dogs, Thomas Fisher, a saving tinman, and a bachelor: so I expect no pity for him.

To the same goal, by the same road, dragging their families, went the Rev. Henry Scudamore, a curate: Philip Hall, a linendraper; Neil Pratt, a shoemaker; Simon Harris, a greengrocer; and a few more; but the above were all prudent, laborious men, who took a friendly glass, but seldom exceeded, until Hardie's bankruptcy drove them to the devil of drink for comfort.

Turned professional thief, Joseph Locke, working locksmith, who had just saved money enough to buy a shop and good-will; and now lost it every penny.

Turned Atheist, and burnt the family Bible before his weeping wife and terrified children and gaping servant girl, Mr. Williams, a Sunday-school teacher, known hitherto only as a mild, respectable man, a teetotaller, and a good parent and husband. He did not take to drinking; but he did to cursing; and forbade his own flesh and blood ever to enter a church again. This man became an outcast, shunned by all.

Three elderly sisters, the Misses Lunley, well born and bred, lived together on their funds which, small singly, united made a decent competence. Two of them had refused marriage in early life for fear the third should fall into less tender hands than theirs. For Miss Blanche Lunley was a cripple: disorder of the spine had robbed her, in youth's very bloom, of the power not only to dance, as you girls do, but to walk or even stand upright; leaving her two active little hands, and a heart as nearly angelic as we are likely to see here on earth.

She lay all day long on a little iron bedstead, at the window of their back parlour that looked on a sunny little lawn; working eagerly for the poor; teaching the poor, young and old, to read, chiefly those of her own sex; hearing the sorrows of the poor, composing the quarrels of the poor, relieving their genuine necessities with a little money, and much ingenuity, and labour.

Some poor woman, in a moment of inspiration, called Miss Blanche "The sunshine of the poor." The word was instantly caught up in the parish, and had now this many years gently displaced "Lunley," and settled on her here below, and its echo gone before her up to Heaven.

The poor "sunshine of the poor" was happy: Life was sweet to her. To know whether this is so, it is useless to inquire of the backbone; or the limbs: look at the face! She lay at her window in the kindred sunshine, and in a world of sturdy, able, agile cursers, grumblers, and yawners, her face, pale as ashes, wore the eternal sunshine of a happy, holy, smile.

But there came one to her bedside and told her the Bank was broken, and all the money gone she and her sisters had lent Mr. Hardie.

The saint clasped her hands and said, "Oh my poor people! Wha

* I find, however, that Squire Langton resolutely refused to commit Miss Phillips. The real reason, I suspect, was, that he had a respect for the Gospel, and not much for the law, except those invaluable clauses which restrain poaching. The reason he *gave* was: "Turnips be hanged! If she hadn't eaten them, the fly would." However, he found means to muzzle Giles, and sent the old doctor two couple of rabbits.

will become of them?" And the tears ran down her pale and now sorrowful cheeks.

At this time she did not know the full extent of their losses

But they had given Mr. Hardie a power of attorney to draw out all their consols. That remorseless man had abused the discretion this gave him, and beggared them—they were his personal friends too—to swell his secret hoard.

When "the sunshine of the poor" heard this, and knew that she was now the poorest of the poor, she clasped her hands and cried, "Oh my poor sisters! my poor sisters!" and she could work no more for sighing.

The next morning found the sunshine of the poor extinct, in her little bed: ay, dead of grief with no grain of egotism in it; gone straight to Heaven without one angry word against Richard Hardie or any other.

Old Betty had a horror of the workhouse. To save her old age from it she had deposited her wages in the Bank for the last twenty years; and also a little legacy from Mr. Hardie's father. She now went about the house of her master and debtor, declaring she was sure he would not rob *her*, and, if he did, she would never go into the poor-house. "I'll go out on the common, and die there. Nobody will miss *me*."

The next instance led to consequences upon consequences: and that is my excuse for telling it the reader somewhat more fully than Alfred heard it.

Mrs. Maxley, one night, found something rough at her feet in bed. "What on earth is this?" said she.

"Never you mind," said Maxley: "say it's my breeches; what then?"

"Why what on earth does the man put his breeches to bed for?"

"That is my business," roared Maxley, and whispered drily, "'tain't for you to wear 'em, howsever."

This little spar led to his telling her he had drawn out all their money: but, when she asked the reason, he snubbed her again, indirectly; recommended her sleep.

The fact is, the small-clothes were full of bank notes; and Maxley always followed them into bed now, for fear of robbers.

The Bank broke on a Tuesday: Maxley dug on impassive; and when curious people came about him to ask whether he was a loser, he used to inquire very gravely, and dwelling on every syllable, "Do—you—see—anything—green—in this here eye."

Friday was club day; the clubsmen met at the "Greyhound" and talked over their losses. Maxley sat smoking complacently; and, when his turn came to groan, he said drily: "I draad all mine a week afore. (Exclamations.) I had a hinkling: my boy Jack he wrote to me from Canada as how Hardies was rotten out there: now these here Bankers they be like an oak tree; they do go at the limbs first, and then at the heart."

The club was wroth; "What? you went and made yourself safe and never gave any of us a chance! Was that neighbourly? was that—clubbable?"

To a hailstorm of similar reproaches, Maxley made but one reply "'Twarn't *my* business to take care o' *you*." He added, however, a little sulkily: "I was lead for slander once: scalded dog fears lue-warm water."

"Oh," said one, "I don't believe him. He puts a good face on it; but his nine hundred is gone along with ourn."

"'Tain't gone far, then." With this he put his hand in his pocket, and after some delay pulled out a nice new crisp note and held it up: "What is that? I ask the company."

"Looks like a ten pun note, James."

"Well, the bulk 'grees with the sample; I knows where to find eight score and nine to match this here."

The note was handed round: and on inspection each countenance in turn wore a malicious smile; till at last Maxley, surrounded by grinning faces, felt uneasy.

"What be 'e all grinning at like a litter o' Chessy cats? warn't ye ugly enough without showing of your rotten teeth?"

"Haw! haw!"

"Better say 'tain't money at all, but only a wench's curl paper:" and he got up and snatched it fiercely out of the last inspector's hand. "Ye can't run your rigs on me," said he. "What an if I can't read words, I can figures; and I spelt the ten out on every one of them, afore I'd take it."

A loud and general laugh greeted this boast.

Then Maxley snatched up his hat in great wrath, and some anxiety, and went out followed by a peal.

In five minutes he was at home; and tossed the note into his wife's lap. She was knitting by a farthing dip. "Dame!" said he, controlling all appearance of anxiety, "what d'ye call that?"

She took up the note and held it close to the candle: "Why Jem, it is a ten pound note, one of Hardie's—*as was.*"

"Then what were those fools laughing at?" And he told her all that had happened.

Mrs. Maxley dropped her knitting and stood up trembling: "Why you told me you had got our money all safe out?"

"Well, and so I have, ye foolish woman:" and he drew the whole packet out of his pocket and flung them fiercely on the table. Mrs. Maxley ran her finger and eye over them, and uttered a scream of anger and despair.

"These! these be all Hardie's notes," she cried; "and what vally be Hardie's notes when Hardie's be broke?"

Maxley staggered as if he had been shot.

The woman's eyes flashed fury at him: "This is your work, ye born idiot: 'mind your own business,' says you: you *must* despise your wedded wife, that has more brains in her finger than you have in all your great long useless carcase: you *must* have your secrets: one day poison, another day beggary: you have ruined me, you have murdered me: get out of my sight! for if I find a knife I'll put it in you, I will." And in her ungovernable passion, she actually ran to the dresser for a knife: at which Maxley caught up a chair and lifted it furiously above his head to fling at her.

Luckily the man had more self-command than the woman; he dashed the chair furiously on the floor, and ran out of the house.

He wandered about half stupid: and presently his feet took him mechanically round to his garden. He pottered about among his plants,

looking at them, inspecting them closely, and scarce seeing them. However, he covered up one or two, and muttered, "I think there will be a frost to-night: I think there will be a frost." Then his legs seemed to give way. He sat down and thought of his wedding-day: he began to talk to himself out loud, as some people do in trouble: "Bless her comely face," said he, "and to think I had my arm lifted to strike her, after wearing her so long, and finding her good stuff upon the whole. Well, thank my stars I didn't. We must make the best on't: money's gone; but here's the garden and our hands still: and 'tain't as if we were single to gnaw our hearts alone: wedded life cuts grief a two. Let's make it up: and begin again. Sixty, come Martinmas: and Susan forty-eight: and I be a'most weary of turning moulds."

He went round to his front door.

There was a crowd round it; a buzzing crowd, with all their faces turned towards his door.

He came at their backs, and asked peevishly what was to do now. Some of the women shrieked at his voice. The crowd turned about; and a score of faces peered at him: some filled with curiosity, some with pity.

"Lord help us!" said the poor man, "is there any more trouble afoot to-day? Stand aside, please; and let me know."

"No! no!" cried a woman, "don't let him."

"Not let me go into my own house, young woman?" said Maxley, with dignity: "be these your manners?"

"Oh, James: I meant you no ill. Poor man!"

"Poor soul!" said another.

"Stand aloof!" said a strange man. "Who has as good a right to be there as he have?"

A lane was made directly, and Maxley rushed down between two rows of peering faces, with his knees knocking together, and burst into his own house. A scream from the women inside, as he entered, and a deep groan from the strong man bereaved of his mate, told the tragedy. Poor Susan Maxley was gone.

She had died of Breast-pang, within a minute of his leaving her; and the last words of two faithful spouses were words of anger.

All these things, and many more less tragic, but very deplorable, came to Alfred Hardie's knowledge, and galled and afflicted him deeply. And several of these revelations heaped discredit high upon Richard Hardie, till the young man, born with a keen sense of justice, and bred amongst honourable minds, began to shudder at his own father.

Herein he was alone; Jane, with the affectionate blindness of her sex, could throw her arms round her father's neck, and pity him for his losses—by his own dishonesty—and pity him most when some victim of his unprincipled conduct died, or despaired. "Poor papa will feel this so deeply," was her only comment on such occasions.

Alfred was not sorry she could take this view; and left her unmolested to confound black with white, and wrong with right, at affections dictates: but his own trained understanding was not to be duped in matters of plain morality. And so, unable to cure the wrongs he deplored, unable to put his conscience into his pocket, like Richard Hardie, or into his

heart like Jane, he wandered alone, or sat brooding and dejected: and the attentive reader, if I am so fortunate as to possess one, will not be surprised to learn that he was troubled too with dark mysterious surmises he half dreaded, yet felt it his duty, to fathom. These and Mrs. Dodd's loss by the Bank combined to keep him out of Albion Villa. He often called to ask after Captain Dodd, but was ashamed to enter the house.

Now Richard Hardie's anxiety to know whether David was to die or live had not declined, but rather increased. If the latter, he was now resolved to fly to the United States with his booty, and cheat his alienated son along with the rest: he had come by degrees down to this. It was on Alfred he had counted to keep him informed of David's state: but, on his putting a smooth inquiry, the young man's face flushed with shame, or anger, or something, and he gave a very short, sharp, and obscure reply. In reality he did not know much, nor did Sarah, his informant: for of late the servants had never been allowed to enter David's room.

Mr. Hardie, after this rebuff, never asked Alfred again; but having heard Sampson's name mentioned as Dodd's medical attendant, wrote and asked him to come and dine, next time he should visit Barkington: "You will find me a fallen man," said he; "to-morrow we resign our house and premises and furniture to the assignees, and go to live at a little furnished cottage not very far from your friends the Dodds. It is called 'Musgrove Cottage.' There, where we have so little to offer besides a welcome, none but true friends will come near us; indeed, there are very few I should venture to ask for such a proof of fidelity to your broken friend.

"R. H."

The good-hearted Sampson sent a cordial reply, and came to dinner at Musgrove Cottage.

Now all Hardie wanted of him in reality was to know about David; so when Jane had retired, and the decanter circulated, he began to pump him by his vanity. "I understand," said he, "you have wrought one of your surprising cures in this neighbourhood. Albion Villa!"

Sampson shook his head sorrowfully: Mr. Hardie's eyes sparkled: Alfred watched him keenly and bitterly.

"How can I work a great cure after those ass-ass-ins Short and Osmond? Look, see! the man had been wounded in the hid, and lost blood: thin stabbed in the shoulder; and lost more blood."—Both the Hardies uttered an ejaculation of unfeigned surprise—"So, instid of recruiting the buddy thus exhausted of the great liquid material of all repair, the profissional ass-ass-in came and exhausted him worse: stabbed him while he slept; stabbed him unconscious, stabbed him in a vein: and stole more blood from him. Wasn't that enough? No! the routine of profissional ass-ass-ination had but begun; nixt they stabbed him with cupping-needles, and so stole more of his life-blood. And they were goen from their stabs to their bites, goen to leech his temples, and so hand him over to the sixton."

"But you came in and saved him," cried Alfred.

"I saved his life," said Sampson, sorrowfully: "but life is not the

only good thing a man may be robbed of by those who steal his life-blood, and so impoverish and water the contints of the vessels of the brain."

"Doctor Sampson," said Alfred, "what do you mean by these mysterious words? you alarm me."

"What, don't you know? Haven't they told you?"

"No, I have not had the courage to enter the house since the Bank——" he stopped in confusion.

"Ay, I understand," said Sampson: "however, it can't be hidden now—

"He is a maniac."

Sampson made this awful announcement soberly and sorrowfully.

Alfred groaned aloud, and even his father experienced a momentary remorse; but so steady had been the progress of corruption, that he felt almost unmixed joy the next instant: and his keenwitted son surprised the latter sentiment in his face, and shuddered with disgust.

Sampson went on to say that he believed the poor man had gone flourishing a razor; and Mrs. Dodd had said "Yes, kill me, David: kill the mother of your children," and never moved: which feminine, or in other words irrational, behaviour, had somehow disarmed him. But it would not happen again: his sister had come; a sensible, resolute woman. She had signed the order, and Osmond and he the certificates, and he was gone to a private asylum. "Talking of that," said Sampson, rising suddenly, "I must go and give them a word of comfort; for they are just breaking their hearts at parting with him, poor things: I'll be back in an hour."

On his departure, Jane returned and made the tea in the dining-room: they lived like that now.

Mr. Hardie took it from his favourite's little white hand, and smiled on her: he should not have to go to a foreign land after all: who would believe a madman if he should rave about his thousands? He sipped his tea luxuriously, and presently delivered himself thus, with bland self-satisfaction:

"My dear Alfred, some time ago you wished to marry a young lady without fortune; you thought that I had a large one: and you expected me to supply all deficiencies. You did not overrate my parental feeling; but you did my means: I would have done this for you, and with pleasure, but for my own coming misfortunes. As it was, I said 'No.' And, when you demanded, somewhat peremptorily, my reasons, I said, 'Trust me.' Well, you see I was right: such a marriage would have been your utter ruin. However, I conclude after what Dr. Sampson has told us, you have resigned it on other grounds. Jane, my dear, Captain Dodd, I am sorry to say, is afflicted. He has gone mad."

"Gone mad?! oh, how shocking! What will become of his poor children?" She thought of Edward first.

"We have just heard it from Sampson. And I presume, Alfred, you are not so far gone as to insist on propagating insanity, by a marriage with his daughter."

At this conclusion, which struck her obliquely, though aimed at

Alfred, Jane sighed gently; and her dream of earthly happiness seemed to melt away.

But Alfred ground his teeth, and replied with great bitterness and emotion: "I think, sir, you are the last man who ought to congratulate yourself on the affliction that has fallen on that unhappy family I aspire to enter, all the more that now they have calamities for me to share——"

"More fool you," put in Mr. Hardie, calmly.

—"For I much fear you are one of the causes of that calamity."

Mr. Hardie assumed a puzzled air: "I don't see how that can be: do you, Jenny? Sampson told us the causes: a wound on the head, a wound in the arm, bleeding, cupping, &c."

"There may be other causes Dr. Sampson has not been told of—yet."

"Possibly. I really don't know what you allude to."

The son fixed his eyes on the father, and leaned across the table to him, till their faces nearly met.

"The fourteen thousand pounds, sir."

## CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Hardie was taken by surprise for once, and had not a word to say; but looked in his son's face, mute and gasping as a fish.

During this painful silence his children eyed him inquiringly; but not with the same result; for one face is often read differently by two persons: to Jane, whose intelligence had no aids, he seemed unaffectedly puzzled; but Alfred discerned beneath his wonder the terror of detection rising, and then thrust back by the strong will: that stoical face shut again like an iron door; but not quickly enough: the right words, the "open sesame" had been spoken, and one unguarded look had confirmed Alfred's vague suspicions of foul play: he turned his own face away: he was alienated by the occurrences of the last few months, but Nature and tender reminiscences still held him by some fibres of the heart: in a moment of natural indignation he had applied the touchstone; but its success grieved him; he could not bear to go on exposing his father; so he left the room with a deep sigh, in which pity mingled with shame and regret; he wandered out into the silent night, and soon was leaning on the gate of Albion Villa, gazing wistfully at the windows, and sore perplexed, and nobly wretched.

As he was going out, Mr. Hardie raised his eyebrows with a look of disinterested wonder and curiosity; and touched his forehead to Jane, as much as to say, "Is he disordered in his mind?"

As soon as they were alone, he asked her coolly what Alfred meant. She said she had no idea. Then he examined her keenly about this fourteen thousand pounds: and found, to his relief, Alfred had never even mentioned it to her.

And now Richard Hardie, like his son, wanted to be alone, and think over this new peril, that had risen in the bosom of his own family: and, for once, the company of his favourite child was irksome: he made an excuse and strolled out in his turn into the silent night. It was calm and clear: the thousand holy eyes, under which men prefer to do their

crimes—except when they are in too great a hurry to wait—looked down and seemed to wonder anything can be so silly as to sin: and beneath their pure gaze the man of the world pondered with all his soul. He tormented himself with conjectures: through what channel did Alfred suspect him? through the Dodds? were they aware of their loss? had the pocket-book spoken? If so, why had not Mrs. Dodd or her son attacked him? But then perhaps Alfred was their agent: they wished to try a friendly remonstrance through a mutual friend before proceeding to extremities; this accorded with Mrs. Dodd's character as he remembered her.

The solution was reasonable; but he was relieved of it by recollecting what Alfred had said, that he had not entered the house since the Bank broke.

On this he began to hope Alfred's might be a mere suspicion he could not establish by any proof, and at all events he would lock it in his own breast like a good son: his never having given a hint even to his sister favoured this supposition.

Thus meditating, Mr. Hardie found himself at the gate of Albion Villa.

Yet he had strolled out with no particular intention of going there. Had his mind, apprehensive of danger from that quarter, driven his body thither?

He took a look at the house: and the first thing he saw was a young lady leaning over the balcony, and murmuring softly to a male figure below, whose outline Mr. Hardie could hardly discern, for it stood in the shadow. Mr. Hardie was delighted: "Aha, Miss Juliet," said he, "if Alfred does not visit you, some one else does. You have soon supplied your peevish lover's place." He then withdrew softly from the gate, not to disturb the intrigue, and watched a few yards off; determined to see who Julia's nightly visitor was, and give Alfred surprise for surprise.

He had not long to wait: the man came away directly, and walked, head erect, past Mr. Hardie, and glanced full in his face, but did not vouchsafe him a word. It was Alfred himself. Mr. Hardie was profoundly alarmed, and indignant: "The young traitor! Never enter the house? no; but he comes and tells her everything directly, under her window, on the sly: and, when he is caught—defies me to my face." And now he suspected female cunning and malice in the way that thunderbolt had been quietly prepared for him and launched, without warning, in his very daughter's presence, and the result just communicated to Julia Dodd.

In a very gloomy mood he followed his son, and heard his firm though elastic tread on the frosty ground, and saw how loftily he carried his head: and from that moment feared, and very, very, nearly hated him.

The next day he feigned sick, and sent for Osmond. That worthy prescribed a pill and a draught, the former laxative, the latter astringent This ceremony performed, Mr. Hardie gossipped with him; and, after a détour or two, glided to his real anxiety. "Sampson tells me you know more about Captain Dodd's case than he does: he is not very clear as to the cause of the poor man's going mad."

"The cause? Why Apoplexy."

"Yes, but I mean what caused the apoplexy?"

Mr. Osmond replied that Apoplexy was often idiopathic.* Captain Dodd, as he understood, had fallen down in the street in a sudden fit: "but as for the mania, that is to be attributed to an insufficient evacuation of blood while under the apoplectic coma."

"Not bled enough! Why Sampson says it is because he was bled too much."

Osmond was amused at this; and repeated that the mania came of not being bled enough.

The discussion was turned into an unexpected quarter by the entrance of Jane Hardie, who came timidly in and said, "Oh, Mr. Osmond, I cannot let you go without telling you how anxious I am about Alfred. He is so thin, and pale, and depressed."

"Nonsense, Jane," said Mr. Hardie; "have we not all cause to be dejected in this house?" But she persisted gently that there was more in it than that; and his headaches were worse: and she could not be easy any longer without advice.

"Ah, those headaches," said Mr. Osmond, "they always made me uneasy. To tell the truth, Miss Hardie, I have noticed a remarkable change in him, but I did not like to excite apprehensions: and so he mopes, does he? seeks solitude, and is taciturn, and dejected?"

"Yes. But I do not mind that so much as his turning so pale and thin."

"Oh, it is all part of one malady."

"Then you know what is the matter?"

"I think I do: and yours is a wise and timely anxiety. Your brother's is a very delicate case of a hyperæsthetic character; and I should like to have the advice of a profound physician. Let me see, Dr. Wycherley will be with me to-morrow: may I bring him over as a friend?"

This proposal did not at all suit Mr. Hardie; he put his own construction on Alfred's pallor and dejection, and was uneasy at the idea of his being cross-questioned by a couple of doctors:

"No, no," said he, "Taff has fancies enough already; I cannot have you gentlemen coming here to fill his head with many more."

"Oh, he has fancies, has he?" said Osmond, keenly. "My dear sir, we shall not say one word to *him*: that might irritate him: but I should like *you* to hear a truly learned opinion."

Jane looked so imploringly, that Mr. Hardie yielded a reluctant assent, on those terms.

So the next day, by appointment, Mr. Osmond introduced his friend Dr. Wycherley: bland and bald, with a fine head, and a face naturally intelligent, but crossed every now and then by gleams of vacancy; a man of large reading, and of tact to make it subserve his interests. A voluminous writer on certain medical subjects, he had so saturated himself with circumlocution, that it distilled from his very tongue: he talked like an Article; a quarterly one; and so gained two advantages: 1st, he rarely irritated a fellow-creature; for, if he began a sentence

* "Arising of itself." A term rather hastily applied to disorders the coming signs of which have not been detected by the medical attendant.

The birth of Topsy was idiopathic—in that learned lady's opinion.

hot, what with its length, and what with its windiness, he ended it cool: item, stabs by polysyllables are pricks by sponges. 2ndly, this foible earned him the admiration of fools; and that is as invaluable, as they are innumerable.

Yet was there in the mother-tongue he despised, one gem of a word he vastly admired: like most quarterly writers. That charming word, the pet of the polysyllabic, was "OF."

He opened the matter in a subdued and sympathizing tone well calculated to win a loving father, such as Richard Hardie—was not.

"My good friend here informs me, sir, you are so fortunate as to possess a son of distinguished abilities, and who is at present labouring under some of those precursory indications of incipient disease of the cerebro-psychical organs, of which I have been, I may say, somewhat successful in diagnosing the symptoms. Unless I have been misinformed, he has, for a considerable time, experienced persistent headache of a kephalalgic or true cerebral type, and has now advanced to the succeeding stage of taciturnity and depression, not* unaccompanied with isolation, and probably, constipation: but as yet without hallucination, though possibly, and, as my experience of the great majority of these cases would induce me to say, probably, he is not† undisturbed by one or more of those latent, and, at first, trifling aberrations, either of the intelligence, or the senses, which in their preliminary stages escape the observation of all but the expert nosologist.

"There you see," said Osmond, "Dr. Wycherley agrees with me: yet I assure you I have only detailed the symptoms, and not the conclusion I had formed from them."

Jane inquired timidly what that conclusion was.

"Miss Hardie, we think it one of those obscure tendencies which are very curable if taken in time——" Dr. Wycherley ended the sentence—"But no longer remediable if the fleeting opportunity is allowed to escape, and diseased action to pass into diseased organisation."

Jane looked awestruck at their solemnity; but, Mr. Hardie, who was taking advice against the grain, turned satirical: "Gentlemen," said he, "be pleased to begin by moderating your own obscurity; and then perhaps I shall see better how to cure my son's disorder: what the deuce are you driving at?"

The two doctors looked at one another inquiringly; and so settled how to proceed. Dr. Wycherley explained to Mr. Hardie that there was a sort of general unreasonable and superstitious feeling abroad, a kind of terror of the complaint with which his son was threatened; "*and which*, instead of the most remediable of disorders, is looked at as the most incurable of maladies:" it was on this account he had learned to approach the subject with singular caution, and even with a timidity which was kinder in appearance than in reality; that he must admit.

"Well, you may speak out, as far as I am concerned," said Mr. Hardie, with consummate indifference.

"Oh yes!" said Jane, in a fever of anxiety; "pray conceal nothing from us."

"Well then, sir, I have not as yet had the advantage of examining your son personally, but, from the diagnostics, I have no doubt whatever

* Anglice, "accompanied." † Anglice, "disturbed."

he is labouring under the first foreshadowings of cerebro-psychical perturbation. To speak plainly, the symptoms are characteristic of the initiatory stage of the germination of a morbid state of the phenomena of intelligence."

His unprofessional hearers only stared.

"In one word, then," said Dr. Wycherley, waxing impatient at their abominable obtuseness, "it is the premonitory stage of the precursory condition of an organic affection of the brain."

"Oh!" said Mr. Hardie, "the brain!* I see; the boy is going mad."

The doctors stared in their turn at the prodigious coolness of a tender parent. "Not exactly," said Dr. Wycherley; "I am habitually averse to exaggeration of symptoms. Your son's suggest to me 'the Incubation of Insanity,' nothing more."

Jane uttered an exclamation of horror: the doctor soothed her with an assurance that there was no cause for alarm. "Incipient aberration" was of easy cure: the mischief lay in delay. "Miss Hardie," said he paternally, "during a long and busy professional career, it has been my painful province to witness the deplorable consequences of the non-recognition, by friends and relatives, of the precedent symptoms of those organic affections of the brain, the relief of which was within the reach of well-known therapeutic agents if exhibited seasonably."

He went on to deplore the blind prejudice of unprofessional persons; who choose to fancy that other diseases creep, but Insanity pounces, on a man: which he expressed thus neatly; "that other deviations from organic conditions of health are the subject of clearly defined though delicate gradations, but that the worst and most climacteric forms of cerebro-psychical disorder are suddenly developed affections presenting no evidence of any antecedent cephalic organic change, and unaccompanied by a premonitory stage, or by incipient symptoms."

This chimera he proceeded to confute, by experience: he had repeatedly been called in to cases of mania described as sudden, and almost invariably found the patient had been cranky for years; which he condensed thus; "His conduct and behaviour for many years previously to any symptom of mental aberration being noticed, had been characterised by actions quite irreconcilable with the supposition of the existence of perfect sanity of intellect."

He instanced a parson, whom he had lately attended, and found him as constipated and as convinced he was John the Baptist engaged to the Princess Mary as could be. "But," continued the learned doctor, "upon investigation of this afflicted ecclesiastic's antecedent history, I discovered that, for years before this, he had exhibited conduct incompatible with the hypothesis of a mind whose equilibrium had been undisturbed: he had caused a number of valuable trees to be cut down on his estate, without being able to offer a sane justification for such an outrageous proceeding: and had actually disposed of a quantity of his patrimonial acres, '*and which*' clearly he never would have parted with had he been in anything resembling a condition of sanity."

"Did he sell the land and timber below the market price?" inquired Mr. Hardie, perking up, and exhibiting his first symptom of interest in the discussion.

* What a blessing there are a few English words left in all our dialects

"On that head, sir, my informant, his heir-at-law, gave me no information: nor did I enter into that class of detail; you naturally look at morbid phenomena in a commercial spirit, but we regard them medically; and, all this time, most assiduously visiting the sick of his parish and preaching admirable sermons."

The next instance he gave was of a stockbroker suffering under general paralysis and a rooted idea that all the *specie* in the Bank of England was his, and ministers in league with foreign governments to keep him out of it. "Him," said the doctor, "I discovered to have been for years guilty of conduct entirely incompatible with the hypothesis of undisordered mental functions. He had accused his domestics of peculation, and had initiated legal proceedings with a view of prosecuting in a court of law one of his oldest friends."

"Whence you infer that, if my son has not for years been doing cranky acts, he is not likely to be deranged at present."

This adroit twist of the argument rather surprised Dr. Wycherley. However, he was at no loss for a reply. "It is not Insanity, but the Incubation of Insanity, which is suspected in your intelligent son's case: and the best course will be for me to enumerate in general terms the several symptoms of 'the Incubation of Insanity:'" he concluded with some severity, "after that, sir, I shall cease to intrude what I fear is an unwelcome conviction."

The Parent, whose levity and cold reception of good tidings he had thus mildly, yet with due dignity, rebuked, was a man of the world; and liked to make friends, not enemies: so he took the hint, and made a very civil speech, assuring Dr. Wycherley that, if he ventured to differ from him, he was none the less obliged by the kind interest he took in a comparative stranger: and would be very glad to hear all about the "Incubation of Insanity."

Dr. Wycherley bowed slightly; and complied:

"One diagnostic preliminary sign of abnormal cerebral action is Kephalalgia, or true cerebral headache; I mean persistent headache not accompanied by a furred tongue, or other indicia significant of abdominal or renal disorder as its origin."

Jane sighed. "He has sad headaches."

"The succeeding symptom is a morbid affection of sleep. Either the patient suffers from Insomnia; or else from Hypersomnia, which we subdivide into sopor, carus, and lethargus; or thirdly from Kakosomnia, or a propensity to mere dozing, and to all the morbid phenomena of dreams."

"Papa," said Jane, "poor Alfred sleeps very badly: I hear him walking at all hours of the night."

"I thought as much," said Dr. Wycherley; "Insomnia is the commonest feature. To resume; the insidious advance of morbid thought is next marked by high spirits, or else by low spirits; generally the latter. The patient begins by moping, then shows great lassitude and ennui, then becomes abstracted, moody, and occupied with a solitary idea."

Jane clasped her hands, and the tears stood in her eyes; so well did this description tally with poor Alfred's case.

"And at this period," continued Dr. Wycherley, "my experience leads

me to believe that some latent delusion is generally germinating in the mind, though often concealed with consummate craft by the patient: the open development of this delusion is the next stage, and, with this last morbid phenomenon, Incubation ceases and Insanity begins. Sometimes, however, the illusion is physical rather than psychical, of the sense rather than of the intelligence. It commences at night: the incubator begins by seeing nocturnal visions, often of a photopsic* character, or hearing nocturnal sounds, neither of which have any material existence, being conveyed to his optic or auricular nerves not from without, but from within, by the agency of a disordered brain. These the reason, hitherto unimpaired, combats at first, especially when they are nocturnal only: but being reproduced, and becoming diurnal, the judgment succumbs under the morbid impression produced so repeatedly. These are the ordinary antecedent symptoms characteristic of the incubation of insanity; to which are frequently added somatic exaltation, or, in popular language, physical excitability—a disposition to knit the brows —great activity of the mental faculties—or else a well marked decline of the powers of the understanding—an exaggeration of the normal conditions of thought—or a reversal of the mental habits and sentiments, such as a sudden aversion to some person hitherto beloved, or some study long relished and pursued."

Jane asked leave to note these all down in her note-book.

Mr. Hardie assented adroitly; for he was thinking whether he could not sift some grain out of all this chaff. Should Alfred blab his suspicions, here were two gentlemen who would at all events help him to throw ridicule on them.

Dr. Wycherley having politely aided Jane Hardie to note down "the preliminary process of the Incubation of disorders of the Intellect," resumed: "Now, sir, your son appears to be in a very inchoate stage of the malady: he has cerebral Kephalalgia and Insomnia——"

"And, oh doctor," said Jane, "he knits his brows often; and has given up his studies; won't go back to Oxford this term."

"Exactly; and seeks isolation, and is a prey to morbid distraction and reverie: but has no palpable illusions; has he?"

"Not that I know of," said Mr. Hardie.

"Well but," objected Jane, "did not he say something to you very curious the other night; about Captain Dodd and fourteen thousand pounds?"

Mr. Hardie's blood ran cold: "No," he stammered, "not that I remember."

"Oh yes he did, papa: you have forgotten it: but at the time you were quite puzzled what he could mean: and you did so." She put her finger to her forehead: and the doctors interchanged a meaning glance.

"I believe you are right, Jenny," said Mr. Hardie, taking the cue so unexpectedly offered him: "he did say some nonsense I could not make head nor tail of; but we all have our crotchets; there, run away, like a good girl, and let me explain all this to our good friends here: and mind, not a word about it to Alfred."

When she was gone, he said, "Gentlemen, my son is over head and ears in love; that is all."

* Luminous.

"Ay, Erotic monomania is a very ordinary phase of insanity," said Dr. Wycherley.

"His unreasonable passion for a girl he knows he can never marry makes him somewhat crotchety and cranky: that, and over-study, may have unhinged his mind a little: suppose I send him abroad? my good brother will find the means; or we could advance it him, I and the other trustees; he comes into ten thousand pounds in a month or two."

The doctors exchanged a meaning look. They then dissuaded him earnestly from the idea of continental travel.

"Cœlum non animam mutant qui trans mare currunt," said Wycherley, and Osmond explained that Alfred would brood abroad as well as at home, if he went alone: and Dr. Wycherley summed up thus: "The most advisable course is to give him the benefit of the personal superintendence of some skilful physician possessed of means and appliances of every sort for soothing and restraining the specific malady."

Mr. Hardie did not at first see the exact purport of this oleaginous periphrasis. Presently he caught a glimpse: but said he thought confinement was hardly the thing to drive away melancholy.

"Not in all respects," replied Dr. Wycherley: "but, on the other hand, a little gentle restraint is the safest way of effecting a disruption of the fatal associations that have engendered and tend to perpetrate the disorder. Besides, the medicinal appliances are invaluable; including, as they do, the nocturnal and diurnal attendance of a Psycho-physical physician, who knows the Psychosomatic relation of body and mind, and can apply physical remedies, of the effect of which on the physical instrument of intelligence, the grey matter of the brain, we have seen so many examples."

The good doctor then feelingly deplored the inhumanity of parents and guardians in declining to subject their incubators to opportune and salutary restraint under the more than parental care of a Psychosomatic physician. On this head he got quite warm, and inveighed against the abominable *cruelty* of the thing. "It is contrary," said he, "to every principle of justice and humanity, that a fellow-creature, deranged perhaps only on one point, should for the want of the early attention of those, whose duty it is to watch over him, linger out his existence separated from all who are dear to him, and condemned without any crime to be a prisoner for life."

Mr. Hardie was puzzled by this sentence, in which the speaker's usual method was reversed, and the thought was bigger than the words.

"Oh," said he, at last, "I see. We ought to incarcerate our children to keep them from being incarcerated."

"That is one way of putting it with a vengeance," said Mr. Osmond, staring. "No; what my good friend means——"

"Is this; where the patient is possessor of an income of such a character as to enable his friends to show a sincere affection by anticipating the consequences of neglected morbid phenomena of the brain, there a lamentable want of humanity is exhibited by the persistent refusal to the patient, on the part of his relatives, of the incalculable advantage of the authoritative advice of a competent physician accompanied with the safeguards and preventives of——"

But ere the mellifluous pleonast had done oiling his paradox with fresh

polysyllables, to make it slip into the Banker's narrow understanding, he met with a curious interruption. Jane Hardie fluttered in to say a man was at the door accusing himself of being deranged.

"How often this sort of coincidence occurs," said Osmond, philosophically.

"Do not refuse him, dear papa; it is not for money: he only wants you to give him an order to go into a lunatic asylum."

"*Now, there is a sensible man,*" said Dr. Wycherley.

"Well but," objected Mr. Hardie, "if he is a sensible man, why does he want to go to an asylum?"

"Oh, they are all sensible at times," observed Mr. Osmond.

"*Singularly so,*" said Dr. Wycherley, warmly. And he showed a desire to examine this paragon, who had the sense to know he was out of his senses.

"It would be but kind of you, sir," said Jane; "poor, poor man!" She added, he did not like to come in, and would they mind just going out to him?

"Oh no, not in the least: especially as you seem interested in him."

And they all three rose and went out together, and found the petitioner at the front door. Who should it be, but James Maxley!

His beard was unshaven, his face haggard, and everything about him showed a man broken in spirit as well as fortune: even his voice had lost half its vigour, and, whenever he had uttered a consecutive sentence or two, his head dropped on his breast, pitiably: indeed, this sometimes occurred in the middle of a sentence, and then the rest of it died on his lips.

Mr. Richard Hardie was not prepared to encounter one of his unhappy creditors thus publicly, and, to shorten the annoyance, would have dismissed him roughly: but he dared not; for Maxley was no longer alone, nor unfriended: when Jane left him, to intercede for him, a young man joined him, and was now comforting him with kind words, and trying to get him to smoke a cigar: and this good-hearted young gentleman was the Banker's son in the flesh, and his opposite in spirit, Mr. Alfred Hardie.

Finding these two in contact, the Doctors interchanged demurest glances.

Mr. Hardie asked Maxley sullenly what he wanted of them.

"Well, sir," said Maxley, despondingly, "I have been to all the other magistrates in the borough; for what with losing my money, and what with losing my missus, I think I bain't quite right in my head; I do see such curious things, enough to make a body's skin creep at times." And down went his head on his chest.

"Well?" said Mr. Hardie, peevishly: "go on: you went to the magistrates, and what then?"

Maxley looked up, and seemed to recover the thread: "Why they said 'no,' they couldn't send me to the 'sylum, not from home: I must be a pauper first. So then my neighbours they said I had better come to you." And down went his head again.

"Well but," said Mr. Hardie, "you cannot expect me to go against the other magistrates."

"Why not, sir? You have had a hatful o' money of me: the other

gentlemen han't had a farthing. They owes me no service, but you does: nine hundred pounds' worth if ye come to that."

There was no malice in this; it was a plain brokenhearted man's notion of give and take; but it was a home-thrust all the same; and Mr. Hardie was visibly discountenanced, and Alfred more so.

Mr. Osmond, to relieve a situation so painful, asked Maxley rather hastily what were the curious things he saw.

Maxley shuddered. "The unreasonablest beasts, sir, you ever saw or heard tell on: mostly snakes and dragons. Can't stoop my head to do no work, for them, sir. Bless your heart, if I was to leave you gentlemen now, and go and dig for five minutes in my garden, they would come about me as thick as slugs on cabbage: why 'twas but yester'en I tried to hoe a bit, and up come the fearfullest great fiery sarpint: scared me so I heaved my hoe and laid on un' properly: presently I seemed to come out of a sort of a kind of a red mist into the clear: and there laid my poor missus's favourite hen; I had been and killed her for a sarpint!" He sighed: then, after a moment's pause, lowered his voice to a whisper, "Now suppose I was to go and take some poor Christian for one of these gre-at bloody dragons I do see at odd times, I might do him a mischief you know, and not mean him no harm neither. Oh dooee take and have me locked up, gentlemen, dooee now: tellee I ain't fit to be about, my poor head is so mazed."

"Well, well," said Mr. Hardie, "I'll give you an order for the Union."

"What, make a pauper of me?"

"I cannot help it," said the magistrate: "it is the routine; and it was settled at a meeting of the bench last month that we must adhere to the rule as strictly as possible; the asylum is so full: and you know, Maxley, it is not as if you were dangerous."

"That I be, sir: I don't know what I'm a looking at, or a doing. Would I ha' gone and killed my poor Susan's hen if I hadn't a been beside myself? and she in her grave, poor dear: no, not for untold gold: and I be fond of that too; used to be however: but now I don't seem to care for money nor nothing else." And his head dropped.

"Look here, Maxley, old fellow," said Alfred, sarcastically, "you must go to the workhouse; and stay there till you hoe a pauper; take him for a crocodile, and kill him; then you will get into an asylum whether the Barkington magistrates like it or not: that is the *routine*, I believe; and as reasonable as most routine."

Dr. Wycherley admired Alfred for this, and whispered Mr. Osmond, "how subtly they reason."

Mr. Hardie did not deign to answer his son, who indeed had spoken at him, and not to him.

As for poor Maxley, he was in sad and sober earnest, and could not relish nor even take in Alfred's irony: he lifted his head and looked Mr. Hardie in the face.

"You be a hard man," said he, trembling with emotion. "You robbed me and my missus of our all, you ha' broke her heart, and turned my head, and if I was to come and kill *you* 'twould only be clearing scores. 'Stead of that I comes to you like a lamb, and says give me your name on a bit of paper, and put me out of harm's way. 'No,' says you, 'go to the workhouse!' Be *you* in the workhouse? You that owes

me nine hundred pounds and my dead missus?" With this he went into a rage, took a packet, out of his pocket, and flung 900*l.* of Mr. Hardie's paper at Mr. Hardie's head before any one could stop him.

But Alfred saw his game, stepped forward, and caught it with one hand, and with the dexterity of a wicket-keeper, within a foot of his father's nose. "How's that, Umpire?" said he: then, a little sternly, "Don't do that again, Mr. Maxley, or I shall have to give you a hiding —to keep up appearances." He then put the notes in his pocket, and said quietly, "*I* shall give you your money for these, before the year ends."

"You won't be quite so mad as that, I hope," remonstrated his father. But he made no reply: they very seldom answered one another now.

"Oh," said Dr. Wycherley, inspecting him like a human curiosity, "nullum magnum ingenium sine mixturâ dementiæ."

"Nec parvum sine mixturâ stultitiæ," retorted Alfred in a moment: and met his offensive gaze with a point-blank look of supercilious disdain.

Then, having shut him up, he turned to Osmond: "Come," said he, "prescribe for this poor fellow, who asks for a hospital, so Routine gives him a workhouse: come, you know there is no limit to your skill and good nature: you cured Spot of the worms, cure poor old Maxley of his snakes; oblige me."

"That I will, Mr. Alfred," said Osmond, heartily: and wrote a prescription on a leaf of his memorandum-book, remarking that, though a simple purgative, it had made short work of a great many serpents and dragons, and not a few spectres and hobgoblins into the bargain.

The young gentleman thanked him graciously, and said kindly to Maxley, "Get that made up—here's a guinea—and I'll send somebody to see how you are to-morrow."

The poor man took the guinea, and the prescription, and his head drooped again, and he slouched away.

Dr. Wycherley remarked significantly that his conduct was worth imitating by *all persons similarly situated:* and concluded oracularly: "Prophylaxis is preferable to therapeusis."

"Or, as *Porson* would say, 'Prevention is better than cure.'"

With this parting blow the Oxonian suddenly sauntered away, unconscious, it seemed, of the existence of his companions.

"I never saw a plainer case of Incubation," remarked Dr. Wycherley with vast benevolence of manner.

"Maxley's?"

"Oh, no; that is parochial. It is your profoundly interesting son I alluded to. Did you notice his supercilious departure? *And his morbid celerity of repartee?*"

Mr. Hardie replied with some little hesitation, "Yes; and, excuse me, I thought he had rather the best of the battle with you."

"Indubitably so," replied Dr. Wycherley: "they always do: at least such is *my* experience. If ever I break a lance of wit with an incubator, I calculate with confidence on being unhorsed with abnormal rapidity: and rare, indeed, are the instances in which my anticipations are not promptly and fully realised: by a similar rule of progression the incubator is seldom a match for the confirmed maniac, either in the light play of sarcasm, the coruscations of wit or the severer encounters of dialectical ratiocination."

"Dear, dear, dear! Then how is one to know a genius from a madman?" inquired Jane.

"*By sending for a psychological physician.*"

"If I understand the doctor right, the two things are not opposed," remarked Mr. Hardie.

Dr. Wycherley assented, and made a remarkable statement in confirmation: "One half of the aggregate of the genius of the country is at present under restraint; fortunately for the community; and still more fortunately for itself."

He then put on his gloves, and, with much kindness but solemnity, warned Mr. Hardie not to neglect his son's case, nor to suppose that matters could go on like this without "disintegrating or disorganising the grey matter of the brain. I admit," said he, "that in some recorded cases of insanity the brain on dissection has revealed no signs of structural or functional derangement, and that, on the other hand, considerable encephalic disorganisation has been shown to have existed in other cases without aberration or impairment of the reason: but such phenomena are to be considered as pathological curiosities, with which the empiric would fain endeavour to disturb the sound general conclusions of science. The only safe mode of reasoning on matters so delicate and profound is à priori: and, as it may safely be assumed as a self-evident proposition, that disturbed intelligence bears the same relation to the brain as disordered respiration does to the lungs, it is not logical, reasoning à priori, to assume the possibility that the studious or other mental habits of a Kephalalgic, and gifted, youth, can be reversed, and erotic monomania germinate, with all the morbid phenomena of isolation, dejection of the spirits, and abnormal exaltation of the powers of wit and ratiocination, without some considerable impairment, derangement, disturbance, or modification, of the psychical, motorial, and sensorial functions of the great cerebral ganglion. But it would be equally absurd to presuppose that these several functions can be disarranged for months, without more or less disorganisation of the medullary, or even of the cineritious, matter of the encephalon. *Therefore*—dissection of your talented son would doubtless reveal at this moment either steatomatous or atheromatous deposits in the cerebral blood-vessels, or an encysted abscess, probably of no very recent origin, or, at the least, considerable inspissation, and opacity, of the membranes of the encephalon, or more or less pulpy disorganisation of one or other of the hemispheres of the brain: *good* morning!!"

"Good morning, sir: and a thousand thanks for your friendly interest in my unhappy boy."

The Psycho-cerebrals "took their departure" (Psycho-cerebral for "went away"), and left Jane Hardie brimful of anxiety. Alfred was not there to dispose of the tirade in two words, "Petitio principii," and so smoke on; and, not being an university woman, she could not keep her eye on the original assumption while following the series of inferences the learned doctor built so neatly, story by story, on the foundation *of* the quicksand *of* a loose conjecture.*

* So novices sitting at a conjuror see him take a wedding-ring, and put it in a little box before a lady; then cross the theatre with another little box, and put that before another lady: "Hey presto! pass!" in box 2 is discovered a wedding-ring, which is in-

"Now not a word of this to Alfred," said Mr. Hardie. "I shall propose him a little foreign tour, to amuse his mind."

"Yes, but papa, if some serious change is really going on inside his poor head."

Mr. Hardie smiled sarcastically. "Don't you see that if the mind can wound the brain, the mind can cure it?" Then, after a while, he said parentally, "My child, I must give you a lesson: men of the world use enthusiasts—like those two I have just been drawing out—for their tools; we don't let them make tools of us. Osmond, you know, is jackal to an asylum in London; Dr. Wycherley, I have heard, keeps two or three such establishments by himself or his agents: blinded by self-interest, and that of their clique—what an egotistical world it is to be sure!—they would confine a melancholy youth in a gloomy house, among afflicted persons, and give him nothing to do but brood; and so turn the scale against his reason: but *I* have my children's interest at heart more than my own; I shall send him abroad, and so amuse his mind with fresh objects, break off sad associations, and restore him to a brilliant career. I count on you to second me in my little scheme for his good."

"That I will, papa."

"Somehow, I don't know why, he is coolish to me.

"He does not understand you, as I do, my own papa."

"But he is affectionate with you, I think."

"Oh yes, more than ever: trouble has drawn us closer. Papa, in the midst of our sorrow, how much we have to be thankful for to the Giver of all good things!"

"Yes, little angel: and you must improve Heaven's goodness by working on your brother's affection, and persuading him to this continental tour."

Thus appealed to, Jane promised warmly: and the man of the world, finding he had a blind and willing instrument in the one creature he loved, kissed her on the forehead, and told her to run away, for here was Mr. Skinner, who no doubt wanted to speak on business.

Skinner, who had in fact been holding respectfully aloof for some time, came forward on Jane's retiring, and in a very obsequious tone requested a private interview. Mr. Hardie led the way into the little dining-room.

They were no sooner alone than Skinner left off fawning, very abruptly; and put on a rugged resolute manner that was new to him: "I am come for my commission," said he sturdily.

Mr. Hardie looked an inquiry.

'Oh, you don't know what I mean, of course," said the little clerk,

stantly *assumed* to be *the* ring: on this the green minds are fixed, and with this is sham business done: Box 1, containing the real ring all the time, is overlooked; and the confederate, in livery or not, does what he likes with it: imprisons it in an orange —for the good of its health.

So poor Argan, when Fleurant enumerates the consequences of his omitting a single —dose shall I say?—is terrified by the threatened disorders, which succeed to each other logically enough: all the absurdity being in the first link of the chain; and from that his mind is diverted.

almost brutally: "I've waited, and waited, to see if you would have the decency, and the gratitude, and the honesty, to offer me a trifle out of It; but I see I might wait till doomsday before you would ever think of thinking of anybody but yourself. So now shell out without more words, or I'll blow the gaff." The little wretch raised his voice louder and louder at every sentence.

"Hush! hush! Skinner," said Mr. Hardie, anxiously, "you are under some delusion. When did I ever decline to recognise your services? I always intended to make you a present, a handsome present."

"Then why didn't ye *do* it without being forced? Come, sir, you can't draw the wool over Noah Skinner's eyes; I have had you watched, and you are looking towards the U. S., and that is too big a country for me to hunt you in. I'm not to be trifled with: I'm not to be palavered: give me a thousand pounds of It this moment, or I'll blow the whole concern, and you along with it."

"A thousand pounds?!"

"Now look at that!" shrieked Skinner. "Serves me right for not saying seven thousand. What right have you to a shilling of it more than I have? If I had the luck to be a burglar's pal instead of a banker's, I should have half. Give it me this moment, or I'll go to Albion Villa and have you took up for a thief; as you are."

"But I haven't got it on me."

"That's a lie: you carry it where *he* did; close to your heart: I can see it bulge: there, Job was a patient man, but his patience went at last." With this he ran to the window and threw it open.

Hardie entreated him to be calm. "I'll give it you, Skinner," said he, "and with pleasure, if you will give me some security that you will not turn round, as soon as you have got it, and be my enemy."

"Enemy of a gent that pays me a thousand pounds? nonsense! Why should I? We are in the same boat: behave like a man, and you know you have nothing to fear from me: but I will—not—go halves in a theft for nothing: would *you*? Come, how is it to be, peace or war? Will you be content with thirteen thousand pounds that don't belong to you, not a shilling of it, or will you go to jail a felon, and lose it every penny?"

Mr. Hardie groaned aloud, but there was no help for it. Skinner was on sale: and *must* be bought.

He took out two notes for five hundred pounds each, and laid them on the table, after taking their numbers.

Skinner's eyes glistened: "Thank you, sir," said he. He put them in his pocket. Then he said quietly, "Now you have taken the numbers, sir, so I'll trouble you for a line to make me safe against the criminal law. You are a deep one; you might say I robbed you."

"That is a very unworthy suspicion, Skinner; and a childish one."

"Oh, it is diamond cut diamond. A single line, sir, just to say that in return for his faithful services, you have given Noah Skinner two notes for 500*l*. Nos. 1084 and 85."

"With all my heart—on your giving me a receipt for them."

It was Skinner's turn to hesitate. After reflecting, however, on all the possible consequences, he saw nothing to fear; so he consented.

The business completed, a magic change took place in the little clerk.

"Now we are friends again, sir: and I'll give you a piece of advice; mind your eye with Mr. Alfred; he is down on us."

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Hardie, with ill-disguised anxiety.

"I'll tell you, sir. He met me this morning: and says he to me, 'Skinner, old boy, I want to speak a word to you.' He puts his hands on my shoulder, and turns me round, and says he all at one time, 'The fourteen thousand pounds!' You might have knocked me down with a feather. And he looked me through like a gimlet, mind ye. 'Come now,' says he, 'you see I know all; make a clean breast of it.' So then I saw he didn't know *all*, and I brazened up a bit: told him I hadn't a notion what he meant. 'Oh yes I did,' he said, 'Captain Dodd's fourteen thousand pounds! It had passed through my hands.' Then I began to funk again at his knowing that: perhaps he only guessed it after all: but at the time I thought he knew it; I was flustered, ye see. But I said, 'I'd look at the books; but I didn't think his deposit was anything like that.' 'You little equivocating humbug,' says he: 'and which was better, to tell the truth at once and let Captain Dodd, who never did me any harm, have his own, or to hear it told me in the felon's dock?' those were his words, sir: and they made my blood run cold; and if he had gone on at me like that, I should have split, I know I should: but he just said, 'There, your face has given your tongue the lie: you haven't brains enough to play the rogue.' Oh, and another thing—he said he wouldn't talk to the sparrow-hawk any more, when there was the kite hard by: so by that I guess your turn is coming, sir; so mind your eye. And then he turned his back on me with a look as if I was so much dirt. But I didn't mind that; I was glad to be shut of him at any price."

This intelligence discomposed Mr. Hardie terribly: it did away with all hope that Alfred meant to keep his suspicions to himself. "Why did you not tell me this before?" said he, reproachfully.

Skinner's sharp visage seemed to sharpen as he replied, "Because I wanted a thousand pounds first."

"Curse your low cunning!"

Skinner laughed. "Good-bye, sir: take care of yourself and I'll take care of mine. I'm afraid of Mr. Alfred and the stone jug, so I'm off to London, and there I'll un-Skinner myself into Mr. Something or other, and make my thousand pounds breed ten." And he whipped out, leaving his master filled with rage and dismay.

"Outwitted even by this little wretch!"

He was now accountable for fourteen thousand pounds, and had only thirteen thousand left, if forced to reimburse; so that it was quite on the cards for him to lose a thousand pounds by robbing his neighbour and risking his own immortal jewel: this galled him to the quick; and altogether his equable temper began to give way; it had already survived half the iron of his nerves. He walked up and down the parlour chafing like an irritated lion. In which state of his mind the one enemy he now feared and hated walked quietly into the room, and begged for a little serious conversation with him.

"It is like your effrontery," said Mr. Hardie: "I wonder you are not ashamed to look your father in the face."

"Having wronged nobody I can look anybody in the face," replied Alfred, looking him in the face point-blank.

At this swift rejoinder, Mr. Hardie felt like a too confident swordsman, who, attacking in a passion, suddenly receives a prick that shows him his antagonist is not one to be trifled with. He was on his guard directly, and said coldly, "You have been belying me to my very clerk."

"No, sir: you are mistaken: I have never mentioned your name to your clerk."

Mr. Hardie reflected on what Skinner had told him, and found he had made another false move. He tried again: "Nor to the Dodds?" with an incredulous sneer.

"Nor to the Dodds," replied Alfred, calmly.

"What, not to Miss Julia Dodd?"

"No, sir, I have seen her but once, since—I discovered about the fourteen thousand pounds."

"What fourteen thousand pounds?" inquired Mr. Hardie, innocently.

"What fourteen thousand pounds!" repeated the young man disdainfully. Then suddenly turning on his father, with red brow and flashing eyes: "the fourteen thousand pounds Captain Dodd brought home from India: the fourteen thousand pounds I heard him claim of you with curses: ay, miserable son, and miserable man, that I am, I heard my own father called a villain; and what did my father reply? Did you hurl the words back into your accuser's throat? No: you whispered, 'Hush! hush! I'll bring it you down.' Oh, what a hell Shame is!"

Mr. Hardie turned pale, and almost sick: with these words of Alfred's fled all hope of ever deceiving him.

"There, there," said the young man, lowering his voice from rage to profound sorrow: "I don't come here to quarrel with my father, nor to insult him, God knows: and I entreat you for both our sakes not to try my temper too hard by these childish attempts to blind me: and, sir, pray dismiss from your mind the notion that I have disclosed to any living soul my knowledge of this horrible secret: on the contrary, I have kept it gnawing my heart, and almost maddening me at times. For my own personal satisfaction I have applied a test both to you and Skinner; but that is all I have done: I have not told dear Julia, nor any of her family; and now, if you will only listen to me, and do what I entreat you to do, she shall never know; oh, never."

"Oho!" thought Mr. Hardie, "he comes with a proposal: I'll hear it, anyway."

He then took a line well known to artful men: he encouraged Alfred to show his hand; maintaining a complete reserve as to his own; "You say you did not communicate your illusion about this fourteen thousand pounds to Julia Dodd that night: may I ask then (without indiscretion) what did pass between you two?"

"I will tell you, sir. She saw me standing there, and asked me in her own soft angel voice if I was unhappy. I told her I must be a poor creature if I could be happy. Then she asked me, with some hesitation I thought, why I was unhappy. I said, because I could not see the path of honour and duty clear: that, at least, was the purport. Then she told me that in all difficulties she had found the best way was to

pray to God to guide her; and she begged me to lay my care before Him, and ask His counsel. And then I thanked her; and bade her good night, and she me; and that was all that passed between us two unhappy lovers, whom you have made miserable; and even cool to one another; but not hostile to you. And you played the spy on us, sir; and misunderstood us, as spies generally do. Ah, sir! a few months ago you would not have condescended to that."

Mr. Hardie coloured, but did not reply. He had passed from the irritable into the quietly vindictive stage.

Alfred then deprecated further discussion of what was past, and said abruptly: "I have an offer to make you: in a very short time I shall have ten thousand pounds; I will not resign my whole fortune; that would be unjust to myself, and my wife; and I loathe and despise Injustice in all its forms, however romantic or plausible. But, if you will give the Dodds their 14,000*l.*, I will share my little fortune equally with you: and thank you, and bless you. Consider, sir, with your abilities and experience five thousand pounds may yet be the nucleus of a fortune; a fortune built on an honourable foundation. I know you will thrive with my five thousand pounds ten times more than with their fourteen thousand; and enjoy the blessing of blessings, a clear conscience."

Now this offer was no sooner made than Mr. Hardie shut his face, and went to mental arithmetic, like one doing a sum behind a thick door. He would have taken ten thousand: but five thousand did not much tempt him: besides, would it be five thousand clear? He already owed Alfred two thousand five hundred. It flashed through him that a young man who loathed and despised Injustice—even to himself—would not consent to be diddled by him out of one sum while making him a present of another: and then there was Skinner's thousand to be reimbursed. He therefore declined in these terms:

"This offer shows me you are sincere in these strange notions you have taken up. I am sorry for it: it looks like insanity. These nocturnal illusions, these imaginary sights and sounds, come of brooding on a single idea, and often usher in a calamity one trembles to think of. You have made me a proposal: I make you one: take a couple of hundred pounds (I'll get it from your trustees) and travel the Continent for four months; enlarge and amuse your mind with the contemplation of nature and manners and customs; and if that does not clear this phantom 14,000*l.* out of your head, I am much mistaken."

Alfred replied that foreign travel was his dream: but he could not leave Barkington while there was an act of justice to be done.

"Then do *me* justice, boy," said Mr. Hardie, with wonderful dignity, all things considered. "Instead of brooding on your one fantastical idea, and shutting out all rational evidence to the contrary, take the trouble to look through my books: and they will reveal to you a fortune, not of fourteen thousand, but of eighty thousand pounds, honourably sacrificed in the vain struggle to fulfil my engagements: who, do you think, will believe, against such evidence, the preposterous tale you have concocted against your poor father? Already the tide is turning, and all, who have seen the accounts of the Bank, pity me; they will

pity me still more if ever they hear my own flesh and blood insults me in the moment of my fall; sees me ruined by my honesty, and living in a hovel, yet comes into that poor but honest abode, and stabs me to the heart by accusing me of stealing fourteen thousand pounds: a sum that would have saved me, if I could only have laid my hands on it."

He hid his face, to conceal its incongruous expression: and heaved a deep sigh.

Alfred turned his head away and groaned.

After a while he rose from his seat and went to the door; but seemed reluctant to go: he cast a longing, lingering look on his father, and said beseechingly: "Oh think! you are not my flesh and blood more than I am yours; is all the love to be on my side? have I no influence even when right is on my side?" Then he suddenly turned and threw himself impetuously on his knees; "Your father was the soul of honour; your son loathed fraud and injustice from his cradle; you stand between two generations of Hardies, and belong to neither; do but reflect one moment how bright a thing honour is, how short and uncertain a thing life is, how sure a thing retribution is, in this world or the next: it is your guardian angel that kneels before you now, and not your son; oh, for Christ's sake, for my mother's sake, listen to my last appeal. You don't know me: I cannot compound with injustice. Pity me, pity her I love, pity yourself!"

"You young viper!" cried the father, stung with remorse but not touched with penitence. "Get away, you amorous young hypocrite; get out of my house, get out of my sight, or I shall spurn you and curse you at my feet."

"Enough!" said Alfred, rising and turning suddenly calm as a statue: "let us be gentlemen, if you please, even though we must be enemies. Good-bye, my father that *was*."

And he walked gently out of the room, and, as he passed the window Mr. Hardie heard his great heart sob.

He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. "A hard tussle," thought he, "and with my own unnatural, ungrateful flesh and blood: but I have won it: he hasn't told the Dodds; he never will: and, if he did, who would believe him, or them?"

At dinner there was no Alfred; but after dinner a note to Jane informing her he had taken lodgings in the town, and requesting her to send his books and clothes in the evening. Jane handed the note to her father: and sighed deeply. Watching his face as he read it, she saw him turn rather pale, and look more furrowed than ever.

"Papa!" said she, "what *does* it all mean?"

"I am thinking."

Then, after a long pause, he ground his teeth and said, "It means — War: War between my own son and me."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Long before this open rupture Jane Hardie had asked her father sorrowfully, whether she was to discontinue her intimacy with the Dodds: she thought of course he would say "Yes;" and it cost her a hard struggle between inclination and filial duty to raise the question. But Mr. Hardie was anxious her friendship with that family should continue; it furnished a channel of news, and in case of detection might be useful to avert or soften hostilities; so he answered rather sharply, "On no account: the Dodds are an estimable family: pray be as friendly with them as ever you can." Jane coloured with pleasure at this most unexpected reply: but her wakeful conscience reminded her this answer was given in ignorance of her attachment to Edward Dodd; and urged her to confession. But at that Nature recoiled: Edward had not openly declared his love to her; so modest pride, as well as modest shame, combined with female cowardice to hold back the avowal.

So then Miss Tender Conscience tormented herself; and recorded the struggle in her diary; but briefly, and in terms vague and typical; not a word about "a young man"—or "crossed in love"—but one obscure and hasty slap at the carnal affections, and a good deal about "the saints in prison," and "the battle of Armageddon."

Yet, to do her justice, laxity of expression did not act upon her conduct and warp that, as it does most mystical speakers'.

To obey her father to the letter, she maintained a friendly correspondence with Julia Dodd, exchanging letters daily: but, not to disobey him in the spirit, she ceased to visit Albion Villa. Thus she avoided Edward, and extracted from the situation the utmost self-denial, and the least possible amount of "carnal pleasure," as she naïvely denominated an interchange of worldly affection, however distant and respectful.

One day she happened to mention her diary, and say it was a present comfort to her, and instructive to review. Julia, catching at every straw of consolation, said she would keep one too, and asked a sight of Jane's for a model. "No, dear friend," said Jane: "a diary should be one's self on paper."

This was fortunate: it precluded that servile imitation, in which her sex excels even mine; and consequently the two records reflect two good girls, instead of one in two skins; and may be trusted to conduct this narrative forward, and relieve its monotony a little: only of course the reader must not expect to see the plot of a story carried minutely out in two crude compositions written with an object so distinct: he must watch for glimpses and make the most of indications. Nor is this an excessive demand upon his intelligence; for, if he cannot do this with a book, how will he do it in real life, where male and female characters reveal their true selves by glimpses only, and the gravest and most dramatic events give the diviner so few and faint signs of their coming?

*Extracts from Julia Dodd's Diary:*

"Dec. 5th. It is all over; they have taken papa away to an asylum: and the house is like a grave, but for our outbursts of sorrow. Just

before he went away the medal came—oh no, I cannot. Poor, poor mamma!

8 P.M. In the midst of our affliction Heaven sent us a ray of comfort: the kindest letter from a lady, a perfect stranger. It *came* yesterday; but now I have got it to copy: oh, bless it; and the good, kind writer.

DEAR MADAM,

I scarcely know whether to hope or to fear that your good husband may have mentioned my name to you; however, he is just the man to pass over both my misbehaviour and his own gallantry; so I beg permission to introduce myself. I and my little boy were passengers by the Agra; I was spoiled by a long residence in India, and gave your husband sore trouble by resisting discipline, refusing to put out my light at nine o'clock, and in short by being an unreasonable woman, or rather a spoiled child. Well, all my little attempts at a feud failed; Captain Dodd did his duty, and kept his temper provokingly: the only revenge he took was a noble one; he jumped into the sea after my darling Freddy, and saved him from a watery grave, and his mother from madness or death; yet he was himself hardly recovered from a wound he had received in defending us all against pirates. Need I say more to one who is herself a mother? You will know how our little misunderstanding ended after that. As soon as we were friends I made him talk of his family; yourself, Edward, Julia, I seem to know you all.

When the ruffian, who succeeded our good captain, had wrecked poor us, and then deserted us, your husband resumed the command, and saved Freddy and me once more by his courage, his wonderful coolness, and his skill. Since then the mouse has been at work for the lion: I despair of conveying any pleasure by it to a character so elevated as Captain Dodd; his reward must be his own conscience; but we poor little women like external shows, do we not? and so I thought a medal of the Humane Society might give some pleasure to you and Miss Dodd. Never did medal nor order repose on a nobler heart. The case was so strong, and so well supported, that the society did not hesitate: and you will receive it very soon after this.

You will be surprised, dear madam, at all this from a stranger to yourself, and will perhaps set it down to a wish to intrude on your acquaintance. Well then, dear madam, you will not be far wrong. I *should* like much to know one, whose character I already seem acquainted with; and to convey personally my gratitude and admiration of your husband; I could pour it out more freely to you, you know, than to him.

I am,
Dear Madam,
Yours very faithfully,
LOUISA BERESFORD.

And the medal came about an hour before the fly to take him away His dear name was on it, and his brave courageous acts.

Oh, shall I ever be old enough and hard enough to speak of this without stopping to cry?

We fastened it round his dear neck with a ribbon. Mamma would put it inside his clothes for fear the silver should tempt some wretch. I should never have thought of that: is there a creature so base? And we told the men how he had gained it (they were servants of the asylum), and we showed them how brave and good he was, and would be again if they would be kind to him and cure him. And mamma bribed them with money to use him kindly: I thought they would be offended and refuse it: but they took it, and their faces showed she was wiser than I am. *He* keeps away from us too. It is nearly a fortnight now."

"Dec. 7th. Aunt Eve left to-day. Mamma kept her room and could not speak to her: cannot forgive her interfering between papa and her. It does seem strange that any one but mamma should be able to send papa out of the house, and to such a place; but it is the law: and Edward, who is all good sense, says it was necessary; he says mamma is unjust: grief makes her unreasonable. I don't know who is in the right: and I don't much care: but I know I am sorry for Aunt Eve, and very, very sorry for mamma."

"Dec. 8th. I am an egotist: found myself out this morning; and it is a good thing to keep a diary. It* was overpowered at first by grief for mamma: but now the house is sad and quiet I am always thinking of *him*; and that is egotism.

Why *does* he stay away so? I almost wish I could think it was coldness or diminished affection; for I fear something worse; something to make *him* wretched. Those dreadful words papa spoke before he was afflicted! words I will never put on paper; but they ring in my ears still; they appal me: and then found at their very door! Ah, and I knew I *should* find him near that house. And now *he* keeps away."

"Dec. 9th. All day trying to comfort mamma. She made a great effort and wrote to Mrs. Beresford."

POOR MAMMA'S LETTER

"DEAR MADAM,

"Your kind and valued letter reached us in deep affliction: and I am little able to reply to you as you deserve. My poor husband is very ill; so ill that he no longer remembers the past, neither the brave acts that have won him your esteem, nor even the face of his loving and unhappy wife, who now thanks you with many tears for your sweet letter. Heartbroken as my children and I are, we yet derive some consolation from it. We have tied the medal round his neck, madam, and thank you far more than we can find words to express.

In conclusion, I pray Heaven that, in your bitterest hour, you may find the consolation you have administered to us: no, no, I pray you may never, never, stand in such need of comfort.

I am,

Dear Madam,

Yours gratefully and sincerely,

LUCY DODD.*

* Egotism. The abstract quality evolved from the concrete term egotist by feminine art, without the aid of grammar.

"Dec. 10th, Sunday. At St. Anne's in the morning. Tried hard to apply the sermon. He spoke of griefs, but *so* coldly; surely he never felt one: *he* was not there. Mem.: always pray against wandering thoughts on entering church."

"Dec. 11th. A diary is a dreadful thing. Everything must go down now, and, amongst the rest, that the poor are selfish. I could not interest one of mine in mamma's sorrows; no, they must run back to their own little sordid troubles, about money and things. I was so provoked with Mrs. Jackson (she owes mamma so much) that I left her hastily: and that was Impatience. I had a mind to go back to her; but would not; and that was Pride. Where is my Christianity?

A kind letter from Jane Hardie. But no word of *him*."

"Dec. 12th. To-day Edward told me plump I must not go on taking things out of the house for the poor: mamma gave me the reason. 'We are poor ourselves, thanks to——' And then she stopped. Does she suspect? How can she? She did hear not those two dreadful words of papa's? They are like two arrows in my heart. And so we are poor: she says we have scarcely anything to live upon after paying the two hundred and fifty pounds a year for papa."

"Dec. 13th. A comforting letter from Jane. She sends me Hebrews xii. 11, and says, 'Let us take a part of the Bible, and read two chapters prayerfully, at the same hour of the day: will ten o'clock in the morning suit you? and, if so, will you choose where to begin?' I will, sweet friend, I will: and then, though some cruel mystery keeps us apart, our souls will be together over the sacred page, as I hope they will one day be together in heaven; yours will at any rate. Wrote back, yes, and a thousand thanks, and should like to begin with the Psalms: they are sorrowful, and so are we. And I must pray not to think too much of *him*.

If everything is to be put down one does, I cried long and bitterly to find I had written that I must pray to God against *him*."

"Dec. 14th. It is plain he never means to come again. Mamma says nothing, but that is out of pity for me; I have not read her dear face all these years for nothing. She is beginning to think him unworthy, when she thinks of him at all. There is a mystery; a dreadful mystery: may he not be as mystified too, and perhaps tortured like me with doubts and suspicions? they say he is pale and dejected. Poor thing! But then oh why not come to me and say so? Shall I write to him? No, I will cut my hand off sooner."

"Dec. 16th. A blessed letter from Jane. She says 'Letter writing on ordinary subjects is a sad waste of time and very unpardonable among His people.' And so it is; and my weak hope, daily disappointed, that there may be something in her letter, only shows how inferior I am to my beloved friend. She says 'I should like to fix another hour for us two to meet at the Throne together: will five o'clock suit you? we dine at six: but I am never more than half an hour dressing.'

The friendship of this saint, and her bright example, is what Heaven sends me in infinite mercy and goodness to soothe my aching heart a little: for *him* I shall never see again.

I have seen him this very evening.

It was a beautiful night: I went to look at—the world to come I call it—for I believe the redeemed are to inhabit those very stars hereafter, and visit them all in turn—and this world I now find is a world of sorrow and disappointment—so I went on the balcony to look at a better one: and oh it seemed so holy, so calm, so pure, that heavenly world: I gazed and stretched my hands towards it for ever so little of its holiness and purity; and, that moment, I heard a sigh. I looked, and there stood a gentleman just outside our gate, and it was *him*. I nearly screamed, and my heart beat so. He did not see me: for I had come out softly, and his poor head was down, down upon his breast; and he used to carry it so high, a little, little, while ago; too high some said; but not I. I looked, and my misgivings melted away; it flashed on me as if one of those stars had written it with its own light in my heart—'There stands Grief; not Guilt.' And before I knew what I was about I had whispered 'Alfred!' The poor boy started and ran towards me: but stopped short and sighed again. My heart yearned: but it was not for me to make advances to him, after his unkindness: so I spoke to him as coldly as ever I could, and I said, 'You are unhappy.'

He looked up to me, and then I saw even by that light that he is enduring a bitter, bitter struggle: *so* pale, *so* worn, *so* dragged!—Now how many times have I cried, this last month? more than in all the rest of my life a great deal.—'Unhappy!' he said; 'I must be a contemptible thing if I was not unhappy.' And then he asked me should not I despise him if he was happy. I did not answer that: but I asked him why he was unhappy. And when I had, I was half frightened; for he never evades a question the least bit.

He held his head higher still, and said, 'I am unhappy because I cannot see the path of honour.'

Then I babbled something, I forget what: then he went on like this—ah, I never forget what *he* says—he said Cicero says Æquitas ipsa lucet per se; something significat* something else: and he repeated it slowly for me, he knows I know a little Latin; and told me that was as much as to say 'Justice is so clear a thing, that whoever hesitates must be on the road of wrong. And yet,' he said bitterly, '*I* hesitate and doubt, in a matter of right and wrong, like an Academic philosopher weighing and balancing mere speculative straws.' Those were his very words. 'And so,' said he, 'I am miserable; deserving to be miserable.'

Then I ventured to remind him that he, and I, and all Christian souls, had a resource not known to heathen philosophers, however able. And I said, 'Dear Alfred, when I am in doubt and difficulty, I go and pray to Him to guide me aright: have you done so?' No, that had never occurred to him: but he *would*, if I made a point of it; and at any rate he could not go on in this way; I should soon see him again, and, once his mind was made up, no shrinking from mere consequences, he promised me. Then we bade one another good night, and he went off holding his head as proudly as he used: and poor silly me fluttered, and nearly hysterical, as soon as I quite lost sight of him."

* Dubitatio cogitationem significat injuriæ.

"Dec. 17th. At church in the morning: a good sermon. Notes and analysis. In the evening Jane's clergyman preached. She came. Going out I asked her a question about what we had heard; but she did not answer me. At parting she told me she made it a rule not to speak coming from church, not even about the sermon. This seemed austere to poor me. But of course she is right. Oh, that I was like her."

"Dec. 18th. Edward is coming out. This boy, that one has taught all the French, all the dancing, and nearly all the Latin he knows, turns out to be one's superior, infinitely: I mean in practical good sense. Mamma had taken her pearls to the jeweller and borrowed two hundred pounds. He found this out and objected. She told him a part of it was required to keep him at Oxford. 'Oh indeed,' said he: and we thought of course there was an end: but next morning he was off before breakfast, and the day after he returned from Oxford with his caution money, forty pounds, and gave it mamma; she had forgotten all about it. And he had taken his name off the college books and left the university for ever. The poor, gentle, tears of mortification ran down his mother's cheeks, and I hung round her neck, and scolded him like a vixen; as I am. We might have spared tears and fury both, for he is neither to be melted nor irritated by poor little us. He kissed us and coaxed us like a superior being, and set to work in his quiet, sober ponderous, way, and proved us a couple of fools to our entire satisfaction, and that without an unkind word: for he is as gentle as a lamb, and as strong as ten thousand elephants. He took the money back and brought the pearls home again, and he has written 'SOYEZ DE VOTRE SIÈCLE' in great large letters, and has pasted it on all our three bed-room doors, inside. And he has been all these years quietly cutting up the Morning Advertiser, and arranging the slips with wonderful skill and method. He calls it 'digesting the 'Tiser!' and you can't ask for any *modern* information, great or small, but he'll find you something about it in this digest. Such a folio! It takes a man to open and shut it. And he means to be a sort of little papa in this house, and mamma means to let him. And indeed it is so sweet to be commanded: besides, it saves thinking for oneself; and that *is* such a worry."

"Dec. 19th. Yes, they have settled it: we are to leave here, and live in lodgings to save servants. How we are to exist even so, mamma cannot see; but Edward can; he says we two have got popular talents, and *he knows the markets* (what does that mean, I wonder), and the world in general. I asked him wherever he picked it up, his knowledge: he said, 'In the 'Tiser.' I asked him would he leave the place where *she* lives. He looked sad, but said, 'Yes: for the good of us all.' So he is better than I am; but who is not? I wasted an imploring look on him; but not on mamma; she looked back to me, and then said sadly, 'Wait a few days, Edward, for—*my* sake.' That meant for poor credulous Julia's, who still believes in him. My sweet mother!"

"Dec. 21st. Told mamma to-day I would go for a governess, to help her, since we are all ruined. She kissed me and trembled; but she did not say 'No;' so it will come to that. He will be sorry. When

I do go, I think I shall find courage to send him a line: just to say I am sure *he* is not to blame for withdrawing. Indeed, how could I ever marry a man whose father I have heard my father call——" (the pen was drawn through the rest).

"Dec. 22nd. A miserable day: low spirited and hysterical. We are really going away. Edward has begun to make packing-cases: I stood over him and sighed, and asked him questions: he said he was going to take unfurnished rooms in London, send up what furniture is absolutely necessary, and sell the rest by auction, with the lease of our dear, dear house, where we were all so happy once. So, what with his 'knowledge of the markets, and the world,' and his sense, and his strong will, we have only to submit. And then he is so kind, too: 'Don't cry, little girl,' he said. 'Not but what I could turn on the waters myself if there was anything to be gained by it. *Shall* I cry, Ju,' said he, 'or shall I whistle? I think I'll whistle.' And he whistled a tune right through while he worked with a heart as sick as my own, perhaps. Poor Edward!"

"Dec. 23rd. My Christian friend has her griefs too. But then *she* puts them to profit: she says to-day, 'We are both tasting the same flesh-crucifying but soul-profiting experience.' Her every word is a rebuke to me: torn at this solemn season of the year with earthly passions. Went down after reading her letter, and played and sang the Gloria in excelsis of Pergolesi, with all my soul. So then I repeated it, and burst out crying in the middle. Oh shame! shame!"

"Dec. 24th. Edward started for London at five in the morning to take a place for us. The servants were next told, and received warning; the one we had the poorest opinion of, she is such a flirt, cried, and begged mamma to let her share our fallen fortunes, and said she could cook a little and would do her best. I kissed her violently, and quite forgot I was a young lady till she herself reminded me; and she looked frightened at mamma. But mamma only smiled through her tears and said, 'Think of it quietly, Sarah, before you commit yourself.'"

"I am now sitting in my old room, cold as a stone: for I have packed up some things: so the first step is actually taken. Oh, if I but knew that he was happy! Then I could endure anything. But how can I think so? Well, I will go, and never tell a soul what I suspect, and he cannot tell, even if he knows: for it is his father. Jane, too, avoids all mention of her own father and brother more than is natural. Oh, if I could only be a child again!

Regrets are vain; I will cease even to record them; these diaries feed one's selfishness, and the unfortunate passion, that will make me a bad daughter and an ungrateful soldier of Him who was born as to-morrow: to your knees, false Christian! to your knees!"

"I am calmer now; and feel resigned to the will of Heaven; or benumbed; or something. I will pack this box and then go down and comfort my mother; and visit my poor people, perhaps for the last time: ah me!

A knock at the street door! his knock! I know every echo of his

hand, and his foot. Where is my composure now? I flutter like a bird. I will not go down. He will think I love him so.

At least I will wait till he has nearly gone.

Elizabeth has come to say I am wanted in the drawing-room.

So I *must* go down whether I like or no."

"Bedtime. Oh that I had the pen of a writer to record the scene I have witnessed, worthily. When I came in, I found mamma and him both seated in dead silence. He rose and looked at me and I at him: and years seemed to have rolled over his face since last I saw it; I was obliged to turn my head away; I curtseyed to him distantly, and may Heaven forgive me for that: and we sat down, and presently turned round and all looked at one another like the ghosts of the happy creatures we once were altogether.

Then Alfred began, not in his old imperative voice, but scarce above a whisper; and oh the words such as none but himself in the wide world would have spoken—I love him better than ever; I pity him; I adore him; he is a scholar; he is a chevalier; he is the soul of honour; he is the most unfortunate and proudest gentleman beneath the sun; oh, my darling! my darling!!

He said, 'Mrs. Dodd, and you Miss Dodd, whom I loved before I lost the right to ask you to be mine, and whom I shall love to the last hour of my miserable existence, I am come to explain my own conduct to you, and to do you an act of simple justice, too long delayed. To begin with myself, you must know that my understanding is of the Academic School: I incline to weigh proofs before I make up my mind. But then I differ from that school in this, that I cannot think myself to an eternal standstill; (such an expression! but what does that matter, it was *his*;) I am a man of action: in Hamlet's place I should have either turned my ghost into ridicule, or my uncle into a ghost; so I kept away from you while in doubt, but now I doubt no longer. I take my line: ladies, you have been swindled out of a large sum of money.'

My blood ran cold at these words. Surely nothing on earth but a man could say this right out like that.

Mamma and I looked at one another; and what did I see in her face, for the first time? Why that she had her suspicions too, and had been keeping them from me. Pitying angel!

He went on: 'Captain Dodd brought home several thousand pounds?'

Mamma said 'Yes.' And I think she was going to say how much, but he stopped her and made her write the amount in an envelope, while he took another and wrote in it with his pencil; he took both envelopes to me, and asked me to read them out in turn: I did, and mamma's said fourteen thousand pounds: and his said fourteen thousand pounds. Mamma looked such a look at me.

Then he turned to me: 'Miss Dodd, do you remember that night you and I met at Richard Hardie's door? Well, scarce five minutes before that, your father was standing on our lawn and called to the man, who was my father, in a loud voice— it rings in my ears now—"Hardie! Villain! give me back my money, my fourteen thousand pounds! give me my children's money, or may your children die before your eyes."

Ah, you wince to hear me whisper these dreadful words: what, if you had been where I was and heard them spoken, and in a terrible voice; the voice of Despair; the voice of Truth! Soon a window opened cautiously, and a voice whispered, "Hush! I'll bring it you down." And *this* voice was the voice of fear, of dishonesty, and of Richard Hardie.'

He turned deadly white when he said this, and I cried to mamma, 'Oh, stop him! stop him!' And she said, 'Alfred, think what you are saying. Why do you tell us what we had better never know?' He answered directly,

'Because it is the truth: and because I loathe injustice. Some time afterwards I taxed Mr. Richard Hardie with this fourteen thousand pounds: and his face betrayed him. I taxed his clerk, Skinner: and Skinner's face betrayed him: and he fled the town that very night.'

My mother looked much distressed and said, 'To what end do you raise this pitiable subject? Your father is a bankrupt, and we but suffer with the rest.'

'No, no,' said he, 'I have looked through the bankrupt's books, and there is no mention of the sum. And then who brought Captain Dodd here? Skinner? and Skinner is his detected confederate. It is clear to me poor Captain Dodd trusted that sum to *us* before he had the fit: beyond this all is conjecture.'

Mamma looked at me again, and said, 'What *am* I to do; or say?'

I screamed, 'Do nothing, say nothing: oh pray, pray make him hold his tongue, and let the vile money go. It is not *his* fault.'

'Do?' said the obstinate creature: 'why tell Edward, and let him employ a sharp attorney: you have a supple antagonist, and a daring one. Need I say I have tried persuasion, and even bribes: but he defies me. Set an attorney on him; or the police, Fiat Justitia, ruat cœlum.' I put both hands out to him and burst out, 'Oh, Alfred, why did you tell? A son expose his own father? For shame; for shame! I have suspected it all long ago: but *I* would never have told.'

He started a little; but said, 'Miss Dodd, you were very generous to me; but that is not exactly a reason why I should be a cur to you; and an accomplice in a theft by which you suffer. I have no pretensions to religion like my sister: so I can't afford to tamper with plain right and wrong. What, look calmly on and see one man defraud another? I can't do it. See *you* defrauded? you, Mrs. Dodd, for whom I profess affection and friendship? You, Miss Dodd, for whom I profess love and constancy? Stand and see you swindled into poverty? Of what do you think I am made? My stomach rises against it, my blood boils against it, my flesh creeps at it, my soul loathes it:' then after this great burst he seemed to turn *so* feeble: 'Oh,' said he, faltering, 'I know what I have done; I have signed the death warrant of our love, dear to me as life. But I can't help it. Oh, Julia, Julia, my lost love, you can never look on me again; you must not love a man you cannot marry, Cheat Hardie's wretched son. But what could I do? Fate offers me but the miserable choice of desolation or cowardly rascality. I choose desolation. And I mean to stand by my choice like a man. So good-bye, ladies.'

The poor proud creature rose from his seat, and bowed stiffly and haughtily to us both, and was going away without another word, and, I

do believe, for over. But his soul had been too great for his body; his poor lips turned pale, and he staggered; and would have fallen, but mamma screamed to me, and she he loves so dearly, and abandons so cruelly, woke from a stupor of despair, and flew and caught him fainting in these arms."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

'We laid the poor proud creature on the sofa, and bathed his face with eau de Cologne. He spoke directly, and said that was nice, and 'His head! his head!' And I don't think he was ever quite insensible, but he did not know what was going on, for presently he opened his eyes wide, and stared at us so, and then closed them with oh such a sigh; it swelled my heart almost to bursting. And to think I could say nothing: but mamma soothed him and insisted on his keeping quiet; for he wanted to run away from us. She was never so good to him before: she said, 'My dear child, you have my pity and my esteem; alas! that at your age you should be tried like this. How few in this sorry world would have acted like you: I should have sided with my own flesh and blood, for one.'

'What, right or wrong?' he asked.

'Yes,' said she, 'right or wrong.' Then she turned to me: 'Julia, shall all the generosity be on his side?'

I kissed her and clung to her, but dared not speak; but I was mad enough to hope, I scarcely know what, till she said in the same kind, sorrowful voice, 'I agree with you; you can never be my son; nor Julia's husband. But as for that money, it revolts me to proceed to extremes against one, who after all is your father, my poor, poor, chivalrous boy.' But she would decide nothing without Edward; he had taken his father's place in this house. So then I gave all up, for Edward is made of iron. Alfred was clearer sighted than I, and never had a hope: he put his arm round mamma and kissed her, and she kissed him: and he kissed my hand, and crept away, and I heard his step on the stair, and on the road ever so far, and life seemed ended for me when I heard it no more.

Edward has come home. Mamma told him all: he listened gravely: I hung upon his lips; and at last the oracle spoke; and said, 'This is a nice muddle.'

More we could not get from him; he must sleep on it. O suspense! you torture! He had seen a place he thinks will suit us: it is a bad omen his saying that so soon after. As I went to bed I could not help whispering, 'If he and I are parted, so will you and Jane.'. The cruel boy answered me *out loud*, 'Thank you, little girl: that is a temptation; and you have put me on my guard.'

Oh, how hard it is to understand a *man!* they *are* so impracticable with their justice and things. I came away with my cheeks burning, and my heart like a stone; to bed, but not to sleep. My poor, poor, unhappy, noble Alfred!"

"Dec. 27th. Mamma and Edward have discussed it: they say nothing

to me. Can they have written to him? I go about my duties like a ghost; and pray for submission to the Divine will."

"Dec. 28th. To-day as I was reading by main force to Mrs. Eagleton's sick girl, came Sarah all in a hurry with, I was wanted, Miss. But I *would* finish my chapter, and O how hard the Devil tried to make me gabble it; so I clenched my teeth at him, and read it as if I was spelling it; and then *didn't* I fly?

*He* was there; and they all sat waiting for me. I was hot and cold all at the same time, and he rose and bowed to me, and I curtseyed to him, and sat down and took my work, and didn't know one bit what I was doing.

And our new oracle, Edward, laid down the law like anything. 'Look here, Hardie,' said he, 'if anybody but you had told us about this fourteen thousand pounds, I should have set the police on your governor before now. But it seems to me a shabby thing to attack a father on the son's information, especially when it's out of love for one of us he has denounced his own flesh and blood.'

'No, no,' said Alfred, eagerly, 'out of love of justice.'

'Ah, you think so, my fine fellow, but you would not have done it for a stranger,' said Edward. Then he went on: 'Of all blunders, the worst is to fall between two stools: look here, mamma; we decide, for the son's sake, not to attack the father: after that it would be very inconsistent to turn the cold shoulder to the son. Another thing, who suffers most by this fraud? why the man that marries Julia.' Alfred burst out impetuously, 'Oh, prove that to me, and let me be that sufferer.' Edward turned calmly to mamma: 'If the fourteen thousand pounds was in our hands, what should you do with it?'

The dear thing said she should settle at least ten thousand of it on Me, and marry Me to this poor motherless boy, 'whom I have learned to love myself,' said she.

'There,' said Edward, 'you see it is you who lose by your governor's —I won't say what—if you marry my sister.'

Alfred took his hand, and said, 'God bless you for telling me this.'

Then Edward turned to mamma and me; and said, 'This poor fellow has left his father's house because he wronged us: then this house ought to open its arms to him: that is only justice; but now to be just to our side; I have been to Mr. Crawford, the lawyer, and I find this Hardie junior has ten thousand pounds of his own. That ought to be settled on Julia, to make up for what she loses by Hardie senior's—I won't say what.'

'If anybody settles any of their trash on *me*, I'll beat them, and throw it in the fire,' said I; 'and I hated money.'

The oracle asked me directly did I hate clothes and food, and charity to the poor, and cleanliness, and decency? Then I didn't hate money, 'for none of these things can exist without money, you little romantic humbug; you shut up!'

Mamma rebuked him for his expressions, but approved his sentiments. But I did not care for his sentiments: for *he* smiled on me, and said, 'We two are of one mind; we shall transfer our fortune to Captain Dodd, whom my father has robbed. Julia will consent to share my honest poverty.'

'Well, we will talk about that,' said Edward pompously.

'Talk about it without me, then,' I cried, and got up, and marched out indignant: only it was partly my low cunning to hide my face that I could not keep the rapture out of. And, as soon as I had retired with cold dignity, off I skipped into the garden to let my face loose, and I think they sent him after me; for I heard his quick step behind me; so I ran away from him as hard as I could; so of course he soon caught me; in the shrubbery where he first asked me to be his; and he kissed both my hands again and again like wildfire, as he is, and he said, 'You are right, dearest; let them talk of their trash while I tell you how I adore you; poverty with you will be the soul's wealth; even misfortune, by your side, would hardly be misfortune: let all the world go, and let you and I be one, and live together, and die together; for now I see I could not have lived without you, nor without your love.' And I whispered something on his shoulder, no matter what; what signifies the cackle of a goose? and we mingled our happy tears, and our hearts, and our souls. Ah, Love is a sweet, a dreadful passion: what we two have gone through for one another in a few months! He dined with us, and Edward and he sat a long, long, time talking; I dare say it was only about their odious money; still I envied Edward having him so long. But at last he came up, and devoured me with his lovely grey eyes, and I sang him Aileen Aroon, and he whispered things in my ear, oh, such sweet, sweet, idiotic, darling, things; I will not part with even the shadow of one of them by putting it on paper, only I am the blessedest creature in all the world; and I only hope to goodness it is not very wicked to be so happy as I am."

"Dec. 31st. It is all settled. Alfred returns to Oxford to make up for lost time; the time spent in construing me instead of Greek: and at the end of term he is to come of age and marry—somebody. Marriage! what a word to put down! It makes me tingle; it thrills me; it frightens me deliciously: no, not deliciously; anything but: for suppose, being both of us fiery, and they all say one of them ought to be cold blooded for a pair to be happy, I should make him a downright bad wife. Why then I hope I shall die in a year or two out of my darling's way, and let him have a good one instead. I'd come back from the grave and tear her to pieces."

"Jan. 4th. Found a saint in a garret over a stable. Took her my luncheon clandestinely; that is lady-like for 'under my apron:' and was detected and expostulated by Ned. He took me into his studio—it is carpeted with shavings—and showed me the 'Tiser digest, an enormous book he has made of newspaper cuttings all in apple-pie order; and out of this authority he proved vice and poverty abound most wherever there are most charities. Oh, and 'the poor' a set of intoxicated sneaks, and Me a Demoralising Influence. It is all very fine: but why are there saints in garrets, and half-starved? that rouses all my evil passions, and I cannot bear it; it *is* no use."

"Jan. 6th. Once a gay day; but now a sad one. Mamma gone to see poor papa, where he is. Alfred found me sorrowful, and rested my forehead on his shoulder; that soothed me, while it lasted. I think I should like to grow there. Mem.! to burn this diary; and never let a creature see a syllable.

As soon as he was gone, prayed earnestly on my knees not to make an idol of him. For it is our poor idols that are destroyed for *our* weakness. Which really I cannot quite see the justice of."

"Jan. 8th. Jane does not approve my proposal that we should praise now and then at the same hour instead of always praying. The dear girl sends me her unconverted diary 'to show me she is "a brand."' I have read most of it. But really it seems to me she was always goodish: only she went to parties, and read novels, and enjoyed society.

There, I have finished it. Oh dear, how like her *un*converted diary is to my *con*verted one!"

"Jan. 14th. A sorrowful day: he and I parted, after a fortnight of the tenderest affection, and that mutual respect, without which neither of *us*, I think, could love long. I had resolved to be very brave; but we were alone, and his bright face looked so sad; the change in it took me by surprise and my resolution failed; I clung to him. If gentlemen could interpret, as we can, he would never have left me. It is better as it is. He kissed my tears away as fast as they came: it was the first time he had ever kissed more than my hand: so I shall have that to think of, and his dear promised letters: but it made me cry more at the time, of course. Some day, when we have been married years and years I shall tell him not to go and pay a lady for every tear; if he wants her to leave off.

The whole place so gloomy and vacant now."

"Jan. 20th. Poverty stares us in the face. Edward says we could make a modest living in London; and nobody be the wiser: but here we are known, and '*must* be ladies and gentlemen, and fools,' he says. He has now made me seriously promise not to give money and things out of the house to the poor: it is robbing my mother and him. Ah, now I see it *is* nonsense to despise money: here I come home sad from my poor people; and I used to return warm all over. And the poor old souls do not enjoy my sermons half so much as when I gave them nice things to eat along with them.

The dear boy, that I always loved dearly, but *admire* and love now that he has turned an intolerable tyrant, and he used to be Wax, has put down two maids out of our three, and brings our dinner up himself in a jacket, then puts on his coat and sits down with us, and we sigh at him and he grins and derides us; he does not care one straw for Pomp. And mamma and I have to dress one another now. And I like it."

"Jan. 30th. He says we may now, by great economy, subsist honestly till my wedding-day; but then mamma and he must '*absquatulate*.' Oh, what stout hearts men have. They can jest at sorrow even when, in spite of their great thick skins, they feel it. Ah, the real poor are happy; they marry, and need not leave the parish where their mother lives."

"Feb. 4th. A kind and most delicate letter from Jane. She says, 'Papa and I are much grieved at Captain Dodd's affliction, and deeply concerned at your loss by the Bank. Papa has asked Uncle Thomas for two hundred pounds, and I entreat you to oblige *me* by receiving it at my hands and applying it according to the dictates of your own affectionate heart.'

Actually our Viceroy will not let me take it: he says he will not accept a crumb from the man who owes us a loaf."

"Feb. 8th. Jane mortified, and no wonder. If she knew how ver-

poor we are, she would be surprised as well. I have implored her not to take it to heart, for that all will be explained one day, and she will see we *could* not.

His dear letters! I feed on them. We have no secrets, no two minds. He is to be a first class and then a private tutor. Our money is to go to mamma: it is he and I that are to work our fingers to the bone (I am so happy!), and never let them be driven by injustice from their home. But all this is a great secret. The Viceroy will be defeated, only I let him talk till Alfred is here to back me. No; it is *not* just the rightful owner of fourteen thousand pounds should be poor.

How shallow female education is: I was always led to suppose modesty is the highest virtue. No such thing! Justice is the queen of the virtues: *He* is justice incarnate."

"March 10th. On reperusing this diary, it is demoralising; very: it feeds self. Of all the detestable compositions! Me, Me, Me, from one end to another: for when it is not about myself, it is about Alfred, and that it is my he-Me though not my she-one. So now to turn over a new leaf: from this day I shall record only the things that happen in this house and what my betters say to *me*, not what I say; and the texts; and outline of the sermons; and Jane's Christian admonitions."

Before a resolve so virtuous all impure spirits retire, taking off their hats, and bowing down to the very ground, but apprehending Small Beer.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Extracts from Jane Hardie's Diary:*

"MARCH 3RD. In my district again, the first time since my illness, from which I am indeed but half recovered. Spoke faithfully to Mrs. B. about her infidel husband: told her not to try and talk to him, but to talk to God about him. Gave her my tract, 'A quiet heart.' Came home tired. Prayed to be used to sharpen the sickles of other reapers."

"March 4th. At St. Philip's to hear the Bishop. In the midst of an excellent sermon on Gen. i. 2, he came out with the waters of baptism, to my horror: he disclaimed the extravagant view some of them take; then hankered after what he denied, and then partly unsaid *that* too. While the poor man was trimming his sails, I slunk behind a pillar in the corner of my pew, and fell on my knees, and prayed against the stream of poison flowing on the congregation. Oh, I felt like Jeremiah in his dungeon.

In the evening papa forbade me to go to church again: said the wind was too cold: I kissed him, and went up to my room and put my head between the pillows not to hear the bells. Prayed for poor Alfred."

"March 5th. Sadly disappointed in J. D. I did hope he was embittering the world to her by degrees. But for some time past she writes in ill-concealed spirits.

Another friend, after seeking rest in the world, is now seeking it in Ritualism. May both be drawn from their rotten reeds to the cross.

And oh this moral may my heart retain,
All hopes of happiness on earth are vain'

"March 6th. The cat is out of the bag. She is corresponding with Alfred; indeed she makes no secret of it. Wrote her a[C] faithful letter. Received a short reply, saying I had made her unhappy, and begging me to suspend my judgment till she could undeceive me without giving me too much pain. What mystery is this?"

"March 7th. Alfred announces his unalterable determination to marry Julia. I read the letter to papa directly. He was silent for a long time: and then said, 'All the worse for both of them.' It was all I could do to suppress a thrill of carnal complacency at the thought this might in time pave the way to another union. Even to think of that now is a sin. 1 Cor. vii. 20–4, plainly shows that whatever position[D] of life we are placed in, there it is our duty to abide. A child, for instance, is placed in subjection to her parents; and must not leave them without their consent."

"March 8th. Sent two cups of cold water to two fellow-pilgrims of mine on the way to Jerusalem, viz.: to E. H., Rom. viii. 1; to Mrs. M., Philipp. ii. 27.

Prayed for increase of humility. I am so afraid my great success[E] in His vineyard has seduced me into feeling as if there was a spring of living water in myself, instead of every drop being derived from the true fountain."

"March 9th. Dr. Wycherley closeted two hours with papa—papa had sent for him, I find. What is it makes me think that man is no true friend to Alfred in his advice? I don't like these roundabout speakers: the lively oracles are not roundabout."

"March 10th. My beloved friend and fellow-labourer, Charlotte D——, ruptured a blood-vessel[X] at 3 P.M., and was conveyed in the chariots of angels to the heavenly banqueting-house, to go no more out. May I be found watching."

"March 11th. Dreadfully starved with these afternoon sermons. If they go on like this, I really *must* stay at home, and feed upon the word."

"March 12th. Alfred has written to his trustees, and announced his coming marriage, and told them he is going to settle all his money upon the Dodds. Papa quite agitated by this news: it did not come from Alfred; one of the trustees wrote to papa. Oh, the blessing of Heaven will never rest on this unnatural marriage. Wrote a faithful letter to Alfred while papa was writing to our trustee."

"March 13th. My book on Solomon's Song now ready for publication. But it is *so* difficult now-a-days to find a publisher for such a subject. The rage is for sentimental sermons, or else for fiction[F] under a thin disguise of religious biography."

"March 14th. Mr. Plummer, of whose zeal and unction I had heard so much, was in the town and heard of me, and came to see me by appointment; just after luncheon. *Such* a sweet meeting. He came in and took my hand, and in that posture prayed that the Holy Spirit might be with us to make our conversation profitable to us, and redound to His glory. Poor man, his wife leads him a cat and dog life, I hear, with her jealousy. We had a *sweet* talk; he admires Canticles almost as much as I do[Z]; and has promised to take my book and get it cast on the Lord[G] for me."

"March 15th. To *please*, one must not be faithful[H]. Miss L., after

losing all her relations, and at thirty years of age, is to be married next week. She came to me and gushed out about the blessing of having at last one earthly friend to whom she could confide everything. On this I felt it my duty to remind her she might lose him by death, and then what a blank! and I was going on to detach her from the arm of flesh, when she burst out crying and left me abruptly; couldn't bear the truth, poor woman.

In the afternoon met *him* and bowed, and longed to speak, but thought it my duty not to: cried bitterly on reaching home."

"March 17th. Transcribed all the 'texts on Solomon's Song. It seems to be the way He' has marked out for me to serve him."

"March 19th. Received this letter from Alfred:

'DEAR JANE,

I send you a dozen kisses and a piece of advice; learn more; teach less: study more; preach less: and don't be in such a hurry to judge and condemn your intellectual and moral superiors, on insufficient information.

Your affectionate brother,
ALFRED.'

A poor return for me loving his soul as my own. I do but advise him the self-denial I myself pursue. Woe be to him if he rejects it."

"March 20th. A perverse reply from J. D. I had proposed we should plead for our parents at the Throne. She says she fears that might seem like assuming the office of the mediator: and besides her mother is nearer Heaven than she is. What blindness! I don't know a more thoroughly unhealthy mind than poor Mrs.[K] Dodd's. I am learning to pray walking. Got this idea from Mr. Plummer. How closely he walks! his mind so *exactly* suits mine."

"March 22nd. Alfred returned. Went to meet him at the station. How bright and handsome he looked! He kissed me so affectionately; and was as kind and loving as could be: I, poor unfaithful wretch, went hanging[M] on his arm, and had not the heart to dash his carnal happiness just then.

He is gone *there*."

"March 24th. Stole into Alfred's lodging when he was out; and, after prayer, pinned Deuteronomy xxvii. 16, Proverbs xiii. 1, and xv. 5, and Mark vii. 10, upon his bed-curtains."

"March 25th. Alfred has been in my room, and nailed Matthew vii. 1, Mark x. 7, and Ezek. xviii. 20, on my wall. He found my diary, and has read it, not to profit by, alas! but to scoff."

[Specimen of Alfred's comments. N.B. Fraternal criticism:

A. Nolo Episcopari.

B. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good.

D. The old trick; picking one text, straining it; and ignoring six. So then nobody who is not born married, must get married.

E. Recipe. To know people's real estimate of themselves, study their language of self-depreciation. If, even when they undertake to lower themselves, they cannot help insinuating self-praise, be sure their humility is a puddle, their vanity is a well. This sentence is typical of the whole Diary, or rather Iary; it sounds Publican, smells Pharisee.

X. How potent a thing is language in the hand of a master! Here is sudden death made humorous by a few incongruous phrases neatly disposed.

F. Excuse me; there is still a little market for the Liquefaction of Holy Writ, and the Perversion of Holy Writ; two deathless arts, which meet in your comment on the song you ascribe to Solomon.

Z. More than Mrs. Plummer does, apparently.

G. Apotheosis of the British public. How very like profaneness some people's piety is!

C. H. Faith, with this school, means anything the opposite of Charity.

I. You are morally truthful: but intellectually mendacious. The texts on Solomon's Song! You know very well there is not one. No grave writer in all Scripture has ever deigned to cite, or notice, that coarse composition; puellarum delicise.

J. Modest periphrasis for "I like it." Motto for this Diary; "Ego, et Deus meus."

K. In other words a good, old-fashioned, sober, humble Christian, to whom the daring familiarities of your school seem blasphemies.

M. Here I recognise my sister; somewhat spoiled by a detestable sect; but lovable by nature (which she is for ever abusing); and therefore always amiable, when off her guard.]

"March 28th. Mr. Crawford the attorney called and told papa his son had instructed him to examine the trust-deed, and to draw his marriage settlement. Papa treated him with the greatest civility, and brought him the deed. He wanted to take it away to copy; but papa said he had better send a clerk here. Poor papa hid his distress from this gentleman, though not from me; and gave him a glass of wine.

Then Mr. Crawford chatted, and let out Alfred had asked him to advance a hundred pounds for the wedding presents, &c. Papa said he might do so with perfect safety.

But the moment he was gone, his whole manner changed. He walked about in terrible anger and agitation: and then sat down and wrote letters; one was to uncle Thomas; and one to a Mr. Wycherley; I believe a brother of the doctor's. I never knew him so long writing two letters before.

Heard a noise in the road, and it was Mr. Maxley, and the boys after him hooting; they have found out his infirmity: what a savage animal is man, till grace changes him! The poor soul had a stick, and now and then turned and struck at them; but his tormentors were too nimble. I drew papa to the window, and showed him, and reminded him of the poor man's request. He answered impatiently what was that to him? 'we have a worse case nearer hand. Charity begins at home.' I ventured to say yes, but it did not begin *and* end at home."

"March 31. Mr. Osmond here to-day; and over my work I heard papa tell him Alfred is blackening his character in the town with some impossible story about fourteen thousand pounds. Mr. Osmond very kind and sympathising; set it all down to illusion; assured papa there was neither malice nor insincerity in it. 'But what the better am I for that?' said poor papa: 'if I am slandered, I am slandered.' And they went out together.

Papa seems to feel this engagement more than all his troubles, and, knowing by sad experience it is useless to expostulate with Alfred, I wrote a long and faithful letter to Julia just before luncheon, putting it to her as a Christian whether she could reconcile it to her profession to set a son against his father, and marry him in open defiance.

She replied 3 P.M. that her mother approved the marriage, and she owed no obedience, nor affection either, to *my* parent.

3·30. Sent back a line rebuking her for this quibble.

At 5 received a note from Mrs. Dodd proposing that the correspondence between myself and her daughter should cease *for the present*

5·30 Retorted with an amendment that it should cease *for ever*. No reply. Such are worldlings! Remonstrance only galls them. And so in one afternoon's correspondence ends one more of my Christian friendships with persons of my own sex. This is the eighth, to which a carnal attachment has been speedily fatal.

In the evening Alfred came in looking very red, and asked me whether it was not self-reliant and uncharitable of me to condemn so many estimable persons, all better acquainted with the circumstances than I am. I replied with the fifth commandment. He bit his lip and said, 'We had better not meet again, until you have found out which is worthiest of honour, your father or your brother.' And with this he left abruptly; and something tells me I shall not see him again. My faithfulness has wounded him to the quick. Alas! Prayed for him: and cried myself to sleep."

"April 4th. Met *him* disguised as a common workman, and carrying a sack full of things. I was so shocked I could not maintain my resolution; I said, Oh, Mr. Edward, what are you doing? He blushed a little, but told me he was going to sell some candlesticks and things of his making: and he should get a better price in that dress; all traders looked on a *gentleman* as a thing made to be pillaged. Then he told me he was going to turn them into a bonnet and a wreath; and his beautiful brown eyes sparkled with affection. What egotistical creatures *they* must be! I was quite overcome, and said oh why did he refuse our offer? did he hate me so very much that he would not even take his due from my hand? No, he said, nobody in our house is so unjust to you as to hate you; my sister honours you, and is very sorry you think ill of her: and, as for me, I love you; you know how I love you. I hid my face in my hands; and sobbed out, Oh, you must not; you must not; my poor father has one disobedient child already. He said softly, Don't cry, dear one; have a little patience; perhaps the clouds will clear: and, meantime, why think so ill of us? Consider, we are four in number, of different dispositions, yet all of one mind about Julia marrying Alfred. May we not be right; may we not know something we love you too well to tell you? His words and his rich manly voice were so soothing; I gave him just one hand while I still hid my burning face with the other; he kissed the hand I yielded him, and left me abruptly.

If Alfred should be right! I am staggered now; *he* puts it so much more convincingly."

"April 5th. A letter from Alfred, announcing his wedding by special license for the 11th.

Made no reply. What *could* I say?

Papa, on my reading it out, left his very breakfast half finished, and packed up his bag and rushed up to London. I caught a side view of his face; and I am miserable. Such a new, such a terrible expression! a vile expression! Heaven forgive me, it seemed the look of one who meditated a *crime*."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

The spirit of dissension in Musgrove Cottage penetrated to the very kitchen. Old Betty sided with Alfred, and combated in her place the creed of the parlour; "Why, according to Miss, the young sparrows are bound never to fly out of the nest; or else have the Bible flung at 'em. She do go on about God's will: seems to me 'tis His will the world should be peopled by body and beast—which they are both His creatures—and, by the same token, if they don't marry they does wus. Certainly whilst a young man bides at home, it behoves him to be dutiful; but that ain't to say he *is* to bide at home for ever. Master Alfred's time is come to leave we, and be master in a house of his own, as his father done before him, which he forgets that now; he is grown to man's estate, and got his mother's money, and no more bound to our master than I be." She said too, that "parting blights more quarrels than it breeds:" and she constantly invited Peggy to speak up, and gainsay her. But Peggy was a young woman with white eyelashes, and giving to looking down, and not to speaking up; she was always watching Mr. Hardie in company, like a cat cream; and hovering about him when alone. Betty went so far as to accuse her of colloguing with him against Alfred, and of "setting her cap at master," which accusation elicited no direct reply, but stinging innuendoes hours after.

Now, if one looks into the thing, the elements of discord had attacked Albion Villa quite as powerfully as Musgrove Cottage; but had hitherto failed signally: the mutual affection of the Dodds was so complete, and no unprincipled person among them to split the good.

And, now that the wedding drew near, there was but one joyful heart within the walls, though the others were too kind and unselfish to throw cold water. Mrs. Dodd's own wedding had ended in a piteous separation, and now to part with her darling child and launch her on the uncertain waves of matrimony! She heaved many a sigh when alone: but as there were no bounds to her maternal love, so there were no exceptions to her politeness: over her aching heart she forced on a wedding face, subdued, but hopeful, for her daughter, as she would for any other young lady about to be married beneath her roof.

It wanted but six days, when one morning after breakfast the bereaved wife, and mother about to be deserted, addressed her son and Viceroy thus: "Edward, we *must* borrow fifty pounds."

"Fifty pounds? what for? who wants that?"

"Why *I* want it," said Mrs. Dodd, stoutly.

"Oh, if *you* want it—what to do, please?"

"Why to buy her wedding clothes, dear."

"I thought what her 'I' would come to," said Julia, reproachfully.

Edward shook his head, and said, "He who goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing."

"But she is not a he," objected Mrs. Dodd with the subtlety of a schoolman: "and who ever heard of a young lady being married without some things to be married *in*?"

"Well, I've heard Nudity is not the cheese on public occasions: but why not go dressed like a lady as she always does, only with white gloves; and be married without any bother and nonsense."

"You talk like a boy," said Mrs. Dodd. "I could not bear it. My poor child!" and she cast a look of tenderest pity on the proposed victim. "Well, suppose we make the poor child the judge," suggested Edward. He then put it to Julia whether, under the circumstances, she would wish them to run in debt, buying her finery to wear for a day. "It was not fair to ask *her*," said Mrs. Dodd with a sigh.

Julia blushed and hesitated, and said she would be candid; and then stopped.

"Ugh!" ejaculated Edward. "This is a bad beginning. Girl's candour! Now for a masterpiece of duplicity."

Julia inquired how he dared; and Mrs. Dodd said warmly that Julia was not like other people, she could be candid; had actually done it, more than once, within her recollection. The young lady justified the exception as follows: "If I was going to be married to myself, or to some gentleman I did not care for, I would not spend a shilling. But I am going to marry *him*; and so—oh, Edward, think of them saying 'What has he married? a dowdy: why she hadn't new things on to go to church with him: no bonnet, no wreath, no new white dress!' To mortify him the very first day of our——" The sentence remained unfinished, but two lovely eyes filled to the very brim without running over, and completed the sense, and did the Viceroy's business though a brother. "Why you dear little goose," said he: "of course I don't mean that. I have as good as got the things we must buy; and those are a new bonnet—— "

"Ah!"

"A wreath of orange blossoms—— "

"Oh you good boy!"

"Four pair of gloves: two white—one is safe to break—two dark; very dark: invisible green, or visible black; last the honeymoon. All the rest you must find in the house."

"What, fit her out with a parcel of old things? Can you be so cruel, so unreasonable, dear Edward?"

"Old things! Why, where is all your gorgeous attire from Oriental climes? I see the splendiferous articles arrive, and then they vanish for ever."

"Now, shawls and Indian muslins! pray what use are they to a bride?"

"Why what looks nicer than a white muslin dress?"

"Married in muslin? The very idea makes me shiver."

"Well, clap her on another petticoat."

"How can you be so childish? Muslin is not *the thing*."

"No more is running in debt."

He then suggested that a white shawl or two should be cut into a bridal dress. At this both ladies' fair throats opened on him with ridicule: cut fifty guinea shawls into ten-pound dresses; that was male

economy! was it? Total; a wedding was a wedding: new things always *had* had to be bought for a wedding, and always would, in secula seculorum.

"New things? Yes," said the pertinacious wretch; "but they need not be new-bought things. You ladies go and confound the world's eyes with your own in the drollest way: if Gorgeous Attire has lain long in your drawers, you fancy the world will detect on its glossy surface how long you had it, and gloated over it, and made it stale to your eye, before you could bring your mind to wear it That is your delusion, that and the itch for going out shopping; oh, I'm down on you. Mamma dear, you open that gigantic wardrobe of yours; and I'll oil my hair, white-wash my mug (a little moan from Mrs. D.) and do the counterjumping business to the life; hand the things down to you, unrol 'em, grin, charge you 100 per cent over value, note them down in a penny memorandum-book, sing out 'Caesh! Caesh!' &c. &c.: and so we shall get all Julia wants, and go through the ritual of shopping without the substantial disgrace of running in debt."

Mrs. Dodd smiled admiringly, as ladies generally do at the sauciness of a young male; but proposed an amendment. She would open her wardrobe, and look out all the contents for Edward's inspection; and, if the mere sight of them did not convince him they were inappropriate to a bride, why then she would coincide with his views, and resign her own.

"All right!" said he. "That will take a jolly time, I know; so I'll go to my governor first for the bonnet and wreath."

Mrs. Dodd drew in at this last slang word; she had heard young gentlemen apply it to their fathers. Edward, she felt sure, would not so sully that sacred relation: still the word was obnoxious for its past offences; and she froze at it: "I have not the honour to know who the personage is you so describe," said she formally. Edward replied very carelessly that it was an upholsterer at the North end of the town.

"Ah, a tradesman you patronise."

"Humph? Well, yes, that is the word, mamma, haw! haw! I have been making the bloke a lot of oak candlesticks, and human heads with sparkling eyes, for walking-sticks, &c. And now I'll go and draw my —protégé's—blunt." The lady's hands were uplifted towards pitying Heaven with one impulse: the young workman grinned: "Soyons de notre siècle," said he, and departed whistling in the tenor clef. He had the mellowest whistle.

After a few minutes well spent in deploring the fall of her Oxonian, and gently denouncing his motto, and his century, its ways, and above all its words, Mrs. Dodd took Julia to her bedroom, and unlocked drawers and doors in her wardrobe; and straightway Sarah, who was hurriedly flogging the chairs with a duster, relaxed, and began to work on a cheval-glass as slowly as if she was drawing Nelson's lions at a thousand pounds the tail. Mrs. Dodd opened a drawer and took out three pieces of worked Indian muslin, a little discoloured by hoarding: "There, that must be bleached and make you some wrappers for the honeymoon, if the weather is at all fine; and petticoats to match;" next an envelope consisting of two foolscap sheets tacked: this, carefully undone upon the bed revealed a Brussels lace flounce and a veil: "It was

my own," said Mrs. Dodd softly. "I saved it for you; see here is your name written on it seventeen years ago. I thought 'this dear little toddler will have wings some day, and then she will leave me.' But now I am almost afraid to let you wear it; it might bring you misfortune: suppose after years of wedded love you should be bereaved of——" Mrs. Dodd choked, and Julia's arms were round her neck in a moment.

"I'll risk it," cried she impetuously. "If it but makes me as beloved as you are, I'll wear it come weal come woe! And then I shall feel it over me at the altar like my guardian angel's wings, my own sweet, darling, mamma. Oh what an idiot, what a wretch I am, to leave you at all."

This unfortunate, unexpected burst, interrupted business sadly. Mrs. Dodd sank down directly on the bed and wept; Julia cried over her, and Sarah plumped herself down in a chair and blubbered. But wedding flowers are generally well watered in the private apartments.

Patient Mrs. Dodd soon recovered herself: "This is childish of me. When I think that there are mothers who see their children go from the house corpses, not brides, I ought to be ashamed of myself. Come! á l'œuvre. Ah, here is something." And she produced a white China crape shawl. "Oh, how sweet," said Julia; "why have you never worn it?"

"Dear me, child, what use would things be to those I love, if I went and *wore* them?"

The next article she laid her hand on was a roll of white poplin, and drew an exclamation from Mrs. Dodd herself: "If I had not forgotten this, and it is the very thing. Your dear papa bought me this in London, and I remonstrated with him well for buying me such a delicate thing, only once wear. I kissed it and put it away, and forgot it. They *say* if you keep a thing seven years. It *is* just seven years since he gave it to me. Really the dear boy is a witch: this is your wedding dress, my precious precious." She unrolled a few yards on the bed to show it; and asked the gloating Sarah with a great appearance of consideration whether they were not detaining her from her occupations?

"Oh no, mum. This glass have got so dull; I'm just polishing of it a bit. I shan't be a minute now, mum."

From silver tissue paper Mrs. Dodd evolved a dress (unmade) of white crape embroidered in truelovers'-knots of violet silk, and ears of wheat in gold. Then there was a scream at the glass, and Sarah seen in it with ten claws in the air very wide apart: she had slily turned the mirror and was devouring the reflexion of the finery, and this last Indian fabric overpowered her. Her exclamation was instantly followed by much polishing; but Mrs. Dodd replied to it after the manner of her sex: "Well, it *is* lovely," said she to Julia: "but where is the one with beetle wings? Oh here."

"Real beetles' wings, mamma?" inquired Julia.

"Yes, love."

"So they are, and how wicked! and what a lovely green! I will never wear them: they are prismatic: now, if ever I am to be a Christian, I had better begin: everything *has* a beginning. Oh vanity of women, you stick at nothing. A thousand innocent lives stolen to make one dress!" And she put one hand before her eyes, and with the other ordered the dress back into the wardrobe with genuine agitation.

"My dear, what expressions! And you need not wear it; indeed neither of them is fit for that purpose. But you *must* have a pretty thing or two about you. I have hoarded these a good many years; now it is your turn to have them by you. And let me see; you want a travelling cloak: but the dear boy will not let us; so choose a warm shawl."

A rich but modest one was soon found, and Julia tried it on, arching her supple neck, and looking down over her shoulder to see the effect behind, in which attitude oh for an immortal brush to paint her, or anything half as bright, supple, graceful, and every inch a woman. At this moment Mrs. Dodd threw a lovely blue Indian shawl on the bed, galvanising Sarah so that up went her hands again, and the door opened softly and a handsome head in a paper cap peeped on the scene, inquiring with mock timidity "May 'The British Workman' come in?" He was invited warmly; Julia whipped his cap off, and tore it in two, reddening, and Mrs. Dodd, intending to compliment his foresight, showed him the bed laden with the treasures they had disinterred from vanity's mahogany tomb.

"Well, mother," said he, "you were right, and I was wrong: they are inappropriate enough, the whole lot."

The ladies looked at one another, and Sarah permitted herself a species of snort.

"Do we want Sarah?" he asked quietly. She retired bridling.

"Inappropriate?" exclaimed Mrs. Dodd. "There is nothing here unfit for a bride's trousseau."

"Good Heavens! Would you trick her out like a Princess?"

"We must. We are too poor to dress her like a lady."

"Cinderella; at your service," observed Julia complacently, and pirouetted before him in her new shawl.

Ideas rejected peremptorily at the time often rankle, and bear fruit by-and-by. Mrs. Dodd took up the blue shawl, and said she would make Julia a peignoir of it; and the border, being narrowish, would do for the bottom. "That was a good notion of yours, darling," said she, bestowing a sweet smile on Edward. He grunted. Then she took out a bundle of lace: "Oh for pity's sake no more," cried the "British Workman."

"Now, dearest, you have interfered once in feminine affairs, and we submitted. But, if you say another word, I will trim her poplin with Honiton two feet deep."

"Quarter! quarter!" cried Edward. "I'm dumb; grant me but this; have nothing made up for her out of the house: you know there is no dressmaker in Barkington can cut like you: and then that will put some limit to our inconsistency." Mrs. Dodd agreed; but she must have a woman in to sew.

Edward grunted at this, and said: "I wish I could turn you these gowns with my lathe; what a deal of time and bother it would save. However, if you want any stuffing, come to me; I'll lend you lots of shavings; make the silk rustle. Oh here is my governor's contribution." And he produced 7*l.* 10*s.*

"Now, look there," said Julia sorrowfully, "it is money. And I thought you were going to bring me the very bonnet yourself. Then I should have valued it."

"Oh yes," replied the young gentleman ironically; "can I choose a bonnet to satisfy such swells as you and mamma? I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll go with you and *look* as wise as Solomon, all the time you are choosing it."

"A capital plan," said Julia.

Edward then shook his fist at the finery: and retired to work again for his governor: "Flowers," he observed, "are indispensable, at a wedding breakfast; I hear too it is considered the right cheese to add something in the shape of grub." Exit whistling in the tenor clef; and keeping their hearts up, like a man.

So now there were two workshops in Albion Villa; Ned's study, as he called it, and the drawing-room: in the former shavings flew, and settled at their ease, and the whirr of the lathe slept not; the latter was all patterns, tapes, hooks and eyes, whalebone, cuttings of muslin, poplin and paper; clouds of lining-muslin, snakes of piping; skeins, shreds; and the floor literally sown with pins, escaped from the fingers of the fair, those taper fingers so typical of the minds of their owners: for they have softness, suppleness, nimbleness, adroitness, and "a plentiful lack" of tenacity.

The days passed in hard work, and the evenings in wooing, never sweeter than when it has been so earned: and at last came the wedding eve. Dr. Sampson, who was to give the bride away, arrived just before dinner-time: the party, including Alfred, sat down to a charming little dinner; they ate beetles' wings, and drank Indian muslin fifteen years in the wood. For the lathe and the chisel proved insufficient, and Julia having really denied herself, as an aspirant to Christianity, that assassin's robe, Mrs. Dodd sold it under the rose to a fat old dowager—for whom nothing was too fine—and so kept up appearances.

Julia and Alfred were profoundly happy at bottom; yet their union was attended with too many drawbacks for boisterous gaiety, and Alfred, up to this time, had shown a seriousness and sobriety of bliss, that won Mrs. Dodd's gratitude: it was the demeanour of a delicate mind; it became his own position, at odds with his own flesh and blood for Julia's sake; it became him as the son-in-law of a poor woman so lately bereaved of her husband, and reduced to poverty by one bearing the name of Hardie.

But now Dr. Sampson introduced a gayer element. He had seen a great deal of Life; *i.e.* of death and trouble. This had not hardened him, but, encountering a sturdy, valiant, self-protecting nature, had made him terribly tough and elastic; it was now his way never to go forward or backward a single step after sorrow. He seldom mentioned a dead friend or relation; and, if others forced the dreary topic on him, they could never hold him to it; he was away directly to something pleasant or useful, like a grasshopper skipping off a grave into the green grass. He had felt keenly about David while there was anything to be done: but now his poor friend was in a madhouse, thanks to the lancet: and there was an end of *him*. Thinking about him would do him no good. The present only is irresistible; past and future ills the mind can bar out by a resolute effort. The bride will very likely die of her first child! Well then, forget that just now. Her father is in an asylum! well then, don't remember him at the wrong time: there sit female beauty and virtue ready to wed manly wit and comeliness, seated

opposite; see their sweet stolen glances; a few hours only between them and wedded rapture: and I'm here to give the lovely virgin away: fill the bumper high! dum vivimus vivamus. In this glorious spirit he rattled on, and soon drew the young people out, and silvery peals of laughter rang round the genial board.

This jarred on Mrs. Dodd. She bore it in silence some time; but with the grief it revived and sharpened by contrast, and the polite effort to hide her distress, found herself becoming hysterical: then she made the usual signal to Julia, and beat an early retreat. She left Julia in the drawing-room, and went and locked herself in her own room. "Oh, how can they be so *cruel* as to laugh and giggle in my David's house!" She wept sadly, and for the first time felt herself quite lonely in the world: for what companionship between the gay and the sad-hearted? Poor thing, she lived to reproach herself even with this, the nearest approach she ever made to selfishness.

Ere long she crept into Julia's room and humbly busied herself packing her trunks for the wedding tour. The tears fell fast on her white hands.

She would not have been left alone a minute if Julia's mind had not been occupied just then with an affectionate and amiable anxiety: she earnestly desired to reconcile her Alfred and his sister before the wedding; and she sat in the drawing-room thinking whether it could be done, and how.

At last she sat down blushing, and wrote a little note, and rang the bell for Sarah, and sent it courageously into the dining-room.

Sarah very prudently listened at the keyhole before entering; for she said to herself, "If they are talking free, I shan't go in till it's over."

The persons so generously suspected were discussing a parchment Alfred had produced, and wanted signed: "You are our trustee, my boy," said he to Edward: "so just write your name here, and mine comes here, and the witnesses there: the Doctor and Sarah will do. Send for a pen."

"Let's read it first, please."

"Read it! What for?"

"Catch me signing a paper without reading it, my boy."

"What, can't you trust me?" inquired Alfred, hurt.

"Oh yes. And can't you trust me?"

"There's a question: why I have appointed you my Trusty in the Deed; he, he."

"Well then trust me without my signing, and I'll trust you without reading."

Sampson laughed at this retort, and Alfred reddened; he did not want the Deed read. But while he hesitated, Sarah came in with Julia's note, asking him to come to her for a minute. This sweet summons made him indifferent to prosaic things. "Well, read away," said he: "one comfort, you will be no wiser."

"What, is it in Latin?" asked Edward, with a wry face.

"No such luck. Deeds used to be in Latin; but Latin could not be made obscure enough. So now Dark Deeds are written in an unknown tongue called 'Lawyerish,' where the sense is 'as one grain of wheat in two bushels of chaff;' pick it out if you can."

"Whatever man has done man may do," said Dr. Sampson stoutly.

„You have rid it, and yet understood it: so why mayn't we, ye monster o' conceit?"

"Read it?" said Alfred. "I never read it: would not read it for a great deal of money. The moment I saw what a senseless rigmarole it was, I flung it down and insisted on the battological author furnishing me with an English translation. He complied: the crib occupies just twenty lines; the original three folio pages, as you see. That crib, gentlemen," added he severely, "is now in my waistcoat pocket; and you shall never see it—for your impudence. No, seat yourselves by that pool of parchment (sedet eternumque sedebit, &c.) and fish for Lawyer Crawford's ideas, rari nantes in gurgite vasto." And with this he flew up-stairs on the wings of love. Julia met him in the middle of the room all in a flutter: "It is to ask you a favour. I am unhappy—about one thing."

She then leaned one hand softly on his shoulder, and curving her lovely supple neck looked round into his face and watched it as she preferred her petition: "It is about Jane and you. I cannot bear to part you two in this way: only think, six days you have not spoken; and I am the cause."

"Not the only cause, love."

"I don't know, darling. But it is very cruel. I have got my dear mother and Edward; you have nobody—but Me. Alfred," said she with gentle impetuosity, "now is the time; your papa is away."

"Oh, is he?" said Alfred, carelessly.

"Yes. Sarah says Betty says he is gone to Uncle Thomas. So I know you won't refuse me, my own Alfred: it is to go to your sister this minute and make it up."

"What, and leave you?" objected Alfred ruefully.

"No, no; you are with the gentlemen, you know: you are not here, *in reality*, till tea. Make them an excuse: say the truth; say it is Me: and come back to me with good news."

He consented on these terms.

Then she armed him with advice: "You go to make peace; it is our last chance; now remember, you must be very generous, very sweet tempered. Guard against your impetuosity. Do take warning by me; see how impetuous I am. And then, you know, after all, she is only a lady, and a great creature like you ought not to be ruffled by anything so small as a lady's tongue: the idea! And, dearest, don't go trusting to your logic, but *do* descend to the arts of persuasion, because they are far more convincing somehow: please try them."

"Yes. Enumerate them."

"Why, kissing, and coaxing, and—don't ask *me*."

"Will you bestow a specimen of those arts on me, if I succeed?"

"Try me," said she: and looked him earnestly in the face; but lowered her long lashes slowly and shily, as she realized to what her Impetuosity was pledging itself.

Alfred got his hat and ran to Musgrove Cottage.

A man stepped out of the shadow of a hedge opposite Albion Villa, and followed him, keeping in shadow as much as possible.

The door of Musgrove Cottage was opened to him by old Betty with a joyful start: "Mr. Alfred, I *de*clare! Come in; there's only me and Miss. Master is in Yorkshire, and that there crocodile, Peggy, she is turned away—for sauce—and a good riddance of bad rubbish: Miss is in the parlour."

She ushered him triumphantly in. Jane was seated reading: she dropped her book, and ran and kissed him with a cry of joy. So warm a reception surprised him agreeably, and simplified his task. He told her he was come to try and make it up with her before the wedding: "We lose your presence, dear Jenny," said he, "and that is a great grief to us, valuing you as we do: don't refuse us your good wishes to-morrow."

"Dearest Alfred," said she, "can you think it? I pray for you day and night. And I have begun to blame myself for being so sure you were in the wrong and poor papa faultless. What you sent me half in jest, I take in earnest. 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'"

"Why, Jenny," said Alfred, "how red your eyes are."

At this observation the young saint laid her head on her brother's shoulder and had a good cry like any other girl. When she recovered a little she told him, yes, she had been very unhappy: that he had always been a dear good brother to her, and the only one she had; and that it cut her to the heart not to be at his wedding; it seemed so unkind.

Alfred set her on his knee,—she had more soul than body,—and kissed her and comforted her: and, in this happy revival of natural affection, his heart opened, he was off his guard, and told her all: gave her the several proofs their father had got the 14,000*l.* Jane, arrested by the skill and logical clearness with which he marshalled the proofs, listened in silence; and presently a keen shudder ran through her frame, and reminded him he was setting a daughter against her father.

"There," said he, "I always said I would never tell you, and now I've done it. Well, at least you will see with what consideration, and unheard-of leniency, the Dodds for our sake are treating Mr. Richard Hardie. Just compare their conduct to him with his to them. And which is most to his advantage? that I should marry Julia, and give Mrs. Dodd the life interest in my ten thousand pounds, to balance his dishonesty, or for him to be indicted as a thief? Ned Dodd told us plainly he would have set the police on him, had any other but his son been the informant."

"Did *he* say that? Oh, Alfred, this is a miserable world."

"I can't see that: it is the jolliest world in the world: everything is bright and lovely, and everybody is happy except a few sick people, and a few peevish ones that run to meet trouble; to-morrow I marry my sweet Julia; Richard Hardie will find we two don't molest him, nor trouble our heads about him; he will get used to us; and one fine day we shall say to him, 'Now, we know all about the 14,000*l.*: just leave it by will to dear Jenny, and let my friend Dodd marry her, and you can enjoy it unmolested for your lifetime." He will consent: and you will marry Nod, and then you'll find the world has been wickedly slandered by dishonest men and dismal dogs."

In this strain he continued till he made her blush a good deal and smile a little; a sad smile.

But at last she said, "If I was sure all this is true, I think I should

go—with a heavy heart—to your wedding. If I don't, the best part of me will be there, my prayers, and my warm, warm wishes for you both. Kiss her for me, and tell her so: and that I hope we shall meet round His throne soon, if we cannot meet at His altar to-morrow."

Brother and sister then kissed one another affectionately; and Alfred ran back like the wind to Albion Cottage. Julia was not in the drawing-room, and some coolish tea was. After waiting half an hour he got impatient, and sent Sarah to say he had a message for her. Sarah went upstairs to Mrs. Dodd's room, and was instantly absorbed. After waiting again a long time, Alfred persuaded Edward to try his luck. Edward went up to Mrs. Dodd's room, and was absorbed.

The wedding dress was being solemnly tried on. A clean linen sheet was on the floor, and the bride stood on it, receiving the last touches of the milliner's art. With this and her white poplin and lace veil she seemed framed in white, and her cheeks bloomed so, and her eyes beamed, with excitement and innocent vanity, that altogether she was supernaturally lovely.

Once enter the room enchanted by this snow-clad rose, and—Vestigia nulla retrorsum.

However, Edward escaped at last, and told Alfred what was on foot, and drew a picture of the Bride with white above and white below.

"Oh, let me see her," implored the lover.

Edward must ask mamma about that. He did, and mamma said "Certainly not; the last person in the world that shall see her in her wedding dress." But she should come down to him in half an hour. It seemed a very long half-hour. However, by way of compensation, he was alone when she did come. "Good news?" she asked eagerly.

"Capital: we are the best of friends. Why she is half inclined to come."

"Then—oh how good you are: oh, how I love you."

And she flung a tender arm round his neck, like a young goddess making love; and her sweet face came so near his, he had only to stoop a little, and their lips met in a long blissful kiss.

That kiss was an era in her life. Innocence itself, she had put up her delicious lips to her lover in pure, though earnest affection; but the male fire with which his met them, made her blush as well as thrill, and she drew back a little, abashed and half scared, and nestled on his shoulder, hiding a face that grew redder and redder.

He bent his graceful head, and murmured down to her, "Are you afraid of me, sweetest?"

"Oh no, no! Yes, a little. I don't know. I was afraid I had made too free with my Treasure; you don't quite belong to me yet, you know."

"Oh yes, I do: and, what is more, you belong to me. Don't you, sweet rebel?"

"Ah, that I do, heart and soul, my own, own, own."

A few more soft delicious murmurs, and then Julia was summoned to more rites of vanity, and the lovers parted with tender reluctance for those few hours.

Alfred went home to his lodgings.

He had not been there above ten minutes, when he came out hastily, and walked quickly to the "White Lion," the principal inn in Bark-

ington. He went into the stable-yard, and said a few words to the ostler: then returned to his lodgings.

The man followed him at a distance, from Albion Terrace; watched him home; dogged him to the "White Lion;" and, by-and-by, entered the yard and offered the ostler a glass of ale at the tap.

At Albion Villa they were working on Julia's dresses till past midnight: and then Mrs. Dodd insisted on her going to bed. She obeyed; but when the house was all quiet, came stealing out to her mother, and begged to sleep with her: the sad mother strained her in a tearful embrace: and so they passed the night; clinging to one another more as the parting drew near.

Edward arranged the wedding breakfast for after the ceremony; and sent the ladies up a cup of coffee, and a bit of toast, apiece; they could hardly find appetite even for this; or indeed time; there was so much still to do.

At ten o'clock Julia was still in the height of dressing, delayed by contretemps upon contretemps. Sarah and her sister did her hair up too loose, and, being a glorious mass, it threatened all to come down and, meantime, a hair-pin quietly but persistently bored her cream-white poll.

"Oh, run for mamma!" she cried.

Mamma came half dressed, had the hair all down again, and did it up with adroit and loving hand, and put on the orange wreath, kissed her admiringly, and retired to her own toilet; and the girls began to lace the bride's body.

Bump came Edward's foot against the door, making them all shriek.

"Now I don't want to hurry you; but Dr. Sampson is come."

The handmaids, flustered, tried to go faster; and, when the work was done, Julia took her little handglass and inspected her back: "Oh," she screamed, "I am crooked. There, go for mamma!"

Mamma soon came, and the poor bride held out imploring hands "I'm all awry; I'm as crooked as a ram's horn."

"La, miss," said Sarah, "it's only behind; nobody will notice it."

"How can they help it? Mamma! *am* I deformed?"

Mrs. Dodd smiled superior and bade her be calm: "It is the lacing, dear. No, Sarah, it is no use your *pulling* it; all the pulling in the world will not straighten it. I thought so: you have missed the second top hole."

Julia's little foot began to beat a tattoo on the floor: "There is not a soul in the house but you can do the simplest thing. Eyes and no eyes! Fingers and no fingers! I never *did*."

"Hush, love, we all do our best."

"Oh, I am sure of that; poor things."

"*Nobody* can lace you if you fidget about, love," objected Mrs. Dodd (Bump)! "Now I don't want to hurry any man's cattle: but the bridesmaids are come."

"Oh dear, I shall never be ready in time," said Julia; and the tattoo recommenced.

"Plenty of time, love," said Mrs. Dodd quietly lacing: "not half past ten yet. Sarah, go and see if the bridegroom has arrived."

"Sarah returned with the reassuring tidings that the bridegroom had not yet arrived; though the carriages had.

"Oh, thank Heaven *he* is not come," said Julia, "If I keep him waiting to-day, he might say—'Oho!'"

Under dread of a comment so significant, she was ready at last, and said majestically he might come now whenever he liked.

Meantime, down stairs an uneasiness of the opposite kind was growing. Ten minutes past the appointed time, and the bridegroom not there. So while Julia, now full dressed, and easy in her mind, was directing Sarah's sister to lay out her plain travelling dress, bonnet and gloves, on the bed, Mrs. Dodd was summoned down stairs: she came down with Julia's white gloves in her hand, and a needle and thread, the button sewed on by trade's fair hand having flown at the first strain. Edward met her on the stairs: "What had we better do, mother?" said he, sotto voce: "there must be some mistake. Can you remember? Wasn't he to call for me on the way to the church?"

"I really do not know," said Mrs. Dodd. "Is he at the church, do you think?"

"No, no, either he was to call for me, here, or I for him. I'll go to the church, though: it is only a step."

He ran off, and in a little more than five minutes came into the drawing-room.

"No, he is not there. I must go to his lodgings. Confound him, he has got reading Aristotle, I suppose."

This passed before the whole party, Julia excepted.

Sampson looked at his watch, and said he could conduct the ladies to the church while Edward went for Alfred. "Division of labour," said he, gallantly, "and mine the delightful half."

Mrs. Dodd demurred to the plan. She was for waiting quietly in one place.

"Well, but," said Edward, "we may overdo that; here it is a quarter-past eleven, and you know they can't be married after twelve. No, I really think you had better all go with the doctor; I dare say we shall be there as soon as you will."

This was agreed on after some discussion: Edward, however, to provide against all contingencies, begged Sampson not to wait for him should Alfred reach the church by some other road: "I'm only grooms-man, you know," said he. He ran off at a racing pace. The bride was then summoned, admired, and handed into one carriage with her two bridesmaids, Miss Bosanquet and Miss Darton; Sampson and Mrs. Dodd went in the other; and by half-past eleven they were all safe in the church.

A good many people high and low were about the door, and in the pews, waiting to see the beautiful Miss Dodd married to the son of a personage once so popular as Mr. Hardie: it had even transpired that Mr. Hardie disapproved the match. They had been waiting a long time, and were beginning to wonder what was the matter, when, at last, the bride's party walked up the aisle with a bright April sun shining on them through the broad old windows. The bride's rare beauty, and stag-like carriage of her head imperial in its loveliness and orange wreath, drew a hum of admiration.

The party stood a minute or two at the east end of the church, and then the clergyman came out and invited them into the vestry.

Their reappearance was eagerly expected; in silence at first, but presently in loud and multitudinous whispers.

At this moment a young lady with almost perfect features, and sylph-like figure, modestly dressed in dove-coloured silk, but with a new chip bonnet and white gloves, entered a pew, near the west door and said a little prayer; then proceeded up the aisle, and exchanged a word with the clerk, then into the vestry.

"Cheep! cheep! cheep!" went fifty female tongues, and the arrival of the bridegroom's sister became public news.

The bride welcomed her in the vestry with a sweet guttural of surprise and delight, and they kissed one another like little tigers.

"Oh my darling Jane, how kind of you! have I got you back to make my happiness complete?"

Now none of her own party had thought it wise to tell Julia there was any hitch: but Miss Hardie blurted out naturally enough; "But where's Alfred?"

"I don't know, dear," said Julia, innocently. "Are not he and Edward in another part of the church? I thought we were waiting till twelve o'clock, perhaps. Mamma dear, you know everything; I suppose this is all right?"

Then, looking round at her friends' faces, she saw in a moment that it was all wrong. Sampson's in particular, was burning with manly indignation, and even her mother's discomposed, and trying to smile.

When the innocent saw this, she suspected her beloved was treating her cavalierly, and her poor little mouth began to work, and she had much ado not to whimper.

Mrs. Dodd, to encourage her, told her not to be put out: it had been arranged all along that Edward should go for him: "Unfortunately we had an impression it was the other way: but now Edward is gone to his lodgings."

"No, mamma," said Julia; "Alfred was to call for Edward; because our house was on the way."

"Are you sure, my child?" asked Mrs. Dodd, very gravely.

"Oh, yes, mamma," said Julia, beginning to tremble: "at a quarter before eleven: I heard them settle it."

The matter was terribly serious now; indeed it began to look hopeless. Weather overclouded: rain-drops falling; and hard upon twelve o'clock.

They all looked at one another in despair.

Suddenly there was a loud, long buzzing heard outside, and the house of God turned into a gossiping fair. Talk of money changers," said Satan that day, "give *me* the exchangers of small talk."

"Thank Heaven they are come," said Mrs. Dodd. But, having thus relieved her mind, she drew herself up and prepared a freezing reception for the defaulter.

A whisper reached their excited ears: "It is young Mr. Dodd!" and next moment Edward came into the vestry—alone: the sight of him was enough; his brow wet with perspiration, his face black and white with bitter wrath

"Come home, *my* people," he said, sternly: "there will be no wedding here to-day."

The bridesmaids cackled questions at him; he turned his back on them.

Mrs. Dodd knew her son's face too well to waste inquiries. "Give me my child!" she cried, in such a burst of mother's anguish long restrained, that even the insult to the bride was forgotten for one moment, till she was seen tottering into her mother's arms and cringing and trying to hide bodily in her: "Oh, throw a shawl over me," she moaned: "hide all this."

Well, they all did what they could; Jane hung round her neck and sobbed, and said, "I've a sister now, and no brother." The bridesmaids cried. The young curate ran and got the fly to the vestry-door: "Get into it," he said, "and you will at least escape the curious crowd."

"God bless you, Mr. Hurd," said Edward, half choked. He hurried the insulted bride and her mother in; Julia huddled and shrank into a corner under Mrs. Dodd's shawl: Mrs. Dodd had all the blinds down in a moment; and they went home as from a funeral.

Ay, and a funeral it was; for the sweetest girl in England buried her hopes, her laugh, her May of youth, in that church that day.

When she got to Albion Villa, she cast a wild look all around for fear she should be seen in her wedding clothes and darted moaning into the house.

Sarah met her in the hall, smirking; and saying, "Wish you j——"

The poor bride screamed fearfully at the mocking words, and cut the conventional phrase in two as with a razor; then fled to her own room and tore off her wreath, her veil, her pearls, and had already strewed the room, when Mrs. Dodd, with a foot quickened by affection, burst in and caught her half fainting, and laid her weary as old age, and cold as a stone, upon her mother's bosom, and rocked her as in the days of happy childhood never to return, and bedewed the pale face with her own tears.

Sampson took the bridesmaids each to her residence, on purpose to leave Edward free. He came home, washed his face, and, sick at heart, but more master of himself, knocked timidly at Julia's door.

"Come in, *my son*," said a broken voice.

He crept in; and saw a sorry sight. The travelling dress and bonnet were waiting still on the bed; the bridal wreath and veil lay on the floor; and so did half the necklace, and the rest of the pearls all about the floor; and Julia, with all her hair loose and hanging below her waist, lay faintly quivering in her mother's arms.

Edward stood and looked, and groaned.

Mrs. Dodd whispered to him over Julia: "Not a tear! not a tear!"

"Dead, or false?" moaned the girl: "dead, or false? oh, that I could believe he was false: no, no, he is dead: dead."

Mrs. Dodd whispered again over her girl.

"Tell her something: give us tears—the world for one tear!"

"What shall I say?" gasped Edward.

"Tell her the truth, and trust to God, whose child she is."

Edward knelt on the floor and took her hand:

"My poor little Ju," he said, in a voice broken with pity and emotion, "would you rather have him dead, or false to you?"

"Why false, a thousand times. It's Edward. Bless your sweet face, my own, own brother; tell me he is false, and not come to deadly harm."

"You shall judge for yourself," he groaned; "I went to his lodgings. He had left the town. The woman told me a letter came for him last night. A letter in—a female hand. The scoundrel came in from us; got this letter; packed up his things directly; paid his lodging; and went off in a two-horse fly at eight o'clock in the morning."

## CHAPTER XXX.

At these plain proofs of Alfred's infidelity, Julia's sweet throat began to swell hysterically, and then her bosom to heave and pant: and, after a piteous struggle, came a passion of sobs and tears so wild, so heart-broken, that Edward blamed himself bitterly for telling her.

But Mrs. Dodd sobbed "No, no, I would rather have her so; only leave her with me now: bless you, darling: leave us quickly."

She rocked and nursed her deserted child hours and hours: and so the miserable day crawled to its close.

Down stairs the house looked strange and gloomy: she, who had brightened it all, was darkened herself. The wedding breakfast and flowers remained in bitter mockery. Sarah cleared half the table, and Sampson and Edward dined in moody silence.

Presently Sampson's eye fell upon the Deed: it lay on a small table with a pen beside it, to sign on their return from church.

Sampson got hold of it and dived in the verbiage. He came up again with a discovery. In spite of its feebleness, verbosity, obscurity, and idiotic way of expressing itself, the Deed managed to convey to David and Mrs. Dodd a life interest in nine thousand five hundred pounds, with reversion to Julia and the children of the projected marriage. Sampson and Edward put their heads over this, and it puzzled them.

"Why, man," said Sampson, "if the puppy had signed this last night, he would be a beggar now."

"Ay," said Edward, "but after all he did not sign it."

"Nay, but that was your fault, not his: the lad was keen to sign."

"That is true: and perhaps if we had pinned him to this, last night, he would not have dared insult my sister to-day."

Sampson changed the subject by inquiring suddenly which way he was gone.

"Curse him, I don't know; and don't care. Go where he will I shall meet him again some day; and then——" Edward spoke almost in a whisper, but a certain grind of his white teeth and flashing of his lion eyes made the incomplete sentence very expressive.

"What ninnies you young men are," said the Doctor; "even you, that I dub 'my fathom o' good sense:' just finish your dinner, and come with me."

"No, Doctor; I'm off my feed for once: if you had been upstairs and seen my poor sister! Hang the grub; it turns my stomach." And he shoved his plate away, and leaned over the back of his chair

Sampson made him drink a glass of wine, and then they got up from the half-finished meal and went hurriedly to Alfred's lodgings, the Doctor, though sixty, rushing along with all the fire and buoyancy of early youth. They found the landlady surrounded by gossips curious as themselves, and longing to chatter, but no materials. The one new fact they elicited was that the vehicle was a White Lion fly, for she knew the young man by the cast in his eye. "Come away," shouted the Doctor, unceremoniously, and in two minutes they were in the yard of the White Lion.

Sampson called the ostler: out came a hard-featured man with a strong squint. Sampson concluded this was his man, and said roughly: "Where did you drive young Hardie this morning?"

He seemed rather taken aback by this abrupt question; but reflected and slapped his thigh: "Why that is the party from Mill Street."

"Yes."

"Druv him to Silverton station, sir: and wasn't long about it, either; gent was in a hurry."

"What train did he go by?"

"Well, I don't know, sir; I left him at the station."

"Well, then where did he take his ticket for? Where did he tell the porter he was going? Think now, and I'll give y' a sovereign."

The ostler scratched his head, and seemed at first inclined to guess for the sovereign, but at last said: "I should only be robbing you, gents; ye see he paid the fly then and there, and gave me a crown: and I druv away directly."

On this they gave him a shilling and left him. But on leaving the yard, Edward said: "Doctor, I don't like that fellow's looks: let us try the landlord." They went into the bar and made similar inquiries. The landlord was out, the mistress knew nothing about it, but took a book out of a drawer, and turned over the leaves. She read out an entry to this effect:

"Pair horse fly to Silverton: take up in Mill Street at eight o'clock. Is that it, sir?" Sampson assented; but Edward told her the ostler said it was Silverton station.

"No: it is Silverton in the book, sir. Well, you see it is all one to us; the station is further than the town, but we charge seven miles whichever 'tis."

Bradshaw, inspected then and there, sought in vain to conceal that four trains reach Silverton from different points between 8·50 and 9·25. A.M.

The friends retired with this scanty information; Alfred could hardly have gone to London: for there was a train up from Barkington itself at 8·30. But he might have gone to almost any other part of the island, or out of it for that matter. Sampson fell into a brown study.

After a long silence, which Edward was too sad to break, he said thoughtfully: "Bring sceince to bear on this hotch-potch. Facks are never really opposed to facks; they onnly seem to be: and the true

solution is the one which riconciles all the facks: f'r instance the chronothairmal Thercy riconciles all th' undisputed facks in midicine. So now sairch for a solution to riconcile the Deed with the puppy levanting."

Edward searched, but could find none; and said so.

"Can't you?" said Sampson; "then I'll give you a couple. Say he is touched in the upper story for one."

"What do you mean? mad?"

"Oh: there are degrees of Phrinzy. Here is th' inconsistency of conduct that marks a disturbance of the reason: and, to tell the truth, I once knew a young fellow that played this very prank at a wedding, and the nixt thing we hard, my lorrd was in Bedlam."

Edward shook his head: "It is the villain's heart, not his brain."

Sampson then offered another solution, in which he owned he had more confidence:

"He has been courting some other wumman first: she declined, or made believe; but, when she found he had the spirit to go and marry an innocent girl, then the jade wrote to him and yielded. It's a married one, likely. I've known women go further for hatred of a wumman than they would for love of a man: and here was a temptation! to snap a lover off th' altar, and insult a rival, all at one blow. He meant to marry: he meant to sign that deed: ay and, at his age, even if he had signed it, he would have gone off at passion's call, and beggared himself. What enrages me is that we didn't let him sign it, and so nail the young rascal's money."

"Curse his money," said Edward, "and him too. Wait till I can lay my hand on him: I'll break every bone in his skin."

"And I'll help you."

In the morning, Mrs. Dodd left Julia for a few minutes expressly to ask Sampson's advice. After Alfred's conduct she was free, and fully determined, to defend herself and family against spoliation by any means in her power: so she now showed the doctor David's letter about the 14,000*l.*; and the empty pocket-book; and put together the disjointed evidence of Julia, Alfred, and circumstances, in one neat and luminous statement: Sampson was greatly struck with the revelation: he jumped off his chair and marched about excited: said truth was stranger than fiction, and this was a manifest swindle: then he surprised Mrs. Dodd in her turn by assuming that old Hardie was at the bottom of yesterday's business. Neither Edward nor his mother could see that, and said so: his reply was characteristic: "Of course you can't; you are Anglosaxins; th' Anglosaxins are good at drawing distinctions; but they can't gineralise. I'm a Celt, and gineralise—as a duck swims. I discovered th' unity of all disease: it would be odd if I could not trace the maniform iniquities you suffer to their one source."

"But what is the connecting link?" asked Mrs. Dodd, still incredulous.

"Why Richard Hardie's interest."

"Well, but the letter?" objected Edward.

"There goes th' Anglosaxin again," remonstrated Sampson: "puzzling his head over petty details; and they are perhaps mere blinds thrown out by the enemy. Put this and that together: Hardie senior always averse to this marriage; Hardie senior wanting to keep 14,000*l.*

of yours: if his son who knows of the fraud, became your mother's son, the swindle would be hourly in danger (no connexion? y' unhappy Anglosaxins; why the two things are interwoven). And so young Hardie is got out of the way: old Hardie's doing, or I'm a Dutchman."

This reasoning still appeared forced and fanciful to Edward; but it began to make some little impression on Mrs. Dodd, and encouraged her to own that her poor daughter suspected foul play.

"Well, that is possible too: whativer tempted man has done, tempted man will do: but more likely he has bribed Jezebel to write and catch the goose by the heart. Gintlemen, I'm a bit of a physiognomist: look at old Hardie's lines: his cords I might say: and deeper every time I see him; sirs, there's an awful weight on that man's mind. Looksee! I'll just send a small trifle of a detective down to watch his game, and pump his people: and, as soon as it is safe, we'll seize the old bird, and, once he is trapped the young one will reappear like magic: th' old one will disgorge: wo'll just compound the felony—been an old friend—and recover the cash."

A fine sketch; but Edward thought it desperately wild, and Mrs. Dodd preferred employing a respectable attorney to try and obtain justice in the regular way. Sampson laughed at her; what was the use of attacking in the regular way an irregular genius like old Hardie? "Attorneys are too humdrum for such a job," said he; "they start with a civil letter putting a rogue on his guard; they proceed t' a writ, and then he digs a hole in another county and buries the booty; or sails t' Australia with it. N'list'me; I'm an old friend, and an insane lover of justice—I say insane, because my passion is not returned, or the jade wouldn't keep out of my way so all these years—you leave all this to me."

"Stop a minute," said Edward; "you must not go compromising us: and we have no money to pay for luxuries, like detectives."

"I won't compromise any one of you: and my detective shan't cost y' a penny."

"Ah, my dear friend," said Mrs. Dodd, "the fact is, you do not know all the difficulties that beset us. Tell him, Edward. Well then let *me*. The poor boy is attached to this gentleman's daughter, whom you propose to treat like a felon: and he is too good a son and too good a friend for me to—what, what, shall I do?"

Edward coloured up to the eyes: "Who told you that, mother?" said he. "Well, yes I do love her, and I'm not ashamed of it. Doctor," said the poor fellow after a while, "I see now I am not quite the person to advise my mother in this matter. I consent to leave it in your hands."

And in pursuance of this resolution, he retired to his study.

"There's a domnable combination," said Sampson, drily. "Truth is sairtainly more wonderful than feckshin. Here's my fathom o' good sense in love with a wax doll, and her brother jilting his sister, and her father pillaging his mother. It *beats* hotch-potch."

Mrs. Dodd denied the wax doll: but owned Miss Hardie was open to vast objections: "An inestimable young lady; but so odd; she is one of these uneasy-minded Christians that have sprung up: a religious egotist, and malade imaginaire, eternally feeling her own spiritual pulse——"

"I know the disorder," cried Sampson, eagerly: "the pashints have a hot fit (and then they are saints); followed in due course by the cold

fit (and then they are the worst of sinners): and so on in endless rotation: and, if they could only realise my great discovery, the periodicity of all disease, and time their sintiments, they would find the hot fit and the cold return chronometrically, at intervals as riglar as the tide's ebb and flow; and the soul has nothing to do with either febrile symptom. Why Religion, apart from intermittent Fever of the Brain, is just the caumest, peaceablest, sedatest thing in all the world."

"Ah, you are too deep for me, my good friend. All I know is that she is one of this new school, whom I take the liberty to call 'THE FIDGETY CHRISTIANS.' They cannot let their poor souls alone a minute; and they pester one day and night with the millennium; as if we shall not all be dead long before that: but the worst is they apply the language of earthly passion to the Saviour of mankind, and make one's flesh creep at their blasphemies; so coarse, so familiar: like that rude multitude which thronged and pressed Him when on earth. But, after all, she came to the church, and took my Julia's part; so that shows she has *principle*; and do pray spare me her feelings in any step you take against that dishonourable person her father: I must go back to his victim, my poor, poor child: I dare not leave her long. Oh, Doctor, such a night! and, if she dozes for a minute, it is to wake with a scream and tell me she sees him dead: sometimes he is drowned; sometimes stained with blood; but always dead."

This evening Mr. Hardie came along in a fly with his luggage on the box, returning to Musgrove Cottage as from Yorkshire: in passing Albion Villa he cast it a look of vindictive triumph. He got home and nodded by the fire in his character of a man wearied by a long journey. Jane made him some tea, and told him how Alfred had disappeared on his wedding-day.

"The young scamp," said he: he added, coolly, "it is no business of mine; I had no hand in making the match, thank Heaven." In the conversation that ensued, he said he had always been averse to the marriage; but not so irreconcilably as to approve this open breach of faith with a respectable young lady: "this will recoil upon our name, you know, at this critical time," said he.

Then Jane mustered courage to confess that she had gone to the wedding herself: "Dear papa," said she, "it was made clear to me that the Dodds are acting in what they consider a most friendly way to you. They think—I cannot tell you what they think. But, if mistaken, they are sincere: and so, after prayer, and you not being here for me to consult, I did go to the church. Forgive me, papa: I have but one brother; and she is my dear friend."

Mr. Hardie's countenance fell at this announcement, and he looked almost diabolical. But on second thoughts he cleared up wonderfully: "I will be frank with you, Jenny: if the wedding had come off, I should have been deeply hurt at your supporting that little monster of ingratitude; he not only marries against his father's will (that is done every day), but slanders and maligns him publicly in his hour of poverty and distress. But, now that he has broken faith and insulted Miss Dodd as well as me, I declare I am glad you were there, Jenny. It will separate us from *his* abominable conduct. But what does he say for himself? What *excuse* does he give?"

"Oh, it is all mystery as yet."

"Well, but he must have sent some explanation to the Dodds.

"He may have: I don't know. I have not ventured to intrude on my poor insulted friend. Papa, I hear her distress is fearful; they fear for her reason. Oh if harm comes to her, God will assuredly punish him whose heartlessness and treachery has brought her to it. Mark my words," she continued with great emotion, "this cruel act will not go unpunished even in this world."

"There, there, change the subject," said Mr. Hardie peevishly. "What have I to do with his pranks? he has disowned me for his father, and I disown him for my son."

The next day Peggy Black called, and asked to see master. Old Betty, after the first surprise, looked at her from head to foot, and foot to head, as if measuring her for a suit of Disdain; and told her she might carry her own message; then flounced into the kitchen, and left her to shut the street door, which she did. She went and dropped her curtsey at the parlour door, and in a miminy piminy voice said she was come to make her submission, and would he forgive her, and give her another trial? Her penitence, after one or two convulsive efforts, ended in a very fair flow of tears.

Mr. Hardie shrugged his shoulders, and asked Jane if the girl had ever been saucy to her.

"Oh no, papa: indeed I have no fault to find with poor Peggy."

"Well then go to your work, and try and not offend Betty; remember she is older than you."

Peggy went for her box and bandbox, and reinstated herself quietly, and all old Betty's endeavours to irritate her only elicited a calm cunning smile, with a depression of her downy eyelashes.

*Albion Villa.*

Next morning Edward Dodd was woke out of a sound sleep at about four o'clock, by a hand upon his shoulder: he looked up, and rubbed his eyes; it was Julia standing by his bedside, dressed, and in her bonnet: "Edward," she said in a hurried whisper, "there is foul play: I cannot sleep, I cannot be idle. He has been decoyed away, and perhaps murdered. Oh, pray get up and go to the police office or somewhere with me."

"Very well; but wait till morning."

"No; now; now; now. I shall never go out of doors in the daytime again. Wait? I'm going crazy with wait, wait, wait, wait, waiting."

Her hand was like fire on him, and her eyes supernaturally bright.

"There," said Edward with a groan, "go down stairs, and I will be with you directly."

He came down: they went out together: her little burning hand pinched his tight, and her swift foot seemed scarcely to touch the ground; she kept him at his full stride till they got to the central police station. There, at the very thought of facing men, the fiery innocent suddenly shrank together, and covered her blushing face with her hot hands. She sent him in alone. He found an intelligent superintendent, who entered into the case with all the coolness of an old official hand.

Edward came out to his sister, and as he hurried her home, told her what had passed: "The superintendent asked to see the letter; I told

him he had taken it with him: that was a pity, he said. Then he made me describe Alfred to a nicety: and the description will go up to London this morning, and all over Barkington, and the neighbourhood, and the county."

She stopped to kiss him, then went on again with her head down, and neither spoke till they were nearly home: then Edward told her "the superintendent felt quite sure that the villain was not dead; nor in danger of it."

"Oh, bless him! bless him! for saying so."

"And that he will turn up in London before very long; not in this neighbourhood: he says he must have known the writer of the letter, and his taking his luggage with him shows he has gone off deliberately. My poor little Ju, now do try and look at it as he does, and everybody else does; try and see it as you would if you were a bystander."

She laid her soft hand on his shoulder as if to support herself floating in her sea of doubt: "I do see I am a poor credulous girl; but how *can* my Alfred be false to me? Am I to doubt the Bible? am I to doubt the sun? Is nothing true in heaven or earth? Oh, if I could only have died as I was dressing for church—died while he seemed true! He *is* true; the wicked creature has cast some spell on him: he has gone in a moment of delirium; he will regret what he has done, perhaps regrets it now. I am ungrateful to you, Edward, and to the good policeman, for saying he is not dead. What more do I require? he is dead to me. Edward, let us leave this place. We *were* going: let us go to-day; this very day; oh, take me, and hide me where no one that knows me can ever see me again." A flood of tears came to her relief: and she went along sobbing and kissing her brother's hand every now and then.

But, as they drew near the gate of Albion Villa, twilight began to usher in the dawn. Julia shuddered at even that faint light, and fled like a guilty thing, and hid herself sobbing in her own bedroom.

Mr. Richard Hardie slept better now than he had done for some time past, and therefore woke more refreshed and in better spirits. He knew an honest family was miserable a few doors off; but he did not care. He got up and shaved with a mind at ease. One morning, when he had removed the lather from one half his face, he happened to look out of window, and saw on the wall opposite—a placard: a large placard to this effect:

"ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS REWARD!

Whereas on the 11th instant Mr. Alfred Hardie disappeared mysteriously from his lodgings in 15 Mill Street under circumstances suggesting a suspicion of foul play, know all men that the above reward will be paid to any person or persons who shall first inform the undersigned where the said Alfred Hardie is to be found, and what person or persons, if any, have been concerned in his disappearance.

ALEXANDER SAMPSON
89 Pope Street
Napoleon Square
London."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

THE note Alfred Hardie received on the 10th of April, was from Peggy Black. The letters were well formed, for she had been educated at the national school: but the style was not upon a par.

"MR. ALFRED, SIR,

"Margaret Black sends her respects, and if you want to know the truth about the money, I can tell you all, and where it is at this present time. Sir, I am now in situation at Silverton Grove House about a furlong from the station; and if you will be so good to call there and ask for Margaret, I will tell you where it is, which I mean the 14,000*l.*; for it is a sin the young lady should be beguiled of her own. Only you must please come this evening, or else to-morrow before ten o'clock, by reason my mistress and me we are going up to London that day early, and she talk of taking me abroad along with her.

"I remain, Sir,

"Yours respectfully to command,

"MARGARET BLACK.

"If you please, sir, not to show this letter on no account."

Alfred read this twice over, and felt a contemptuous repugnance towards the writer, a cashiered servant, who offered to tell the truth out of spite, having easily resisted every worthy motive. Indeed I think he would have perhaps dismissed the subject into the fire, but for a strange circumstance that had occurred to him this very afternoon; but I had no opportunity to relate it till now. Well, just as he was going to dress for dinner, he received a visit from Dr. Wycherley, a gentleman he scarcely knew by name. Dr. Wycherley inquired after his kephalalgia: Alfred stared and told him it was much the same; troubled him occasionally.

"And your insomnia."

"I don't know the word; have you any authority for it?"

Dr. Wycherley smiled with a sort of benevolent superiority, that galled his patient, and proceeded to inquire after his nightly visions and voices. But at this Alfred looked grave as well as surprised and vexed. He was on his guard now, and asked himself seriously what was the meaning of all this, and could his father have been so mad as to talk over his own shame with this stranger: he made no reply whatever.

Dr. Wycherley's curiosity was not of a very ardent kind: for he was one of those who first form an opinion, and then collect the materials of one: and a very little fact goes a long way with such minds. So, when he got no answer about the nocturnal visions and voices, he glided calmly on to another matter. "By-the-by, that 14,000*l.*!"

Alfred started; and then eyed him keenly: "What 14,000*l.*?"

"The fabulous sum you labour under the impression of your father having been guilty of clandestinely appropriating."

This was too much for Alfred's patience: "I don't know who you are, sir," said he; "I never exchanged but three words in my life with you, and do you suppose I will talk to a stranger on family matters of so delicate a kind as this? I begin to think you have intruded yourself on me simply to gratify an impertinent curiosity."

"The hypothesis is at variance with my established character," replied the oleaginous one. "Do me the justice to believe in the necessity of this investigation, and that it is one of a most friendly character."

"Then I decline the double nuisance: your curiosity and your friendship! Take them both out of my room, sir, or I shall turn them both out by one pair of shoulders."

"You shall smart for this," said the doctor, driven to plain English by anger, that great solvent of circumlocution with which Nature has mercifully supplied us. He made to the door, opened it, and said in considerable excitement to some one outside, "Excited!—Very!"

Now Dr. Pleonast had no sooner been converted to the vernacular, and disappeared, than another stranger entered the room: he had evidently been lurking in the passage: it was a man of smallish stature, singularly gaunt, angular, and haggard, but dressed in a spruce suit of black, light, new, and glossy. In short, he looked like Romeo's apothecary gone to Stultz with the money. He fluttered in with pale cheek and apprehensive body, saying hurriedly, "Now, my *dear* sir, *be* calm: *pray* be calm. I have come down all the way from London to see you, and I am *sure* you won't make me lose my journey; will you now?"

"And pray who asked you to come all the way from London, sir?"

"A person to whom your health is very dear."

"Oh indeed; so I have secret friends, have I? Well, you may tell my secret, underhand, *friends*, I never was better in my life."

"I am truly glad to hear it," said the little man: "let me introduce myself; as Dr. Wycherley forgot to do it." And he handed Alfred a card, on which his name and profession were written.

"Well, Mr. Speers," said Alfred, "I have only a moment to give you, for I must dress for dinner. What do you want?"

"I come, sir, in hopes of convincing your friends you are not so very ill; not incurable. Why your eye is steady, your complexion good; a little high with the excitement of this conversation; but, if we can only get over this little delusion, all will be well."

"What little delusion?"

"About the 14,000*l.* you know."

"What 14,000*l.*? I have not mentioned 14,000*l.* to you, have I?"

"No, sir: you seem to shun it like poison; that is the worst of it; you talk about it to others fast enough; but to Dr. Wycherley and myself, who could cure you of it, you would hide all about it, if you could."

At this Alfred rose and put his hands in his pockets and looked down grimly on his inquisitor. "Mr. Speers," said he, "you had better go. There is no credit to be gained by throwing so small an apothecary, as you, out of that window; and *you* won't find it pleasant either; for, if you provoke me to it, I shall not stand upon ceremony; I shan't open the window first, as I should for Dr. What's his confounded name."

At these suggestive words, spoken with suppressed ire and flashing

eyes, Speers scuttled to the door crabwise, holding the young lion in check, conventionally; to wit with an eye as valiant as a sheep's, and a joyful apothecary was he when he found himself safe outside the house and beside Dr. Wycherley, who was waiting for him.

Alfred soon cooled, and began to laugh at his own anger and the unbounded impudence of his visitors: but, on the other hand, it struck him as a grave circumstance that so able a man as his father should stir muddy water; should go and talk to these strangers about the money he had misappropriated. He puzzled himself all the time he was dressing: and, not to trouble the reader with all the conjectures that passed through his mind, he concluded at last, that Mr. Hardie must feel very strong, very sure there was no evidence against him but his son's, or he would not take the eighth commandment by the horns like this.

"Injustice carries it with a high hand," thought Alfred, with a sigh. He was not the youth to imitate his father's shamelessness: so he locked this last incident in his own breast; did not even mention it to Julia.

But now, on reading Peggy's note, his warlike instincts awoke, and, though he despised his correspondent and her motives, he could not let such a chance pass of defeating brazen injustice. It was unfortunate and awkward to have to go to Silverton on his wedding morning; but, after all, there was plenty of time. He packed up his things at once for the wedding tour, and in the morning took them with him in the fly to Silverton: his plan was to come back direct to Albion Villa: so he went to Silverton Grove full dressed, all ready for the wedding.

As it happened he overtook his friend Peterson just outside the town, called to him gaily, and invited him to church and breakfast.

To his surprise the young gentleman replied sullenly that he should certainly not come.

"Not come, old fellow?" said Alfred, hurt.

"You have a good cheek to ask me," retorted the other.

This led to an explanation. Peterson's complaint was that he had told Alfred he was in love with Julia, and Alfred had gone directly and fallen in love with her just to cut him out.

"What are you talking about?" said Alfred: "so this is the reason you have kept away from me of late: why, I was engaged to her at the very time; only my father was keeping us apart."

"Then why didn't you say so?"

"Because my love is not of the prattling sort."

"Oh, nonsense; I don't believe a word of it."

"You don't believe my word! Did you ever know me tell a lie? At that rate think what you please, sir: drive on, Strabo."

And so ended that little friendship.

On the road our ardent youth arranged in his head a noble scheme. He would bring Peggy Black home with him, compensating her liberally for the place she would thereby lose: would confront her privately with his father, and convince him it was his interest to restore the Dodds their money with a good grace, take the 5000*l.* he had already offered, and countenance the wedding by letting Jane be present at it. It was hard to do all this in the time, but well worth trying for, and not impossible: a two-horse fly is not a slow conveyance,

and he offered the man a guinea to drive fast; so that it was not nine o'clock when they reached Silverton Grove House, a place Alfred had never heard of; this, however, I may observe, was no wonder: for it had not borne that name a twelvemonth.

It was a large square mansion of red brick, with stone facings and corners, and with balustrades that hid the garret windows. It stood in its own grounds, and the entrance was through handsome iron gates, one of which was wide open to admit people on foot or horseback. The flyman got down and tried to open the other, but could not manage it. "There, don't waste time," said Alfred impatiently, "let me out."

He found a notice under the bell, "Ring and enter." He rang accordingly, and at the clang the hall-door opened, as if he had pulled a porter along with the bell; and a grey-haired servant out of livery stood on the steps to receive him. Alfred hurried across the plat, which was trimmed as neatly as a college green, and asked the servant if he could see Margaret Black.

"Margaret Black?" said the man doubtfully: "I'll inquire, sir. Please to follow me."

They entered a handsome hall, with antlers and armour: from this a double staircase led up to a landing with folding doors in the centre of it; one of these doors was wide open like the iron gate outside. The servant showed Alfred up the left-hand staircase, through the open door, into a spacious drawing-room, handsomely though not gaily furnished and decorated; but a little darkened by Venetian blinds.

The old servant walked gravely on, and on, till Alfred began to think he would butt the wall; but he put his hand out and opened a door, that might very well escape a stranger's notice; for it was covered with looking-glass, and matched another narrow mirror in shape and size. this door led into a very long room, as plain and even sordid as the drawing-room was inviting; the unpapered walls were a cold drab, and wanted washing; there was a thick cobweb up in one corner, and from the ceiling hung the tail of another, which the housemaid's broom had scotched not killed: that side of the room they entered by was all books. The servant said, "Stay here a moment, sir, and I'll send her to you." With this he retired into the drawing-room, closing the door softly after him: once closed it became invisible; it fitted like wax, and left nothing to be seen but books; not even a knob. It shut to with that gentle but clean click which a spring bolt, however polished and oiled and gently closed, will emit. Altogether it was enough to give some people a turn. But Alfred's nerves were not to be affected by trifles; he put his hands in his pockets and walked up and down the room, quietly enough at first, but by-and-by uneasily. "Confound her for wasting my time," thought he; "why doesn't she come?"

Then, as he had learned to pick up the fragments of time, and hated dawdling, he went to take a book from the shelves.

He found it was a piece of iron, admirably painted: it chilled his hand with its unexpected coldness: and all the books on and about the door were iron and chilly.

"Well," thought he, "this is the first dummy ever took me in. What a fool the man must be! Why he could have bought books with ideas in them for the price of these impostors."

Still Peggy did not come. So he went to a door opposite, and at right angles to the farthest window; meaning to open it and inquire after her: lo and behold he found this was a knob without a door. There had been a door but it was blocked up. The only available door on that side had a keyhole, but no latch, nor handle.

Alfred was a prisoner.

He no sooner found this out than he began to hammer on the door with his fists, and call out.

This had a good effect, for he heard a woman's dress come rustling: a key was inserted, and the door opened. But, instead of Peggy, it was a tall well-formed woman of thirty, with dark grey eyes, and straightish eyebrows massive and black as jet. She was dressed quietly but like a lady. Mrs. Archbold, for that was her name, cast on Alfred one of those swift, all devouring glances, with which her sex contrive to take in the features, character, and dress of a person from head to foot; and smiled most graciously on him, revealing a fine white set of teeth. She begged him to take a seat; and sat down herself. She had left the door ajar.

"I came to see Margaret Black," said Alfred.

"Margaret Black? There is no such person here," was the quiet reply.

"What, has she gone away so early as this?"

Mrs. Archbold smiled, and said soothingly, "Are you sure she ever existed; except in your imagination?"

Alfred laughed at this, and showed her Peggy's letter. She ran her eye over it, and returned it him with a smile of a different kind, half pitying, half cynical. But presently resuming her former manner, "I remember now," said she in dulcet tones: "the anxiety you are labouring under is about a large sum of money, is it not?"

"What, can you give me any information about it?" said he, surprised.

"I think we can render you great *service* in the matter, infinite service, Mr. Hardie," was the reply, in a voice of very honey.

Alfred was amazed at this. "You say you don't know Peggy! And yet you seem to know me. I never saw you in my life before, madam; what on earth is the meaning of all this?"

"Calm yourself," said Mrs. Archbold, laying a white and finely moulded hand upon his arm, "there is no wonder nor mystery in the matter: *you were expected.*"

The colour rushed into Alfred's face, and he started to his feet; some vague instinct told him to be gone from this place.

The lady fixed her eyes on him, put her hand to a gold chain that was round her neck, and drew out of her white bosom, not a locket, nor a key, but an ivory whistle: keeping her eye steadily fixed on Alfred, she breathed softly into the whistle. Then two men stepped quietly in at the door; one was a short, stout snob, with great red whiskers, the other a wiry gentleman with iron-grey hair. The latter spoke to Alfred, and began to coax him. If Mrs. Archbold was honey, this personage was treacle. "Be calm, my dear young gentleman; don't agitate yourself. You have been sent here for your good; and that you may be cured, and so restored to society and to your anxious and affectionate friends."

"What are you talking about? what do you mean?" cried Alfred; "are you mad?"

"No, *we* are not," said the short snob, with a coarse laugh.

"Have done with this fooling, then," said Alfred, sharply; "the person I came to see is not here; good morning."

The short man instantly stepped to the door, and put his back to it. The other said, calmly, "No, Mr. Hardie, you cannot leave the house at present."

"Can't I? Why not, pray?" said, Alfred, drawing his breath hard: and his eyes began to glitter dangerously.

"We are responsible for your safety: we have force at hand if necessary; pray do not compel us to summon it."

"Why, where am I?" said Alfred, panting now; "is this a prison?"

"No, no," said Mrs. Archbold, soothingly: "it is a place where you will be cured of your headaches and your delusions, and subjected to no unnecessary pain nor restraint."

"Oh, bother," said the short snob, brutally. "Why make two bites of a cherry? You are in *my* asylum, young gentleman, and a devilish lucky thing for you."

At this fatal word, "asylum," Alfred uttered a cry of horror and despair, and his eyes roved wildly round the room in search of escape. But the windows of the room, though outside the house they seemed to come as low as those of the drawing-room, were partly bricked up within, and made just too high to be reached without a chair. And his captors read that wild glance directly, and the doctor whipped one chair away, while Mrs. Archbold, with more tact, sat quietly down on the other. They all three blew their whistles shrilly.

Alfred uttered an oath and rushed at the door: but heard heavy feet running on stone passages towards the whistles, and felt he had no chance out that way: his dilating eye fell upon the handle of the old defunct door: he made a high leap, came down with his left foot on its knob of brass, and, though of course he could not stand on it, contrived to spring from it slap at the window—Mrs. Archbold screamed—he broke the glass with his shoulder, and tore and kicked the woodwork, and squeezed through on to a stone ledge outside, and stood there bleeding and panting, just as half a dozen keepers burst into the room at his back. He was more than twenty feet from the ground: to leap down was death or mutilation; he saw the flyman driving away. He yelled to him, "Hy! hy! stop! stop!" The flyman stopped and looked round. But soon as he saw who it was, he just grinned: Alfred could see his hideous grin; and there was the rattle of chairs, being brought to the window, and men were mounting softly to secure him; a coarse hand stole towards his ankle; he took a swift step and sprang desperately on to the next ledge:—it was an old manor house, and these ledges were nearly a foot broad:—from this one he bounded to the next, and then to a third, the last but one on this side of the building; the corner ledge was but half the size, and offered no safe footing: but close to it he saw the outside leaves of a tree. That tree then must grow close to the corner; could he but get round to it he might yet reach the ground whole. Urged by that terror of a madhouse, which is natural to a sane man, and in England is fed by occasional disclosures, and the general

suspicion they excite, he leaped on to a piece of stone no bigger than one's hat, and then whirled himself round into the tree, all eyes to see and claws to grasp.

It was a weeping ash: he could get hold of nothing but soft yielding slivers, that went through his fingers, and so down with him like a bulrush, and souse he went with his hands full of green leaves over head and ears into the water of an enormous iron tank that fed the baths.

The heavy plunge, the sudden cold water, the instant darkness, were appalling: yet, like the fox among the hounds, the gallant young gentleman did not lose heart nor give tongue. He came up gurgling and gasping, and swimming for his life in manly silence: he swam round and round the edge of the huge tank trying in vain to get a hold upon its cold rusty walls. He heard whistles and voices about: they came faint to him where he was, but he knew they could not be very far off.

Life is sweet. It flashed across him how, a few years before, an university man of great promise had perished miserably in a tank on some Swiss mountain, a tank placed for the comfort of travellers. He lifted his eyes to Heaven in despair, and gave one great sob.

Then he turned upon his back and floated: but he was obliged to paddle with his hands a little to keep up.

A window opened a few feet above him, and a face peered out between the bars.

Then he gave all up for lost, and looked to hear a voice denounce him: but no; the livid face and staring eyes at the window took no notice of him: it was a maniac, whose eyes, bereft of reason, conveyed no images to the sentient brain: only by some half vegetable instinct this darkened man was turning towards the morning sun, and staring it full in the face; Alfred saw the rays strike and sparkle on those glassy orbs, and fire them; yet they never so much as winked. He was appalled yet fascinated by this weird sight: could not take his eyes off it, and shuddered at it in the very water. With such creatures as that he must be confined, or die miserably like a mouse in a basin of water.

He hesitated between two horrors.

Presently his foot struck something, and he found it was a large pipe that entered the tank to the distance of about a foot. This pipe was not more than three feet under water, and Alfred soon contrived to get upon it, and rest his fingers upon the iron edge of the tank. The position was painful: yet so he determined to remain till night: and then, if possible, steal away. Every faculty of mind and body was strung up to defend himself against the wretches who had entrapped him.

He had not been long in this position, when voices approached, and next the shadow of a ladder moved across the wall towards him. The keepers were going to search his pitiable hiding-place. They knew, what he did not, that there was no outlet from the premises: so now, having hunted every other corner and cranny, they came by what is called the exhaustive process of reasoning to this tank; and when they got near it, something in the appearance of the tree caught the gar-

dæner's quick eye. Alfred quaking heard him say, "Look here! He is not far from this."

Another voice said, "Then the Lord have mercy on him; why there's seven foot of water; I measured it last night."

At this Alfred was conscious of a movement and a murmur, that proved humanity was not extinct; and the ladder was fixed close to the tank, and feet came hastily up it.

Alfred despaired.

But, as usual with spirits so quickwitted and resolute, it was but for a moment. "One man in his time plays many animals;" he caught at the words he had heard, and played the game the jackal desperate plays in India, the fox in England, the elephant in Ceylon: he feigned death; filled his mouth with water, floated on his back paddling imperceptibly, and half closed his eyes.

He was rewarded by a loud shout of dismay just above his head, and very soon another ladder was placed on the other side, and with ropes and hands he was drawn out and carried down the ladder: he took this opportunity to discharge the water from his mouth; on which a coarse voice said, "Look there! *His* troubles are at an end."

However, they laid him on the grass, and sent for the doctor; then took off his coat and one of them began to feel his heart to see whether there was any pulsation left: he found it thumping. "Look out," he cried in some alarm; "he's shamming Abraham."

But, before the words were well uttered, Alfred, who was a practised gymnast, bounded off the ground without touching it with his hands, and fled like a deer towards the front of the house: for he remembered the open iron gate: the attendants followed shouting, and whistle answered whistle all over the grounds. Alfred got safe to the iron gate: alas! it had been closed at the first whistle twenty minutes ago. He turned in rage and desperation, and the head-keeper, a powerful man, was rushing incautiously upon him. Alfred instantly steadied himself, and with his long arm caught the man in full career a left-handed blow like the kick of a pony, that laid his cheek open and knocked him stupid and staggering; he followed it up like lightning with his right, and, throwing his whole weight into this second blow, sent the staggering man to grass; slipped past another, and skirting the south side of the house got to the tank again well in advance of his pursuers, seized the ladder, carried it to the garden wall, and was actually half way up it, and saw the open country and liberty, when the ladder was dragged away and he fell heavily to the ground, and a keeper threw himself bodily on him. Alfred half expected this, and drawing up his foot in time, dashed it furiously in the coming face, actually knocking the man backwards; another kneeled on his chest; Alfred caught him by the throat so felly that he lost all power, and they rolled over and over together, and Alfred got clear and ran for it again, and got on the middle of the lawn, and hallooed to the house:—"Hy! hy! Are there any more sane men imprisoned there? come out, and fight for your lives!" Instantly the open windows were filled with white faces, some grinning, some exulting, all greatly excited; and a hideous uproar shook the whole place—for the poor souls were all sane in their own opinion—and the whole force of attendants, two of them bleeding profusely from his blows, made

a cordon and approached him; but he was too cunning to wait to be fairly surrounded; he made his rush at an under-keeper, feinted at his head, caught him a heavy blow in the pit of the stomach, doubled him up in a moment, and off again, leaving the man on his knees vomiting and groaning. Several mild maniacs ran out in vast agitation and, to curry favour, offered to help catch him. Vast was their zeal. But when it came to the point, they only danced wildly about and cried "Stop him! for God's sake stop him! he's ill, dreadfully ill; poor wretch! knock out his brains!" And, when ever he came near them, away they ran whining like kicked curs.

Mrs. Archbold, looking out at a window, advised them all to let him alone, and she would come out and persuade him. But they would not be advised: they chased him about the lawn; but so swift of foot was he, and so long in the reach, that no one of them could stop him, nor indeed come near him, without getting a facer that came like a flash of lightning.

At last, however, they got so well round him, he saw his chance was gone: he took off his hat to Mrs. Archbold at the window, and said quietly, "I surrender to *you*, madam."

At these words they rushed on him rashly; on this he planted two blows right and left, swift as a cat attacked by dogs; administered two fearful black eyes, and instantly folded his arms, saying haughtily, "It was to the lady I yielded, not to you fellows."

They seized him, shook their fists in his face, cursed him, and pinned him; he was quite passive: they handcuffed him, and drove him before them, shoving him every now and then roughly by the shoulders. He made no resistance, spoke no word. They took him to the strong-room, and manacled his ankles together with an iron hobble, and then strapped them to the bed-posts, and fastened his body down by broad bands of ticking with leathern straps at the ends: and so left him more helpless than a swaddled infant. The hurry and excitement of defence were over, and a cold stupor of misery came down and sat like lead on him. He lay mute as death in his gloomy cell, a tomb within a living tomb. And, as he lay, deeper horror grew and grew in his dilating eyes: gusts of rage swept over him, shook him, and passed: then gusts of despairing tenderness; all came and went, but his bonds. What would his Julia think? If he could only let her know! At this thought he called, he shouted, he begged for a messenger; there was no reply. The cry of a dangerous lunatic from the strong-room was less heeded here than a bark from any dog-kennel in Christendom. "This is my father's doing," he said. "Curse him! Curse him! Curse him!" and his brain seemed on fire, his temples throbbed: he vowed to God to be revenged on his father.

Then he writhed at his own meanness in coming to visit a servant, and his folly in being caught by so shallow an artifice. He groaned aloud. The clock in the hall struck ten. There was just time to get back if they would lend him a conveyance. He shouted, he screamed, he prayed. He offered terms humbly, piteously; he would forgive his father, forgive them all, he would say no more about the money, would do anything, consent to anything, if they would only let him keep faith with his Julia: they had better consent, and not provoke his vengeance. "Have mercy on me!" he cried. "Don't make me insult her I love

They will all be waiting for me. It is my wedding-day; you can't have known it is my wedding-day; fiends, monsters, I tell you it is my wedding-day. Oh pray send the lady to me; she can't be all stone, and my misery might melt a stone." He listened for an answer, he prayed for an answer. There was none. Once in a mad-house, the sanest man is mad, however interested and barefaced the motive of the relative who has brought two of the most venal class upon the earth to sign away his wits behind his back: and once hobbled and strapped, he is a *dangerous* maniac, for just so many days, weeks, or years, as the hobbles, handcuffs, and jacket happen to be left upon him by inhumanity, economy, or simple carelessness. Poor Alfred's cries and prayers were heard: but no more noticed than the night howl of a wolf on some distant mountain. All was sullen silence, but the grating tongue of the clock, which told the victim of a legislature's shallowness and a father's avarice that Time, deaf to his woe, as were the walls the men the women and the cutting bands, was stealing away with iron finger his last chance of meeting his beloved at the altar.

He closed his eyes, and saw her lovelier than ever, dressed all in white, waiting for him with sweet concern in that peerless face. "Julia! Julia!" he cried, with a loud heart-broken cry. The half-hour struck. At that he struggled, he writhed, he bounded: he made the very room shake, and lacerated his flesh; but that was all. No answer. No motion. No help. No hope.

The perspiration rolled down his steaming body. The tears burst from his young eyes and ran down his cheeks. He sobbed, and sobbing almost choked, so tight were his linen bands upon his bursting bosom.

He lay still exhausted.

The clock ticked harshly on: the rest was silence. With this miserable exception; ever and anon the victim's jammed body shuddered so terribly it shook and rattled the iron bedstead, and told of the storm within, the agony of the racked and all foreboding soul.

For then rolled over that young head hours of mortal anguish that no tongue of man can utter, nor pen can shadow. Chained sane amongst the mad; on his wedding-day; expecting with tied hands the sinister acts of the soul-murderers who had the power to make their lie a truth! We can paint the body writhing vainly against its unjust bonds; but who can paint the loathing, agonised, soul in a mental situation so ghastly? For my part I feel it in my heart of hearts; but am impotent to convey it to others; impotent, impotent.

Pray think of it for yourselves, men and women, if you have not *sworn* never to think over a novel. Think of it for your own sakes; Alfred's turn to-day, it may be yours to-morrow.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

At two o'clock an attendant stole on tiptoe to the strong-room, unlocked the door, and peeped cautiously in. Seeing the dangerous maniac quiet, he entered with a plate of lukewarm beef and potatoes, and told him bluntly to eat. The crushed one said he could not eat. "You must," said the man. "Eat!" said Alfred; "of what do you think I am made?

Pray put it down and listen to me. I'll give you a hundred pounds to let me out of this place; two hundred; three."

A coarse laugh greeted this proposal. "You might as well have made it a thousand when you was about it."

"So I will," said Alfred, eagerly, "and thank you on my knees besides. Ah, I see you don't believe I have money. I give you my honour I have ten thousand pounds: it was settled on me by my grandfather, and I came of age last week."

"Oh, that's like enough," said the man carelessly. "Well, you *are* green. Do you think them as sent you here will let you spend your money? No, your money is theirs now."

And he sat down with the plate on his knee and began to cut the meat in small pieces; while his careless words entered Alfred's heart, and gave him such a glimpse of sinister motives and dark acts to come as set him shuddering.

"Come, none o' that," said the man, suspecting this shudder; he thought it was the prologue to some desperate act; for all a chained madman does is read upon this plan; his terror passes for rage, his very sobs for snarls.

"Oh, be honest with me," said Alfred imploringly: "do you think it is to steal my money the wretch has stolen my liberty?"

"What wretch?"

"My father."

"I know nothing about it," said the man sullenly: "in course there's mostly money behind, when young gents like you come to be took care of. But you mustn't go thinking of that, or you'll excite yourself again; come, you eat your vittles like a Christian, and no more about it."

"Leave it, that is a good fellow; and then I'll try and eat a little by-and-by. But my grief is great—oh Julia! Julia!—what shall I do? And I am not used to eat at this time. Will you, my good fellow?"

"Well I will, now you behave like a gentleman," said the man.

Then Alfred coaxed him to take off the handcuffs. He refused, but ended by doing it; and so left him.

Four more leaden hours rolled by, and then this same attendant (his name was Brown) brought him a cup of tea. It was welcome to his parched throat; he drank it, and ate a mouthful of the meat to please the man, and even asked for some more tea.

At eight four keepers came into his room, undressed him, compelled him to make his toilette, &c., before them, which put him to shame—being a gentleman—almost as much as it would a woman: they then hobbled him, and fastened his ankles to the bed, and put his hands into muffles, but did not confine his body; because they had lost a lucrative lodger only a month ago, throttled at night in a strait-waistcoat.

Alfred lay in this plight, and compared with anguish unspeakable his joyful anticipations of this night with the strange and cruel reality. "My wedding night! my wedding night!" he cried aloud, and burst into a passion of grief.

By-and-by he consoled himself a little with the hope that he could not long be incarcerated as a madman, being sane; and his good wit told him his only chance was calmness. He would go to sleep and recover composure to bear his wrongs with dignity, and quietly baffle his enemies.

Just as he was dropping off he felt something crawl over his face. Instinctively he made a violent motion to put his hands up. Both hands were confined, he could not move them. He bounded, he flung, he writhed. His little persecutors were quiet a moment, but the next they began again: in vain he rolled and writhed, and shuddered with loathing inexpressible. They crawled, they smelt, they bit.

Many a poor soul these little wretches had distracted with the very sleeplessness the madhouse professed to cure, not create. In conjunction with the opiates, the confinement and the gloom of Silverton House, they had driven many a feeble mind across the line that divides the weak and nervous from the unsound.

When he found there was no help, Alfred clenched his teeth and bore it:—"Bite on, ye little wretches," he said: "bite on, and divert my mind from deeper stings than yours—if you can."

And they did; a little.

Thus passed the night in mental agony, and bodily irritation and disgust. At daybreak the feasters on his flesh retired, and utterly worn out and exhausted he sank into a deep sleep.

At half-past seven the head keeper and three more came in, and made him dress before them. They handcuffed him, and took him down to breakfast in the noisy ward; set him down on a little bench by the wall like a naughty boy, and ordered a dangerous maniac to feed him.

The dangerous maniac obeyed, and went and sat beside Alfred with a basin of thick gruel and a great wooden spoon. He shovelled the gruel down his charge's throat mighty superciliously from the very first; and presently, falling into some favourite and absorbing train of thought, he fixed his eye on vacancy and handed the spoonfuls over his left shoulder with such rapidity and recklessness that it was more like sowing than feeding. Alfred cried out, "Quarter! I can't eat so fast as that, old fellow."

Something in his tone struck the maniac; he looked at Alfred full; Alfred looked at him in return, and smiled kindly but sadly.

"Hallo!" cried the maniac.

"What's up now?" said a keeper fiercely.

"Why this man is sane. As sane as I am."

At this there was a horse laugh.

"Saner," persisted the maniac; "for I am a little queer at times, you know."

"And no mistake, Jemmy. Now what makes you think he is sane?"

"Looked me full in the face, and smiled at me."

"Oh, that is your test, is it?"

"Yes it is. You try it on any of those mad beggars there and see if they can stand it."

"Who invented gunpowder?" said one of the insulted persons, looking as sly and malicious as a magpie going to steal.

Jemmy exploded directly: "I did, ye rascal, ye liar, ye rogue, ye Baconian!" and going higher, and higher, and higher in this strain, was very soon handcuffed with Alfred's handcuffs, and seated on Alfred's bench and tied to two rings in the wall. On this his martial ardour went down to zero: "Here is treatment, sir," said he piteously to Alfred. "I see you are a gentleman; now look at this. All spite and jealousy·

because I invented that invaluable substance, which has done so much to prolong human life and alleviate human misery."

Alfred was now ordered to feed Jemmy; which he did: so quickly were their parts inverted.

Directly after breakfast Alfred demanded to see the proprietor of the asylum.

Answer: Doesn't live here.

The Doctor then.

Oh, he has not come.

This monstrosity irritated Alfred: "Well, then," said he, "whoever it is that rules this den of thieves, when those two are out of it."

"I rule in Mr. Baker's absence," said the head keeper, "and I'll teach you manners, you young blackguard. Handcuff him."

In five minutes Alfred was handcuffed and flung into a padded room.

"Stay there till you know how to speak to your *betters*," said the head keeper.

Alfred walked up and down grinding his teeth with rage for five long hours.

Just before dinner Brown came and took him into a parlour, where Mrs. Archbold was seated writing. Brown retired. The lady finished what she was doing, and kept Alfred standing like a schoolboy going to be lectured. At last she said, "I have sent for you to give you a piece of advice: it is to try and make friends with the attendants."

"Me make friends with the scoundrels! I thirst for their lives. Oh, madam, I fear I shall kill somebody here."

"Foolish boy; they are too strong for you. Your worst enemies could wish nothing worse for you than that you should provoke *them*." In saying these words she was so much more kind and womanly that Alfred conceived hopes, and burst out, "Oh, madam, you are human then; you seem to pity me; pray give me pen and paper, and let me write to my friends to get me out of this terrible place; do not refuse me."

Mrs. Archbold resumed her distant manner without apparent effort: she said nothing, but she placed writing materials before him. She then left the room, and locked him in.

He wrote a few hasty ardent words to Julia, telling her how he had been entrapped, but not a word about his sufferings—he was too generous to give her needless pain—and a line to Edward, imploring him to come at once with a lawyer and an honest physician, and liberate him.

Mrs. Archbold returned soon after, and he asked her if she would lend him sealing-wax: "I dare not trust to an envelope in such a place as this," said he. She lent him sealing-wax.

"But how am I to post it?" said he.

"Easily: there is a box in the house; I will show you."

She took him and showed him the box: he put his letters into it, and in the ardour of his gratitude kissed her hand: she winced a little and said, "Mind, this is not by my advice; I would never tell my friends I had been in a madhouse; oh, never. I would be calm, make friends with the servants—they are the real masters—and never let a creature know where I had been."

"Oh, you don't know my Julia," said Alfred; "she will never desert

me, never think the worse of me because I have been entrapped illegally into a madhouse."

"Illegally, Mr. Hardie! you deceive yourself; Mr. Baker told me the order was signed by a relation, and the certificates by first-rate lunacy doctors."

"What on earth has that to do with it, madam, when I am as sane as you are?"

"It has everything to do with it. Mr. Baker could be punished for confining a madman in this house without an order and two certificates; but he couldn't for confining a sane person under an order and two certificates."

Alfred could not believe this, but she convinced him that it was so.

Then he began to fear he should be imprisoned for years: he turned pale, and looked at her so piteously, that to soothe him she told him sane people were never kept in asylums now; they only used to be.

"How can they?" said she. "The London asylums are visited four times a year by the commissioners, and the country asylums six times, twice by the commissioners, and four times by the justices. *We* shall be inspected this week or next; and then you can speak to the justices: mind and be calm; say it is a mistake; offer testimony; and ask either to be discharged at once or to have a commission of lunacy sit on you; ten to one your friends will not face public proceedings: but you *must* begin at the foundation, by making the servants friendly—and by—being calm." She then fixed her large grey eye on him and said, "Now if I let you dine with me and the first-class patients, will you pledge me your honour to 'be calm;' and not attempt to escape?" Alfred hesitated at that. Her eye dissected his character all the time. "I promise," said he at last with a deep sigh. "May I sit by you? There is something so repugnant in the very idea of mad people."

"Try and remember it is their misfortune, not their crime," said Mrs. Archbold, just like a matronly sister admonishing a brother from school.

She then whistled in a whisper for Brown, who was lurking about unseen all the time. He emerged and walked about with Alfred, and, by-and-by, looking down from a corridor, they saw Mrs. Archbold driving the second-class women before her to dinner like a flock of animals. Whenever one stopped to look at anything, or try and gossip, the philanthropic Archbold went at her just like a shepherd's dog at a refractory sheep, caught her by the shoulders, and drove her squeaking, headlong.

At dinner Alfred was so fortunate as to sit opposite a gentleman, who nodded and grinned at him all dinner with a horrible leer. He could not, however, enjoy this to the full for a little distraction at his elbow: his right hand neighbour kept forking pieces out of his plate and substituting others from his own; there was even a tendency to gristle in the latter. Alfred remonstrated gently at first; the gentleman forbore a minute, then recommenced; Alfred laid a hand very quietly on his wrist and put it back. Mrs. Archbold's quick eye surprised this gesture: "What is the matter there?" said she.

"Oh, nothing serious, madam," replied Alfred: "only this gentleman does me the honour to prefer the contents of my plate to his own."

"Mr. Cooper!" said the Archbold sternly.

Cooper, the head keeper, pounced on the offender, seized him roughly by the collar, dragged him from the table, knocking his chair down, and bundled him out of the room with ignominy and fracas, in spite of a remonstrance from Alfred, "Oh, don't be so rough with the poor man."

Then the novice laid down his knife and fork, and ate no more. "I am grieved at my own ill nature in complaining of such a trifle," said he when all was quiet.

The company stared considerably at this remark; it seemed to them a most morbid perversion of sensibility; for the deranged, thin-skinned beyond conception in their own persons, and alive to the shadow of the shade of a wrong, are stoically indifferent to the woes of others.

Though Alfred was quiet as a lamb all day, the attendants returned him to the padded room at night, because he had been there last night; but they only fastened one ankle to the bed-post: so he encountered his Lilliputians on tolerably fair terms—numbers excepted; they swarmed. Unable to sleep, he put out his hand and groped for his clothes. But they were outside the door, according to rule.

Day broke at last: and he took his breakfast quietly with the first-class patients. It consisted of cool tea in small basins instead of cups, and table-spoons instead of tea-spoons; and thick slices of stale bread thinly buttered. A few patients had gruel or porridge instead of tea. After breakfast Alfred sat in the first-class patients' room and counted the minutes and the hours till Edward should come. After dinner he counted the hours till tea-time. Nobody came; and he went to bed in such grief and disappointment as some men live to eighty without ever knowing.

But when two o'clock came next day, and no Edward, and no reply, then the distress of his soul deepened. He implored Mrs. Archbold to tell him what was the cause. She shook her head and said gravely, it was but too common; a man's nearest and dearest were very apt to hold aloof from him the moment he was put into an asylum.

Here an old lady put in her word. "Ah, sir, you must not hope to hear from anybody in this place. Why, I have been two years writing and writing, and can't get a line from my own daughter. To be sure she is a fine lady now: but it was her poor neglected mother that pinched and pinched to give her a good education, and that is how she caught a good husband. But it's my belief the post in our hall isn't a real post: but only a box; and I think it is contrived so as the letters fall down a pipe into that Baker's hands, and so then when the postman comes——"

The Archbold bent her bushy brows on this chatty personage. "Be quiet, Mrs. Dent; y u are talking nonsense, and exciting yourself: you know you are not to speak on that topic. Take care."

The poor old woman was shut up like a knife; for the Archbold had a way of addressing her own sex that crushed them. The change was almost comically sudden to the mellow tones in which she addressed Alfred the very next moment, on the very same subject: "Mr. Baker, I believe, sees the letters: and, where our poor patients (with a glance at Dent) write in such a way as to wound and perhaps terrify those who are in reality their best friends, they are not always sent. But I conclude

*your* letters have gone. If you feel you can be calm, why not ask Mr. Baker? He is in the house now; for a wonder."

Alfred promised to be calm; and she got him an interview with Mr. Baker.

He was a full-blown pawnbroker of Silverton town, whom the legislature, with that keen knowledge of human nature which marks the British senate, permitted, and still permits, to speculate in Insanity, stipulating however that the upper servant of all in his asylum should be a doctor; but omitting to provide against the instant dismissal of the said doctor should he go and rob his employer of a lodger—by curing a patient.

As you are not the British legislature, I need not tell you that to this pawnbroker insanity mattered nothing, nor sanity: his trade lay in catching, and keeping, and stinting, as many lodgers, sane or insane, as he could hold.

There are certain formulæ in these quiet retreats, which naturally impose upon greenhorns such as Alfred certainly was, and some visiting justices and lunacy commissioners would seem to be. Baker had been a lodging-house keeper for certified people many years, and knew all the formulæ: some call them dodges: but these must surely be vulgar minds.

Baker worked "the see-saw formula:"

"Letters, young gentleman?" said he: "they are not in my department. They go into the surgery, and are passed by the doctor, except those he examines and orders to be detained."

Alfred demanded the doctor.

"He is gone," was the reply. (Formula.)

Alfred found it as hard to be calm, as some people find it easy to say that word over the wrongs *of others*.

The next day, but not till the afternoon, he caught the doctor: "My letters! Surely, sir, you have not been so cruel as to intercept them?"

"I intercept no letters," said the doctor, as if scandalised at the very idea. "I see who writes them, and hand them to Mr. Baker, with now and then a remark. If any are detained, the responsibility rests with him."

"He says it rests with you."

"You must have misunderstood him."

"Not at all, sir. One thing is clear; my letters have been stolen either by him or you; and I will know which."

The doctor parried with a formula.

"You are *excited*, Mr. Hardie. Be calm, sir, be calm: or you will be here all the long year."

All Alfred obtained by this interview was a powerful opiate. The head keeper brought it him in bed. He declined to take it. The man whistled, and the room filled with keepers.

"Now," said Cooper, "down with it, or you'll have to be drenched with this cowhorn."

"You had better take it, sir," said Brown; "the doctor has ordered it you."

"The doctor? Well, let me see the doctor about it."

"He is gone."

"He never ordered it me," said Alfred. Then fixing his eyes sternly on Cooper, "You miscreants, you want to poison me. No, I will not take it. Murder! murder!"

Then ensued a struggle, on which I draw a veil: but numbers won the day, with the help of handcuffs and a cowhorn.

Brown went and told Mrs. Archbold, and what Alfred had said.

"Don't be alarmed," said that strong-minded lady: "it is only one of the old fool's composing draughts. It will spoil the poor boy's sleep for one night, that is all. Go to him the first thing in the morning."

About midnight Alfred was seized with a violent headache and fever: towards morning he was light-headed, and Brown found him loud and incoherent: only he returned often to an expression Mr. Brown had never heard before—

"Justifiable parricide. Justifiable parricide. Justifiable parricide."

Most people dislike new phrases. Brown ran to consult Mrs. Archbold about this one. After the delay inseparable from her sex she came in a morning wrapper; and they found Alfred leaning over the bed and bleeding violently at the nose. They were a good deal alarmed, and tried to stop it: but Alfred was quite sensible now, and told them it was doing him good:—

"I can manage to see now," he said: "a little while ago I was blind with the poison."

They unstrapped his ankle and made him comfortable, and Mrs. Archbold sent Brown for a cup of strong coffee and a glass of brandy. He tossed them off, and soon after fell into a deep sleep that lasted till tea-time. This sleep the poor doctor ascribed to the sedative effect of his opiate. It *was* the natural exhaustion consequent on the morbid excitement caused by his cursed opiate.

"Brown," said Mrs. Archbold, "if Dr. Bailey prescribes again let me know. He shan't square *this* patient with his certificates, whilst I am here."

This was a shrewd, but uncharitable, speech of hers. Dr. Bailey was not such a villain as that.

He was a less depraved, and more dangerous, animal: he was a fool.

The farrago he had administered would have done an excited maniac no good of course, but no great harm. It was dangerous to a sane man: and Alfred to the naked eye was a sane man. But then Bailey had no naked eye left: he had been twenty years an M.D. The certificates of Wycherley and Speers were the green spectacles he wore—very green ones—whenever he looked at Alfred Hardie.

Perhaps in time he will forget those certificates, and, on his spectacles dropping off, he will see Alfred is sane. If he does, he will publish him as one of his most remarkable *cures*.

Meanwhile the whole treatment of this ill-starred young gentleman gravitated towards insanity. The inner mind was exasperated by barefaced injustice and oppression; above all, by his letters being stopped; for that convinced him both Baker and Bailey, with their see-saw evasions, knew he was sane, and dreaded a visit from honest, understanding men: and the mind's external organ, the brain, which an asylum professes to soothe, was steadily undermined by artificial sleeplessness. A man can't sleep in irons till he is used to them: and, when

Alfred was relieved of these, his sleep was still driven away by biting insects and barking dogs, two opiates provided in many of these placid Retreats, with a view to the permanence, rather than the comfort, of the lodgers.

On the eighth day Alfred succeeded at last in an object he had steadily pursued for some time: he caught the two see-saw humbugs together.

"Now," said he, "*you* say *he* intercepts my letters; and *he* says it is *you* who do it. Which is the truth?"

They were staggered, and he followed up his advantage: "Look me in the face, gentlemen," said he. "Can you pretend you do not know I am sane? Ah, you turn your heads away. You can only tell this barefaced lie behind my back. Do you believe in God, and in a judgment to come? Then, if you cannot release me, at least don't be such scoundrels as to stop my letters, and so swindle me out of a fair trial, an open, public trial."

The doctor parried with a formula. "Publicity would be the greatest misfortune could befal you. Pray be calm."

Now, an asylum is a place not entirely exempt from prejudices: and one of them is, that any sort of appeal to God Almighty is a sign or else forerunner of maniacal excitement.

These philosophers forget that by stopping letters, evading public trials, and, in a word, cutting off all appeals to human justice, they compel the patient to turn his despairing eyes, and lift his despairing voice to Him, whose eye alone can ever really penetrate these dark abodes.

However the patient who appealed to God above a whisper in Silverton Grove House used to get soothed directly. And the tranquillising influences employed were morphia, croton oil, or a blister.

The keeper came to Alfred in his room. "Doctor has ordered a blister."

"What for? Send for him directly."

"He is gone."

This way of ordering torture, and then coolly going, irritated Alfred beyond endurance. Though he knew he should soon be powerless, he showed fight; made his mark as usual on a couple of his zealous attendants; but not having room to work in was soon overpowered, hobbled, and handcuffed: then they cut off his hair, and put a large blister on the top of his head.

The obstinate brute declined to go mad. They began to respect him for this tenacity of purpose; a decent bedroom was allotted him; his portmanteau and bag were brought him, and he was let walk every day on the lawn with a keeper, only there were no ladders left about, and the trap-door was locked; i.e. the iron gate.

On one of these occasions he heard the gatekeeper whistle three times consecutively; his attendant followed suit, and hurried Alfred into the house, which soon rang with treble signals.

"What is it?" inquired Alfred.

"The visiting justices are in sight: go into your room, please."

"Yes, I'll go," said Alfred, affecting cheerful compliance, and the man ran off.

The whole house was in a furious bustle. All the hobbles, and chains, and instruments of restraint, were hastily collected and bundled out of sight, and clean sheets were being put on many a filthy bed whose occupant had never slept in sheets since he came there, when two justices arrived and were shown into the drawing-room.

During the few minutes they were detained there by Mrs. Archbold, who was mistress of her whole business, quite a new face was put on everything and everybody; ancient cobwebs fell; soap and water explored unwonted territories: the harshest attendants began practising pleasant looks and kind words on the patients, to get into the way of it, so that it might not come too abrupt and startle the patients visibly under the visitors' eyes: something like actors working up a factitious sentiment at the wing for the public display, or like a racehorse's preliminary canter. Alfred's heart beat with joy inexpressible. He had only to keep calm, and this was his last day at Silverton Grove. The first thing he did was to make a careful toilet.

The stinginess of relations, and the greed of madhouse proprietors, make many a patient look ten times madder than he is, by means of dress. Clothes wear out in an asylum, and are not always taken off, though Agriculture has long and justly claimed them for her own. And when it is no longer possible to refuse the Reverend Mad Tom or Mrs. Crazy Jane some new raiment, then consanguineous munificence does not go to Poole or Elise, but oftener to paternal or maternal wardrobes, and even to the ancestral chest, the old oak one, singing:

"Poor things, they are out of the world: what need for them to be in the fashion!" (Formula.)

This arrangement keeps the bump of self-esteem down, especially in women, and so co-operates with many other little arrangements to perpetuate the lodger.

Silverton Grove in particular was supplied with the grotesque in dress from an inexhaustible source. Whenever money was sent Baker to buy a patient a suit, he went from his lunacy shop to his pawnbroker's, dived headlong into unredeemed pledges, dressed his patient as gentlemen are dressed to reside in cherry-trees; and pocketed five hundred per cent. on the double transaction. Now Alfred had already observed that many of the patients looked madder than they were—thanks to short trousers and petticoats, holey gloves, ear-cutting shirt-collars, frilled bosoms, shoes made for, and declined by, the very infantry: coats short in the waist and long in the sleeves, coalscuttle bonnets, and grandmaternal caps. So he made his toilet with care, and put his best hat on to hide his shaven crown. He then kept his door ajar, and waited for a chance of speaking to the justices. One soon came; a portly old gentleman, with a rubicund face and honest eye, walked slowly along the corridor, looking as wise as he could, cringed on by Cooper and Dr. Bailey; the latter had arrived post haste, and Baker had been sent for. Alfred came out, touched his hat respectfully, and begged a private interview with the magistrate. The old gentleman bowed politely, for Alfred's dress, address, and countenance, left no suspicion of insanity possible in an unprejudiced mind.

But the doctor whispered in his ear, "Take care,

Now this is one of the most effective of the

asylum. How can an inexperienced stranger know for certain that such a statement is a falsehood? and even the just do not love justice—*to others*—quite so well as they love their own skins. So Squire Tollett very naturally declined a private interview with Alfred; and even drew back a step, and felt uneasy at being so near him. Alfred implored him not to be imposed upon. "An honest man does not whisper," said he. "Do not let him poison your mind against me; on my honour I am as sane as you are, and he knows it. Pray, pray use your own eyes, and ears, sir, and give yourself a chance of discovering the truth in this stronghold of lies."

"Don't excite yourself, Mr. Hardie," put in the doctor, parentally. (Formula.)

"Don't you interrupt me, doctor; I am as calm as you are. Calmer; for, see, you are pale at this moment; that is with fear that your wickedness in detaining a sane man here is going to be exposed. Oh, sir," said he, turning to the justice, "fear no violence from me, not even angry words; my misery is too deep for irritation, or excitement. I am an Oxford man, sir, a prize man, an Ireland scholar. But, unfortunately for me, my mother left me ten thousand pounds, and a heart. I love a lady whose name I will not pollute by mentioning it in this den of thieves. My father is the well-known banker, bankrupt, and cheat, of Barkington. He has wasted his own money, and now covets his neighbour's and his son's. He had me entrapped here on my wedding-day, to get hold of my money, and rob me of her I love. I appeal to you, sir, to discharge me; or, if you have not so much confidence in your own judgment as to do that, then I demand a commission of lunacy, and a public inquiry."

Dr. Bailey said, "That would be a most undesirable exposure, both to yourself and your friends." (Formula.)

"It is only the guilty who fear the light, sir," was the prompt reply.

Mr. Tollett said he thought the patient had a legal right to a commission of lunacy if there was property, and he took note of the application. He then asked Alfred if he had any complaint to make of the food, the beds, or the attendants.

"Sir," said Alfred, "I leave those complaints to the insane ones: with me the gigantic wrong drives out the petty worries. I cannot feel my stings for my deep wound."

"Oh, then, you admit you are not treated *unkindly* here?"

"I admit nothing of the kind, sir. I merely decline to encumber your memory with petty injuries, when you are good enough to inquire into a monstrous one."

"Now that is very sensible and considerate," said Mr. Tollett. "I will see you, sir, again before we leave."

With this promise Alfred was obliged to be content. He retired respectfully, and the justice said, "He seems as sane as I am." The doctor smiled. The justice observed it, and not aware that this smile was a formula, as much so as a prize-fighter's or a ballet-dancer's, began to doubt a little: he reflected a moment, then asked who had signed the certificates.

"Dr. Wycherley for one."

"Dr. Wycherley? that is a great authority.

"One of the greatest in the country, sir."

"Oh, then one would think he must be more or less deranged."

"Dangerously so at times. But in his lucid intervals you never saw a more quiet gentlemanly creature." (Formula.)

"How sad!"

"Very. He is my most interesting patient (formula), though terribly violent at times. Would you like to see the medical journal about him."

"Yes; by-and-by."

The inspection then continued: the inspector admired the clean sheets that covered the beds, all of them dirty, some filthy: and asked the more reasonable patients to speak freely and say if they had any complaint to make. This question being with the usual sagacity of public inspectors put in the presence of Cooper and the doctor, who stuck to Tollett like wax, the mad people all declared they were very kindly treated: the reason they were so unanimous was this: they knew by experience that, if they told the truth, the justices could not at once remedy their discomforts, whereas the keepers, the very moment the justices left the house, would knock them down, beat them, shake them, strait-jacket them, and starve them: and the doctor, less merciful, would doctor them. So they shook in their shoes, and vowed they were very comfortable in Silverton Grove.

Thus, in later days, certain Commissioners of Lunacy inspecting Accomb House, extracted nothing from Mrs. Turner, but that she was happy and comfortable under the benignant sway of Metcalf the mild—there present. It was only by a miracle the public learned the truth: and miracles are rare.

Meantime, Alfred had a misgiving. The plausible doctor had now Squire Tollett's ear, and Tollett was old, and something about him reminded the Oxonian of a trait his friend Horace had detected in old age:

> Vel quòd res omnes timidè gelidè que ministrat.
> Dilator, spe longus, iners, &c.

He knew there was another justice in the house, but he knew also he should not be allowed to get speech with him, if by cunning or force it could be prevented. He kept his door ajar. Presently Nurse Hannah came bustling along with an apronful of things, and let herself into a vacant room hard by. This Hannah was a young woman with a pretty and rather babyish face, diversified by a thick biceps muscle in her arm that a blacksmith need not have blushed for. And I suspect it was this masculine charm, and not her feminine features, that had won her the confidence of Baker and Co., and the respect of his female patients; big or little, excited or not excited, there was not one of them this bicipital baby-face could not pin by the wrists, and twist her helpless into a strong-room, or handcuff her unaided in a moment; and she did it too on slight provocation. Nurse Hannah seldom came into Alfred's part of the house; but when she did meet him, she generally gave him a kind look in passing; and he had resolved to speak to her, and try if he could touch her conscience, or move her pity. He saw what

she was at, but was too politic to detect her openly and irritate her. He drew back a step, and said softly, "Nurse Hannah! Are you there?"

"Yes, I am here," said she sharply, and came out of the room hastily: and shut it. "What do you want, sir?"

Alfred clasped his hands together. "If you are a woman have pity on me."

She was taken by surprise. "What can I do?" said she in some agitation. "I am only a servant."

"At least tell me where I can find the Visiting Justice, before the keepers stop me."

"Hush! Speak lower," said Hannah. "You *have* complained to one, haven't you?"

"Yes. But he seems a feeble old fogy. Where is the other? Oh, pray tell me?"

"I mustn't: I mustn't. In the noisy ward. There, run."

And run he did.

Alfred was lucky enough to get safe into the noisy ward without being intercepted. And then he encountered a sunburnt gentleman, under thirty, in a riding-coat, with a hunting-whip in his hand: it was Mr. Vane, a Tory squire and large landholder in the county.

Now, as Alfred entered at one door, Baker himself came in at the other, and they nearly met at Vane. But Alfred saluted him first, and begged respectfully for an interview.

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Vane.

"Take care, sir; he is dangerous," whispered Baker. Instantly Mr. Vane's countenance changed. But this time Alfred overheard the formula, and said quietly: "Don't believe him, sir. I am not dangerous; I am as sane as any man in England. Pray examine me, and judge for yourself."

"Ah, that is his delusion," said Baker. "Come, Mr. Hardie, I allow you great liberties, but you abuse them. You really must not monopolise his Worship with your fancies. Consider, sir, you are not the only patient he has to examine."

Alfred's heart sank: he turned a look of silent agony on Mr. Vane.

Mr. Vane, either touched by that look, or irritated by Baker's pragmatical interference, or perhaps both, looked that person coolly in the face, and said sternly: "Be silent, sir; and let *the gentleman* speak to me."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

ALFRED thus encouraged told his story with forced calmness, and without a word too much. Indeed, so clear and telling was the narrative, and the logic so close, that incoherent patients one or two stole up and listened with wonder and a certain dreamy complacency; the bulk, however held aloof apathetic: inextricably wrapped in fictitious Autobiography.

His story told, Alfred offered the Dodds in evidence that the fourteen thousand pounds was no illusion; and referred to his sister and several

friends as witnesses to his sanity, and said the letters he wrote were all stopped in the asylum: and why? That no honest man or woman might know where he was.

He ended by convincing Mr. Vane he was a sane and injured man, and his father a dark designing person.

Mr. Vane asked him whether he had any other revelations to make. Alfred replied, "Not on my own account, but for the sake of those afflicted persons who are here for life. Well, the beds want repaving; the vermin thinning; the instruments of torture want abolishing, instead of hiding for an hour or two when you happen to come: what do the patients gain by that? The madmen dare not complain to you, sir; because the last time one did complain to the justices (it was Mr. Petworth), they had no sooner passed through the iron gate, than Cooper made an example of him; felled him with his fist, and walked up and down him on his knees, crying, 'I'll teach you to complain to the justices.' But one or two gentlemanly madmen, who soon found out that I am not one of *them*, have complained to *me* that the attendants wash them too much like Hansom cabs, strip them naked, and mop them on the flag-stones, then fling on their clothes without drying them. They say, too, that the meat is tough and often putrid, the bread stale, the butter rancid, the vegetables stinted, since they can't be adulterated; and as for sleep it is hardly known; for the beds are so short your feet stick out; insects, without a name to ears polite, but highly odoriferous and profoundly carnivorous, bite you all night; and dogs howl eternally outside; and, when exhausted nature defies even these enemies of rest, then the doctor, who seems to be in the pay of Insanity, claps you on a blister by brute force, and so drives away sleep, Insanity's cure, or hocuses you by brute force as he did me, and so steals your sleep, and tries to steal your reason, with his opium, henbane, morphia, and other tremendous brain-stealers. With such a potion, sir, administered by violence, he gave me in one night a burning fever, headache, loss of sight, and bleeding at the nose; as Mrs. Archbold will tell you. Oh look into these things, sir, in pity to those whom Heaven has afflicted: to me they are but strokes with a feather; I am a sane man torn from love and happiness, and confined among the mad; discomfort is nothing to me; comfort is nothing; you can do nothing for me but restore me to my dignity as a man, my liberty as a Briton, and the rights as a citizen I have been swindled out of by a fraudulent bankrupt and his tools, two venal doctors, who never saw me but for one five minutes, but came to me ready bribed at a guinea apiece, and so signed away my wits behind my back."

"Now, Mr. Baker," said Vane, "what do you say to all this?"

Baker smiled with admirable composure, and replied with crafty moderation, "He is a gentleman, and believes every word he says; but it is all his delusions. Why, to begin, sir, his father has nothing to do with putting him in here; nothing on earth. (Alfred started; then smiled incredulous.) And, in the next place, there are no instruments of restraint here, but two pair of handcuffs and two strait-jackets, and these never hardly used; we trust to the padded rooms, you know. And, sir," said he, getting warm, which instantly affected his pronunciation, "if there's a hinsect in the ouse, I'll heat im."

Delusion is a big word, especially in a mad-house; it overp visitor's understanding. Mr. Vane was staggered. Alfred, whos eyes were never off his face, saw this with dismay, and feeling t he failed in the simpler matter, he should be sure to fail in establis his sanity, he said with inward anxiety, though with outward calm "Suppose we test these delusions?"

"With all my heart," said Vane.

Baker's countenance fell.

"Begin with the instruments of restraint. Find me them."

Baker's countenance brightened up; he had no fear of their being found.

"I will," said Alfred; "please to follow me."

Baker grinned with anticipated triumph.

Alfred led the way to a bedroom near his own; and asked Mr. Baker to unlock it. Baker had not the key; no more had Cooper; the latter was sent for it; he returned, saying the key was mislaid.

"That I expected," said Alfred. "Send for the kitchen poker, sir: I'll soon unlock it."

"Fetch the kitchen poker," said Vane.

"Good gracious! sir," said Cooper; "he only wants that to knock all our brains out. You have no idea of his strength and ferocity."

"Well lied, Cooper," said Alfred, ironically.

"Fetch *me* the poker," said Vane.

Cooper went for it; and came back with the key instead.

The door was opened, and they all entered. Alfred looked under the bed. The rest stood round it.

There was nothing to be seen but a year's dust.

Alfred was dumb-foundered, and a cold perspiration began to gather on his brow. He saw at once a false move would be fatal to him.

"Well, sir," said Vane, grimly. "Where are they?"

Alfred caught sight of a small cupboard; he searched it; it was empty. Baker and Cooper grinned at his delusion, quietly, but so that Vane might see that formula. Alfred returned to the bed and shook it. Cooper and Baker left off grinning; Alfred's quick eye caught this, and he shook the bed violently, furiously.

"Ah!" said Mr. Vane, "I hear a chink."

"It is an iron bedstead, and old," suggested Baker.

Alfred tore off the bed-clothes, and then the mattress. Below the latter was a framework, and below the framework a receptacle about six inches deep, five feet long, and three broad, filled with chains, iron belts, wrist-locks, muffles, and screwlocked hobbles, &c.; a regular Inquisition.

If Baker had descended from the Kemble family, instead of rising from nothing, he could not have acted better. "Good Heavens!" cried he, "where do these come from? They must have been left here by the last proprietor."

Vane replied only by a look of contempt, and ordered Cooper to go and ask Mr. Tollett to come to him.

Alfred improved the interval. "Sir," said he, "all my delusions, fairly tested, will turn out like this."

"They *shall* be tested, sir; I give you my word."

Mr. Tollett came, and the two justices commenced a genuine scrutiny their first. They went now upon the true method, in which all these dark places ought to be inspected. They did not believe a word; they suspected everything; they examined patients apart, detected cruelty filth and vermin under philanthropic phrases and clean linen; and the upshot was they reprimanded Baker and the attendants severely, and told him his licence should never be renewed, unless at their next visit the whole asylum was reformed. They ordered all the iron body-belts, chains, leg-locks, wrist-locks, and muffs, to be put into Mr. Tollett's carriage, and concluded a long inspection by inquiring into Alfred's sanity: at this inquiry they did not allow Baker to be even present, but only Dr. Bailey.

First they read the order; and found it really was not Alfred's father who had put him into the asylum. Then they read the certificates, especially Wycherley's; it accused Alfred of headache, insomnia, nightly visions, a rooted delusion (pecuniary), a sudden aversion to an affectionate father; and at the doctor's last visit, a wild look (formula), great excitement, and threats of violence without any provocation to justify them. This overpowered the worthy squires' understandings, to begin. But they proceeded to examine the three books an asylum has to keep by law; the visitor's book, the case book, and the medical journal. All these were kept with the utmost looseness in Silverton House: as indeed they are in the very best of these places. However, by combining the scanty notices in the several books, they arrived at this total.

"Admitted April 11. Had a very wild look, and was much excited. Attempted suicide by throwing himself into a tank. Attacked the keepers, for rescuing him, with prodigious strength and violence. Refused food."

And some days after came an entry with his initials instead of his name, which was contrary to law. "A. H. Much excited. Threats. Ordered composing draught."

And a day or two after: "A. H. Excited. Blasphemous. Ordered blister."

The first entry, however, was enough. The doctor had but seen real facts through his green spectacles, and lo! "suicide," "homicide," and "refusal of food," three cardinal points of true mania.

Mr. Vane asked Dr. Bailey whether he was better since he came.

"Oh, infinitely better," said Dr. Bailey. "We hope to cure him in a month or two."

They then sent for Mrs. Archbold, and had a long talk with her, recommending Alfred to her especial care: and, having acted on his judgment and information in the teeth of those who called him insane, turned tail at a doctor's certificate; distrusted their eyesight at an unsworn affidavit.

Alfred was packing up his things to go away; bright as a lark. Mrs. Archbold came to him, and told him she had orders to give him every comfort; and the justices hoped to liberate him at their next visit.

The poor wretch turned pale. "At their next visit!" he cried. "What, not to-day? When is their next visit?"

Mrs. Archbold hesitated: but at last she said, "Why you know; I told you; they come four times every year."

The disappointment was too bitter. The contemptible result of all his patience, self-command, and success, was too heartbreaking. He groaned aloud. "And you can come with a smile and tell me that; you cruel woman." Then he broke down altogether and burst out crying. "You were born without a heart," he sobbed.

Mrs. Archbold quivered at that. "I wish I had been," said she, in a strange, soft, moving voice; then, casting an eloquent look of reproach on him, she went away in visible agitation, and left him sobbing. Once out of his sight she rushed into another room, and there, taking no more notice of a gentle madwoman its occupant than of the bed or the table, she sank into a chair, and, throwing her head back with womanly abandon, laid her hand upon her bosom that heaved tempestuously.

And soon the tears trickled out of her imperious eyes, and ran unrestrained.

The mind of Edith Archbold corresponded with her powerful frame, and bushy brows. Inside this woman all was vigour; strong passions, strong good sense to check or hide them; strong will to carry them out. And between these mental forces a powerful struggle was raging. She was almost impenetrable to mere personal beauty, and inclined to despise early youth in the other sex; and six months spent with Alfred in a quiet country house would probably have left her reasonably indifferent to him. But the first day she saw him in Silverton House he broke through her guard, and pierced at once to her depths; first he terrified her by darting through the window to escape: and terror is a passion. So is pity; and never in her life had she overflowed with it as when she saw him drawn out of the tank and laid on the grass. If, after all, he was as sane as he looked, that brave high-spirited young creature, who preferred death to the touch of coarse confining hands!

No sooner had he filled her with dismay and pity, than he bounded from the ground before her eyes and fled: she screamed, and hoped he would escape; she could not help it. Next she saw him fighting alone against seven or eight, and with unheard-of prowess almost beating them. She sat at the window panting, with clenched teeth and hands, and wished him to beat, and admired him, wondered at him. He yielded, but not to them: to her. All the compliments she had ever received were tame compared with this one. It thrilled her vanity. He was like the men she had read of, and never seen; the young knights of chivalry. She glowed all over at him, and detecting herself in time was frightened. Her strong good sense warned her to beware of this youth, who was nine years her junior, yet had stirred her to all her depths in an hour; and not to see him nor think of him too much. Accordingly she kept clear of him altogether at first. Pity soon put an end to that; and she protected and advised him, but with a cold and lofty demeanour put on express. What with her kind acts and her cold manner he did not know what to make of her; and often turned puzzled earnest eyes upon her, as much as to say are you really my friend or not? Once she forgot herself and smiled so tenderly in answer to these imploring eyes, that his hopes rose very high indeed. He flattered himself she would let him out of the asylum before long. That was all Julia's true lover thought of.

A feeling hidden, and not suppressed, often grows fast in a vigorous

nature. Mrs. Archbold's fancy for Alfred was subjected to this dangerous treatment; and it smouldered, and smouldered, till from a penchant it warmed to a fancy, from a fancy to a passion. But penchant, fancy, or passion, she hid it with such cunning and resolution, that neither Alfred nor even those of her own sex saw it; nor did a creature even suspect it, except Nurse Hannah; but *her* eyes were sharpened by jealousy, for that muscular young virgin was beginning to sigh for him herself, with a gentle timidity that contrasted prettily with her biceps muscle and prowess against her own sex.

Mrs. Archbold had more passion than tenderness, but what woman is not to be surprised and softened? When her young favourite, the greatest fighter she had ever seen, broke down at the end of his gallant effort and began to cry like a girl, her bowels of compassion yearned within her, and she longed to cry with him. She only saved herself from some imprudence by flight, and had her cry alone. After a flow of tears such a woman is invincible; she treated Alfred at tea-time with remarkable coldness and reserve. This piece of acting led to unlooked-for consequences: it emboldened Cooper, who was raging against Alfred for telling the justices, but had forborne from violence, for fear of getting the house into a fresh scrape. He now went to the doctor, and asked for a powerful drastic; Bailey gave him two pills, or rather boluses, containing croton-oil—inter alia; for Bailey was one of the *farraginous* fools of the unscientific science. Armed with this weapon of destruction, Cooper entered Alfred's bedroom at night, and ordered him to take them: he refused. Cooper whistled, and four attendants came. Alfred knew he should soon be powerless; he lost no time, sprang at Cooper, and with his long arm landed a blow that knocked him against the wall, and in this position, where his body could not give, struck him again with his whole soul, and cut his cheek right open. The next minute he was pinned, handcuffed, and in a strait-jacket, after crippling one assailant with a kick on the knee.

Cooper, half stunned, and bleeding like a pig, recovered himself now, and burned for revenge. He uttered a frightful oath, and jumped on Alfred as he lay bound and powerless, and gave him a lesson he never forgot.

Every art has its secrets: the attendants in such madhouses as this have been for years possessed of one they are too modest to reveal to justices, commissioners, or the public: the art of breaking a man's ribs, or breast-bone, or both, without bruising him externally. The convicts at Toulon arrive at a similar result by another branch of the art; they stuff the skin of a conger eel with powdered stone; then give the obnoxious person a sly crack with it; and a rib or backbone is broken with no contusion to mark the external violence used. But Mr. Cooper and his fellows do their work with the knee-joint: it is round, and leaves no bruise. They subdue the patient by walking up and down him on their knees. If they don't jump on him, as well as promenade him, the man's spirit is often the only thing broken; if they do, the man is apt to be broken bodily as well as mentally. Thus died Mr. Sizer in 1854, and two others quite recently. And how many more God only knows; we can't count the stones at the bottom of a dark well.

Cooper then sprang furiously on Alfred, and went kneeling up and down him. Cooper was a heavy man, and his weight crushed and hurt

the victim's legs; but that was a trifle; as often as he kneeled on Alfred's chest, the crushed one's whole framework seemed giving way, and he could scarcely breathe. But Brown drew Cooper back by the collar, saying, "D'ye want to kill him?" And at this moment Mrs. Archbold, who was on the watch, came in with Hannah and another nurse, and the three women at a word from their leader pinned Cooper simultaneously, and, taking him at a disadvantage, handcuffed him in a moment with a strength, sharpness, skill, and determination not to be found in women out of a madhouse—luckily for the newspaper husbands.

The other keepers looked astounded at this masterstroke; but, as no servant had ever affronted Mrs. Archbold without being dismissed directly, they took their cue and said, "We advised him, ma'am, but he would not listen to us."

"Cooper," said Mrs. Archbold as soon as she recovered her breath, "you are not fit for your place. To-morrow you go, or I go."

Cooper, cowed in a moment by the handcuffs, began to whine and say that it was all Alfred's fault.

But Mrs. Archbold was now carried away by two passions instead of one, and they were together too much for prudence; she took a handful of glossy locks out of her bosom and shook them in Cooper's face:

"You monster!" said she; "you should go, for *that*, if you were my own brother."

The two young nurses assented loudly, and turned and cackled at Cooper for cutting off such lovely hair.

He shrugged his shoulders at them, and said sulkily to Mrs. Archbold, "Oh, I didn't know. Of course, if you have fallen in love with him, my cake is burnt. 'Tisn't the first lunatic you have taken a fancy to."

At this brutal speech, all the more intolerable for not being quite false, Mrs. Archbold turned ashy pale and looked round for a weapon to strike him dead; but found none so handy and so deadly as her tongue.

"It's not the first you have tried to MURDER," said she. "I know all about that death in Calton Retreat: you kept it dark before the coroner, but it is not too late, I'll open the world's eyes; I was only going to dismiss you, sir: but you have insulted me. I'll hang you in reply."

Cooper turned very pale and was silent; his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

But a feeble, unexpected, voice issued from the bed and murmured cheerfully, though with some difficulty, a single word:

"Justice!"

At an expression so out of place they all started with surprise.

Alfred went on: "You are putting the saddle on the wrong horse. The fault lies with those villains Baker and Bailey. Cooper is only a servant, you know, and obeys orders."

"What business had the wretch to cut your hair off?" said Mrs. Archbold, turning on Alfred with flashing eyes. Her blood once up, she was ready to quarrel even with him for taking part against himself.

"Because he was ordered to put on a blister, and hair must come off before a blister can go on," replied Alfred soberly.

"That is no excuse for him beating you and trying to break your front teeth."

She didn't mind so much about his side ribs.

"No," replied Alfred. "But I hit him first: look at the bloke's face!

Dear Mrs. Archbold, you are my best friend in this horrid place, and you have beautiful eyes, and, talk of teeth, look at yours! but you haven't much sense of justice: forgive me for saying so. Put the proposition into signs; there is nothing like that for clearing away prejudice. B. and C. have a scrimmage: B. begins it, C. gets the worst of it; in comes A. and turns away—C. Is that justice? It is me you ought to turn away; and I wish to Heaven you would: dear Mrs. Archbold, do pray turn me away, and keep the other blackguard."

At this extraordinary and, if I may be allowed the expression, Alfredian speech, the men first stared, and then laughed; the women smiled, and then were nearer crying than laughing.

And so it was, that justice handcuffed, straitjacketed, blistered, and impartial, sent from its bed of torture a beam through Cooper's tough hide to his inner heart. He hung his head and stepped towards Alfred: "You're what I call a man," he said. "I don't care a curse whether I stay or go, after what she has said to me. But, come what may, you're a gentleman, and one as can put hisself in a poor man's place. Why, sir, I wasn't always so rough; but I have been twenty years at it; and mad folk they'd wear the patience out of Jove, and the milk of human kindness out of saints and opossums. However, if I was to stay here all my life, instead of going to-morrow, I'd never lift hand to trouble you again, for you taking my part again yourself like that."

"I'll put that to the test," said Mrs. Archbold sharply. "Stay—on your probation. Hannah!"

And Baby-face biceps at a look took off his handcuffs; which she had been prominent in putting on.

This extraordinary scene ended in the men being dismissed, and the women remaining and going to work after their kind.

"The bed is too short for one thing," said Hannah. "Look at his poor feet sticking out, and cold as a stone: just feel of them, Jane."

"No, no; murder!" cried Alfred; "that tickles."

Hannah ran for a chair, Jane for another pillow. Mrs. Archbold took off his handcuffs, and, passing her hand softly and caressingly over his head, lamented the loss of his poor hair. Amongst them they relieved him of his strait-jacket, set up his head, covered his feet, and he slept like a top for want of drastics and opiates, and in spite of some brilliant charges by the Lilliputian cavalry.

After this the attendants never molested Alfred again; nor did the doctor; for Mrs. Archbold got his boluses, and sent them up to a famous analysing chemist in London, and told him she had; and said, "I'll thank you not to prescribe at random for *that* patient any more." He took the lady's prescription, coming as it did in a voice quietly grim, and with a momentary but wicked glance shot from under her black brows.

Alfred was all the more miserable at his confinement: his melancholy deepened now there was no fighting to excite him. A handsome bright young face clouded with sadness is very pitiable, and I need not say that both the women who had fallen in love with him had their eyes, or at least the tails of their eyes, for ever on his face. The result varied with the characters of the watchers. That young face, ever sad, made Mrs. Archbold sigh, and long to make him happy under her wing. How it wrought on the purer and more womanly Hannah will be revealed by the incident I have to relate. Alfred was sitting on a bench in the

corridor, bowed down by grief, and the Archbold lurking in a room hard by, feasting her eyes on him through an aperture in the door caused by the inspection plate being under repair—when an erotic maniac was driven past. She had obtained access—with marvellous cunning—to the men's side; but was now coming back with a flea in her ear, and faster than she went; being handcuffed and propelled by Baby-face biceps. On passing the disconsolate Alfred the latter eyed him coyly, gave her stray sheep a coarse push—as one pushes a *thing*—and laid a timid hand, gentle as falling down, upon the rougher sex. Contrast sudden and funny.

"Don't be so sad, sir," she murmured, cooing like the gentlest of doves. "I can't bear to see you look like that."

Alfred looked up, and met her full with his mournful honest eyes. "Ah, Hannah, how can I be anything but sad, imprisoned here, sane amongst the mad?"

"Well, and so am I, sir: so is Mrs. Archbold herself."

"Ay, but you have not been entrapped, imprisoned, on your wedding-day. I cannot even get a word sent to my Julia, my wife that ought to be. Only think of the affront they have made me put on her I love better, ten times better, than myself. Why, she must have been waiting for me; humiliated perhaps by my absence. What will she think of me? The rogues will tell her a thousand lies: she is very high spirited, Hannah, impetuous like myself, only so gentle and so good; oh, my angel; my angel; I shall lose you for ever."

Hannah clasped her hands, with tears in her eyes: "No, no," she cried; "it is a burning shame to part true lovers like you and her. Hush! speak low. Brown told me you are as well as he is."

"God bless him for it, then."

"You have got money they say: try it on with Brown."

"I will. Oh you darling. What is the matter?"

For Baby-face was beginning to whimper.

"Oh, nothing, sir; only you are so glad to go; and we shall be sorry to part with you: but you won't care for that—oh! oh! oh!"

"What, do you think I shall forget you and your kindness? Never: I'll square accounts with friends and foes; not one shall be forgotten."

"Don't offer me any of your money," sobbed Hannah, "for I wouldn't touch it. Good-bye," said she: "I shan't have as much as a kiss for it, I'll be bound: good-bye," said she again, and never moved.

"Oh, won't you, though," cried Alfred gaily. "What is that? and that? and that? Now, what on earth are you crying about? Dry your tears, you dear good-hearted girl: no, I'll dry them for you."

He took out a white handkerchief and dried her cheeks gently for her, and gave her a parting kiss; but the Archbold's patience was exhausted; a door opened nearly opposite, and there she stood yellow with jealousy and sombre as night with her ebon brows. At sight of this lowering figure Hannah uttered a squawk, and fled with cheeks red as fire. Alfred, not aware of Mrs. Archbold's smouldering passion, and little dreaming that jealous anguish and rage stood incarnate before him, burst out laughing like a mischievous boy! on this she swept upon him, and took him by both shoulders, and awed him with her lowering brows close to his. "You ungrateful wretch," she said violently, and panted.

His colour rose. "Ungrateful? That I am not, madam. Why do you call me so?"

"You are; you are. What have I done to you that you run from me to the very servants? However, she shall be packed off this very night, and you to thank for it."

This was the way to wound the generous youth. "Now it is you that are ungenerous," he said. "What harm has the poor girl done? She had a virtuous movement, and pitied me for the heartless fraud I suffer by; that is all. Pray do you never pity me?"

"Was it this virtuous movement set her kissing you?" said the Archbold, clenching her teeth as if the word stung her, like the sight.

"She didn't, now," said Alfred: "it was I kissed her."

"And yet you pretend to love your Julia so truly?"

"This is no place for that sacred name, madam. But be sure I have no secrets from her, and kiss nobody she would not kiss herself."

"She must be a very accommodating young lady."

At this insult Alfred rose pale with anger, and was about to defy his monitor mortally: but the quick-witted woman saw and disarmed him; in one moment, before ever he could speak, she was a transformed creature, a penitent; she put her hands together supplicatingly, and murmured—

"I didn't mean it; I respect *her;* and your love for her; forgive me, Alfred: I am so unhappy, oh forgive me."

And behold she held his hand between her soft, burning palms, and her proud head sank languidly on his shoulder, and the inevitable tears ran gently.

Morals apart, it was glorious love-making.

"Bother the woman," thought Alfred.

"Promise me not to do it again," she murmured, "and the girl shall stay."

"Oh, lord, yes, I promise; though I can't see what it matters to you."

"Not much, cruel boy, alas! but it matters to her; for——" She kissed Alfred's hand gently and rose to her feet and moved away, but at the second step turned her head sudden as a bird and finished her sentence—"if you kiss her before me, I shall kill her before you."

Here was a fresh complication! The men had left off blistering, torturing, and bullying him; but his guardian angels, the women, were turning up their sleeves to pull caps over him, and plenty of the random scratches would fall on him. If anything could have made him pine more to be out of the horrid place, this voluptuous prospect would. He hunted everywhere for Brown. But he was away the day with a patient. At night he lay awake for a long time, thinking how he should open the negotiation: he shrank from it. He felt a delicacy about bribing Beelzebub's servant to betray him.

As Hannah had originated the idea, he thought he might very well ask her to do the dirty work of bribing Brown, and he would pay her for it; only in money, not kisses. With this resolution he sank to sleep; and his spirit broke prison: he stood with Julia before the altar, and the priest made them one. Then the church and the company and daylight disappeared, and her own sweet low moving voice came thrilling, "My own, own, own," she murmured, "I love you ten times more for

all you have endured for me;" and with this her sweet lips settled on his like the dew.

Impartial sleep flies at the steps of the scaffold and the gate of Elysium: so Alfred awoke at the above. But doubted whether he was quite awake; for two velvet lips seemed to be still touching his. He stirred, and somebody was gone like the wind, with a rustle of flying petticoats, and his door shut in a moment; it closed with a catch-lock; this dastardly vision had opened it with her key, and left it open to make good her retreat if he should awake. Alfred sat up in bed indignant, and somewhat fluttered. "Confound her impudence," said he. But there was no help for it; he grinned and bore it, as he had the blisters, and boluses, &c., rolled the clothes round his shoulders, and off to the sleep of the just again. Not so the passionate hypocrite, who, maddened by a paroxysm of jealousy, had taken this cowardly advantage of a prisoner. She had sucked fresh poison from those honest lips, and filled her veins with molten fire. She tossed and turned the livelong night in a high fever of passion, nor were the cold chills wanting of shame and fear at what she had done.

In the morning, Alfred remembered this substantial vision, and determined to find out which of those two it was. "I shall know by her looks," said he; "she won't be able to meet my eye." Well, the first he saw was Mrs. Archbold. She met his eye full with a mild and pensive dignity. "Come, it is not you," thought Alfred. Presently he fell in with Hannah. She wore a serene, infantine face, the picture of unobtrusive modesty. Alfred was dumbfoundered. "It's not this one, either," said he. "But, then, it must. Confound her impudence for looking so modest." However, he did not speak to her; he was looking out for a face that interested him far more: the weather-beaten countenance of Giles Brown. He saw him once or twice, but could not get him alone till the afternoon. He invited him into his room: and when he got him there, lost no time. "Just look me in the face, Brown," said he quietly. Brown looked him in the face.

"Now, sir, am I mad or sane?"

Brown turned his head away. Alfred laughed. "No, no, none of your tricks, old fellow: look me in the face while you answer."

The man coloured. "I can't look a gentleman like you in the face, and tell him he is mad."

"I should think not. Well, now; what shall I give you to help me escape?"

"Hush! don't mention that, sir; it's as much as my place is worth even to listen to you."

"Well! then I must give you as much as your place is worth. Please to calculate that, and name the figure."

"My place! I wouldn't lose it for a hundred pounds."

"Exactly. Then I'll give you a hundred guineas."

"And how am I to get my money, sir?"

"The first time you are out, come to Albion Villa, in Barkington, and I'll have it all ready for you."

"And suppose you were to say, 'No: you didn't ought ever to have been confined'?"

"I must trouble you to look in my face again, Mr. Brown. Now, do you see treason, bad faith, avarice, ingratitude, rascality in it?"

"Not a grain of 'em," said Brown, with an accent of conviction. "Well, now, I'll tell you the truth; I can read a gent by this time: and I'm no more afeared for the money than if I had it in my hand. But, ye see my stomach won't let me do it."

This was a sad disappointment: so sudden, too. "Your stomach?" said Alfred, ruefully. "What do you mean?"

"Ay, my stomach. Wouldn't *your* stomach rise against serving a man that had done you the worst turn one man can do another—been and robbed you of your sweetheart."

Alfred stared with amazement.

Brown continued, and now with some emotion: "Hannah Blake and I were very good friends till you came, and I was thinking of asking her to name the day; but now she won't look at me. 'Don't come teasing me,' says she, 'I am meat for your master.' It's you that have turned the girl's head, sir."

"Bother the women!" said Alfred cordially. "Oh, what plagues they are! And how unjust *you* are, to spite me for the fault of another. Can I help the fools from spooning upon me?" He reflected a moment, then burst out: "Brown, you are a duffer, a regular duffer. What, don't you see your game is to get me out of the place? If you do, in forty-eight hours I shall be married to my Julia, and that dumpling-faced girl will be cured. But if you keep me here, by Gee, sir, I'll make hot love to your Hannah, boiling hot, hotter than ever was—out of the isles of Greece. Oh! do help me out, and I'll give you the hundred pounds, and I'll give Hannah another hundred pounds, on condition she marries you: and, if she won't marry you, she shan't have a farthing, only a good hiding."

Brown was overpowered by his maniac's logic. "You *have* a head," said he; "there's my hand; I'll go in, if I die for it."

They now put their heads together over the means. Brown's plan was to wait, and wait, for an opportunity. Alfred's was to make one this very night.

"But how can I?" said Brown. "I shan't have the key of your room. I am not on watch in your part to-night."

"Borrow Hannah's."

"Hannah's? She has got no key of the male patients' rooms."

"Oh yes she has; of mine, at all events."

"What makes you think that, sir?" said Brown suspiciously.

Alfred didn't know what to say: he could not tell him why he felt sure she had a key.

"Just go quietly and ask her for it," said he: "don't tell her I sent you, now."

Brown obeyed, and returned in half an hour with the key of the vacant bedroom, where the hobbles and chains were hidden on the arrival of the justices.

"She tells me this is the only key she has of any room in this corridor. But dear heart," said Brown, "how quicksighted the women are. She said, says she, 'If it is to bring sorrowful true lovers together again, Giles, or the like of that, I'll try and get the key you want off Mrs. Archbold's bunch, though I get the sack for it,' says she. 'I know she leaves them in the parlour at night,' says Hannah. She is a trump, you must allow."

Alfred coloured up. He suspected he had been unjust.

'She is a good, kind, single-hearted girl," said he; "and neither of you shall find me ungrateful."

It was evident by the alacrity Brown now showed, that he had got his orders from Hannah.

It was agreed that Alfred should lie down at night in his clothes, ready to seize the right moment; that Hannah should get the key, and watch the coast clear, and let him out into the corridor; and Brown get him down by a back stairs, and out on the lawn. There he would find a ladder close by the wall, and his own arms and legs must do the rest.

And now Alfred was a changed creature: his eye sparkled; he walked on air, and already sniffed the air of liberty.

After tea Brown brought in some newspapers, and made Alfred a signal, previously agreed on, that the ladder was under the east wall. He went to bed early, put on his tweed shooting-jacket and trousers, and lay listening to the clock with beating heart.

At first, feet passed to and fro from time to time. These became less frequent as the night wore on.

Presently a light foot passed, stopped at the door, and made a sharp scratch on it with some metal instrument.

It was the key. The time was not ripe to use it, but good Hannah had taken this way to let him know she had got it.

This little scratch outside his door, oh it made his heart leap and thrill. One great difficulty was overcome. He waited, and waited, but with glowing, hopeful heart; and at last a foot came swiftly, the key turned, and Hannah opened the door. She had a bull's-eye lantern.

"Take your shoes in your hand," she whispered, "and follow me."

He followed her. She led him in and out, to the door of the public room belonging to the second-class patients. Then she drew her whistle, and breathed very softly. Brown answered as softly from the other end. He was waiting at the opposite door.

"All right," said she; "the dangerous part is over." She put a key into the door, and said very softly, "Good-bye."

"God bless you, Hannah," said Alfred, with deep emotion. "God in heaven bless you for this!"

"He will, he does," said the single-hearted girl, and put her other hand to her breast with a great gulp. She opened the door slowly. "Good-bye, dear. I shall never see you again."

And so these two parted; for Hannah could not bear the sight of Giles at that moment. He was welcome to Alfred though, most welcome, and conducted him by devious ways to the kitchen, lantern in hand.

He opened the kitchen door softly, and saw two burly strangers seated at a table, eating with all their souls, and Mrs. Archbold standing before the fire, but looking towards him: for she had heard his footsteps ever so far off.

The men looked up, and saw Alfred. They rose to their feet, and said, "This will be the gentleman, madam?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Archbold.

"Your servant, sir," said the man very civilly. "If you are ready we are."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Sampson's placard was on Barkington walls, and inside the asylum Alfred was softening hearts and buying consciences, as related; so, in fact, he had two strings to his bow.

But mark how strangely things turn; these two strings got entangled. His father, alarmed by the placard, had called at the pawnbroker's shop, and told him he must move Alfred directly to a London asylum. Baker raised objections; Mr. Hardie crushed them with his purse, i. e. with his son's and victim's sweetheart's father's money: so then, as Baker after all could not resist the project, but only postpone it for a day or two, he preferred to take a handsome present, and co-operate; he even connived at Mr. Hardie's signing the requisite name to the new order. This the giddy world calls forgery; but, in these calm retreats, far from the public's inquisitive eye, it goes for nothing. Why, Mrs. Archbold had signed Baker's name and Dr. Bailey's more than a hundred several times to orders, statements, and certificates; depriving Englishmen of their liberty and their property with a gesture of her taper fingers; and venting the conventional terms, "Aberration," "Exaltation," "Depression," "Debility," "Paralysis," "Excitable," "Abnormal," as boldly and blindly as any male starling in the flock.

On the very night then of Alfred's projected escape, two keepers came down from Dr. Wycherley's asylum to Silverton station: Baker met them and drove them to Silverton House in his dog-cart. They were to take Alfred up by the night train; and, when he came into the kitchen with Brown, they suspected nothing, nor did Baker or Cooper, who presently emerged from the back kitchen. Brown saw, and recovered his wits partially. "Shall I go for his portmanteau, sir?" stammered he, making a shrewd and fortunate guess at what was up. Baker assented; and soon after went out to get the horse harnessed: on this Mrs. Archbold, pale, sorrowful, and silent hitherto, beckoned Alfred into the back kitchen, and there gave him his watch and his loose money. "I took care of them for you," said she; "for the like have often been stolen in this place. Put the money in your shoes; it may be useful to you."

He thanked her somewhat sullenly; for his disappointment was so deep and bitter that small kindnesses almost irritated him.

She sighed. "It is cruel to be angry with me," she said: "I am not the cause of this; it is a heavier blow to me than to you. Sooner or later you will be free—and then you will not waste a thought on me, I fear—but I must remain in this odious prison without your eyes and your smile to lighten me, yet unable to forget you. Oh, Alfred, for mercy's sake whisper me one kind word at parting; give me one kind look to remember and dote upon."

She put out both hands as eloquently as she spoke, and overpowered his prudence so far that he took her offered hands—they were as cold now as they were burning hot the last time—and pressed them, and said, "I shall be grateful to you while I live."

The passionate woman snatched her hands away. "Gratitude is too cold for me," she cried; "I scorn even yours. Love me or hate me."

He made no reply. And so they parted.

"Will you pledge your honour to make no attempt at escape on the road?" asked the pawnbroker on his return.

"I'll see you d—d first," replied the prisoner.

On this he was handcuffed, and helped into the dog-cart.

They went up to town by the midnight train; but, to Alfred's astonishment and delight, did not take a carriage to themselves.

However, station after station was passed, and nobody came into their carriage. At last they stopped at a larger station, and a good many people were on the platform: Alfred took this opportunity and appealed in gentle but moving terms to the first good and intelligent face he saw. "Sir," said he, "I implore your assistance."

The gentleman turned courteously to him. The keepers, to Alfred's surprise, did not interrupt.

"I am the victim of a conspiracy, sir; they pretend I am mad: and are taking me by force to a madhouse, a living tomb."

"You certainly don't appear to be mad," said the gentleman.

The head keeper instantly showed him the order and a copy of the certificates.

"Don't look at *them*, sir," cried Alfred; "they are signed by men who were bribed to sign them. For pity's sake, sir, judge for yourself. Test my memory, my judgment, by any question you please. Use your own good sense; don't let those venal rogues judge for you."

The gentleman turned cold directly.

"I could not take on me to interfere," said he. The unsworn affidavits had overpowered his senses. He retired with a frigid inclination. Alfred wrung his handcuffed hands, and the connecting chain rattled.

The men never complained: his conduct was natural; and they knew their strength. At the next station he tested a snob's humanity instead of a gentleman's. He had heard they were more tender-hearted. The answer was a broad grin: repeated at intervals.

Being called mad was pretty much the same thing as being mad to a mind of this class: and Alfred had admitted he was called mad.

At the next station he implored a silvery-haired old gentleman. Old age, he had heard, has known griefs, and learned pity.

The keeper showed the certificates.

"Ah!" said Senex; "poor young man. Now don't agitate yourself. It is all for your good. Pray go quietly. Very painful, very painful." And he hobbled away as fast as he could. It is by shirking the painful some live to be silvery old.

Next he tried a policeman. Bobby listened to him erect as a dart.

The certificates were shown him.

He eyed them and said sharply, "All right." Nor could Alfred's entreaties and appeals to common sense attract a word or even a look from him. Alfred cried "Help! murder! If you are Englishmen, if you are Christians, help me."

This soon drew a crowd round him, listening to his fiery tale of wrong, and crying "Shame, shame! Let him go." The keepers touched their heads, winked, and got out and showed the certificates; the crowd melted

away like wax before those two suns of evidence (unsworn). The train moved on.

It was appalling. How could he ever get free? Between his mind and that of his fellows there lay a spiritual barrier more impassable than the walls of fortified cities.

Yet, at the very next station, with characteristic tenacity of purpose, he tried again: for he saw a woman standing near, a buxom country woman of forty. Then he remembered that the Naked Eye was not yet an extinct institution among her sex. He told her his tale, and implored her to use her own eyes. She seemed struck, and did eye him far more closely than the men had: and told the keepers they ought to be ashamed of themselves; he was no madman, for she had seen madmen. They showed her the certificates.

"Oh, I am no scholar!" said she contemptuously; "ye can't write my two eyes out of my head."

The keeper whipped off Alfred's cap and showed his shaven crown.

"La! so he is," said she, lowering her tone; "dear heart, what a pity! And such a pretty young gentleman." And after that all he could say only drew the dew of patient pity to her eyes.

The train went on, and left her standing there, a statue of negative clemency. Alfred lost heart. He felt how impotent he was. "I shall die in a madhouse," he said. He shivered in a corner, hating man, and doubting God.

They reached Dr. Wycherley's early in the morning. Alfred was shown into a nice clean bedroom, and asked whether he would like to bathe or sleep. "Oh, a bath," he said; and was allowed to bathe himself. He had not been long in the water when Dr. Wycherley's medical assistant tapped at the door, and then entered without further ceremony; a young gentleman with a longish down on his chin, which, initiated early in the secrets of physiology, he was too knowing to shave off and so go to meet his trouble. He came in looking like a machine, with a note-book in his hand, and stood by the bath side dictating notes to himself and jotting them down.

"Six contusions: two on the thorax, one on the abdomen, two on the thighs, one near the patella; turn, please." Alfred turned in the water. "A slight dorsal abrasion; also of the wrists; a severe excoriation of the ankle. Leg-lock, eh?"

"Yes."

"Iron leg-lock. Head shaved. Large blister. Good! Any other injuries external or internal under old system?"

"Yes, sir, confined as a madman though sane, as *you*, I am sure, have the sense to see."

"Oh, never mind that; we are all sane here—except the governor and I."

He whipped out, and entered the condition of the new patient's body with jealous minuteness in the case-book. As for his mind, he made no inquiry into that: indeed he was little qualified for researches of the kind.

At breakfast Alfred sat with a number of mad ladies and gentlemen, who by firmness, kindness, and routine, had been led into excellent habits: the linen was clean and the food good. He made an excellent meal, and set about escaping: with this view he explored the place.

Nobody interfered with him; but plenty of eyes watched him. The house was on the non-restraint system. He soon found this system was as bad for him as it was good for the insane. Non-restraint implied a great many attendants, and constant vigilance. Moreover, the doors were strong, the windows opened only eight inches, and that from the top; their framework was iron, painted like wood, &c. It was next to impossible to get into the yard at night: and then it looked quite impossible to get any further, for the house was encompassed by high walls.

He resigned all hope of escape without connivance. He sounded a keeper; the man fired at the first word. "Come, none of that sir; you should know better than tempt a poor man."

Alfred coloured to the eyes; and sighed deeply. To have honour thrown in his face, and made the reason for not aiding him to baffle a dishonourable conspiracy! But he took the reproof so sweetly, the man was touched, and by-and-by, seeing him deeply dejected, said good-naturedly, "Don't be down on your luck, sir. If you are really better, which you don't look to have much the matter now, why not write to the Commissioners and ask to be let out?"

"Because my letters will be intercepted."

"Ay, to your friends; but not to the Commissioners of Lunacy. Not in this house, any way."

"God bless you!" cried Alfred impetuously. "You are my benefactor; you are an honest fellow; give me your hand."

"Well, why not? Only you mustn't excite yourself. Take it easy." (Formula.)

"Oh, no cant among friends!" said Alfred: "wouldn't you be excited at the hope of getting out of prison?"

"Well, I don't know but I might. Bound I am as sick of it as you are."

Alfred got paper and sketched the letter on which so much depended. It took him six hours. He tore up two; he cooled down the third, and condensed it severely: by this means, after much thought, he produced a close and telling composition: he also weeded it of every trait and every term he had observed in mad people's talk, or the letters they had shown him. So there was no incoherency, no heat, no prolixity, no "spies," no "conspiracy," no italics. A simple, honest, earnest story, with bitter truth stamped on every line; a sober, strong appeal from a sore heart but hard head to the arbiters of his fate.

To the best of my belief no madman, however slightly touched, or however cunning, ever wrote a letter so gentle yet strong, so earnest yet calm, so short yet full, and withal so lucid and cleanly jointed as this was: and I am no contemptible judge; for I have accumulated during the last few years a large collection of letters from persons deranged in various degrees, and studied them minutely, more minutely than most Psychologicals study anything but Pounds, Shillings, and Verbiage.

The letter went, and he hoped but scarcely expected an answer by return of post. It did not come. He said to his heart, "Be still;" and waited. Another day went by; and another: he gnawed his heart, and waited: he pined, and waited on. The Secret Tribunal, which was all a shallow legislature had left him, "took it easy." Secret Tribunals always do.

But, while the victim-suitor longed and pined and languished for one sound from the voice of Justice and Humanity, and while the Secret Tribunal, not being in prison itself all this time, "took it easy," events occurred at Barkington that bade fair to throw open the prison doors, and bring father and son, bride and bridegroom, together again under one roof.

But at what a price!

## CHAPTER XXXV.

At sight of Sampson's placard Mr. Hardie was seized with a tremor, that suspended the razor in mid air: he opened the window, and glared at the doctor's notice.

At this moment he himself was a picture: not unlike those half cleaned portraits the picture restorers hang out as specimens of their art.

"Insolent interfering fool," he muttered, and began to walk the room in agitation. After a while he made a strong effort, shaved the other half, and dressed slowly, thinking hard all the time. The result was, he went out before breakfast (which he had not done for years), and visited Mr. Baker, for what purpose has been already shown.

On his return, Jane was waiting breakfast. The first word to him was: "Papa, have you seen?"

"What, the Reward!" said he, indifferently. "Yes, I noticed it at our door as I came home."

Jane said it was a very improper and most indelicate interference in their affairs, and went on to say with heightened colour: "I have just told Peggy to take it down."

"Not for the world!" cried Mr. Hardie, losing all his calmness real or feigned; and he rang the bell hastily. On Peggy's appearing, he said anxiously, "I do not wish that Notice interfered with."

"I shouldn't think of touching it without your orders, sir," said she, quietly, and shot him a feline glance from under her pale lashes.

Jane coloured, and looked a little mortified: but on Peggy's retiring, Mr. Hardie explained that, whether judicious or not, it was a friendly act of Dr. Sampson's; and to pull down his notice would look like siding with the boy against those he had injured: "Besides," said he, "why should you and I burk inquiry? Ill as he has used me, I am his father, and not altogether without anxiety. Suppose those doctors should be right about him, you know?"

Jane had for some time been longing to call at Albion Villa and sympathise with her friend; and now curiosity was superadded: she burned to know whether the Dodds knew of or approved this placard. She asked her father whether he thought she could go there with propriety. "Why not?" said he, cheerfully, and with assumed carelessness.

In reality it was essential to him that Jane should visit the Dodds. Surrounded by pitfalls, threatened with a new and mysterious assailant in the eccentric, but keen and resolute Sampson, this artful man, who had now become a very Machiavel—constant danger and deceit had so

sharpened and deepened his great natural abilities—was preparing amongst other defences a shield; and that shield was a sieve; and that sieve was his daughter. In fact, ever since his return, he had acted and spoken at the Dodds through Jane, but with a masterly appearance of simplicity and mere confidential intercourse. At least I think this is the true clue to all his recent remarks.

Jane, a truthful, unsuspicious girl, was all the fitter instrument of the cunning monster. She went and called at Albion Villa, and was received by Edward, Mrs. Dodd being up-stairs with Julia, and in five minutes she had told him what her father, she owned, had said to her in confidence. "But," said she, "the reason I repeat these things is to make peace, and that you may not fancy there is any one in our house so cruel, so unchristian, as to approve Alfred's perfidy. Oh, and papa said candidly he disliked the match, but then he disliked this way of ending it far more."

Mrs. Dodd came down in due course, and kissed her; but told her Julia could not see even her at present. "I think, dear," said she, "in a day or two she will see *you*; but no one else: and for her sake we shall now hurry our departure from this place, where she was once so happy."

Mrs. Dodd did not like to begin about Alfred; but Jane had no such scruples; she inveighed warmly against his conduct, and, ere she left the house, had quite done away with the faint suspicion Sampson had engendered, and brought both Mrs. Dodd and Edward back to their original opinion that the elder Hardie had nothing on earth to do with the perfidy of the younger.

Just before dinner a gentleman called on Edward, and proved to be a policeman in plain clothes. He had been sent from the office to sound the ostler at the "White Lion," and, if necessary, to threaten him. The police knew, though nobody else in Barkington did, that this ostler had been in what rogues call trouble, twice, and, as the police can starve a man of the kind by blowing on him, and can reward him by keeping dark, he knows better than withhold information from them.

However, on looking for this ostler, he had left his place that very morning; had decamped with mysterious suddenness.

Here was a puzzle.

Had the man gone without noticing the reward? Had somebody outbid the reward? or was it a strange coincidence, and did he after all know nothing?

The police thought it was no coincidence, and he did know something; so they had telegraphed to the London office to mark him down.

Edward thanked his visitor; but, on his retiring, told his mother he could make neither head nor tail of it; and she only said, "We seem surrounded by mystery."

Meantime, unknown to these bewildered ones, Greek was meeting Greek only a few yards off.

Mr. Hardie was being undermined by a man of his own calibre, one too cautious to communicate with the Dodds, or any one else, till his work looked ripe.

The game began thus: a decent mechanic, who lodged hard by, lounging with his pipe near the gate of Musgrove Cottage, offered to

converse with old Betty: she gave him a rough answer; but with a touch of ineradicable vanity must ask Peggy if she wanted a sweetheart, because there was a hungry one at the gate: "Why: he wanted to begin on an old woman like me." Peggy inquired what he had said to her.

"Oh, he begun where most of them ends, if they get so far at all: axed me was I comfortable here; if not, he knew a young man wanted a nice tidy body to keep house for him."

Peggy pricked up her ears; and, in less than a quarter of an hour, went for a box of lucifers in a new bonnet and clean collar. She tripped past the able mechanic very accidentally, and he bestowed an admiring smile on her, but said nothing, only smoked. However, on her return he contrived to detain her, and paid her a good many compliments, which she took laughingly and with no great appearance of believing them. However, there is no going by that: compliments sink: and within forty-eight hours the able mechanic had become a hot wooer of Peggy Black, always on the look-out for her day and night, and telling her all about the lump of money he had saved, and how he could double his income, if he had but a counter, and tidy wife behind it. Peggy gossiped in turn, and let out amongst the rest that she had been turned off once, just for answering a little sharply; and now it was the other way; her master was a trifle too civil at times.

"Who could help it?" said the able mechanic, rapturously; and offered a pressing civility; which Peggy fought off.

"Not so free, young man," said she. "Kissing is the prologue to sin."

"How do you know that?" inquired the able mechanic, with the sly humour of his class.

"It is a saying," replied Peggy, demurely.

At last, one night, Mr. Green the Detective, for he it was, put his arm round his new sweetheart's waist, and approached the subject nearest his heart. He told her he had just found out there was money enough to be made in one day to set them up for life in a nice little shop; and she could help in it.

After this inviting preamble he crept towards the 14,000*l.* by artful questions; and soon elicited that there had been high words between Master and Mr. Alfred about that very sum; she had listened at the door and heard. Taking care to combine close courtship with cunning interrogatories, he was soon enabled to write to Dr. Sampson, and say that a servant of Mr. Hardie's was down on him, and reported that he carried a large pocket-book in his breast-pocket by day; and she had found the dent of it under his pillow at night; a stroke of observation very creditable in an unprofessional female: on this he had made it his business to meet Mr. Hardie in broad day, and sure enough the pocket-book was always there. He added, that the said Hardie's face wore an expression which he had seen more than once when respectable parties went in for felony: and altogether thought they might now take out a warrant and proceed in the regular way.

Sampson received this news with great satisfaction: but was crippled by the interwoven relations of the parties.

To arrest Mr. Hardie on a warrant would entail a prosecution for felony, and separate Jane and Edward for ever.

He telegraphed Green to meet him at the station; and reached Barkington at eight that very evening. Green and he proceeded to Albion Villa, and there they held a long and earnest consultation with Edward; and at last, on certain conditions, Mr. Green and Edward consented to act on Sampson's plan. Green, by this time, knew all Mr. Hardie's out of door habits; and assured them that at ten o'clock he would walk up and down the road for at least half an hour, the night being dry. It wanted about a quarter to ten, when Mrs. Dodd came down, and proposed supper to the travellers. Sampson declined it for the present; and said they had work to do at eleven. Then, making the others a signal not to disclose anything at present, he drew her aside and asked after Julia.

Mrs. Dodd sighed:—"She goes from one thing to another, but always returns to one idea; that he is a victim, not a traitor."

"Well, tell her in one hour, the money shall be in the house."

"The money! What does she care?"

"Well, say we shall know all about Alfred by eleven o'clock."

"My dear friend, be prudent," said Mrs. Dodd. "I feel alarmed: you were speaking almost in a whisper when I came in."

"Y' are very obsairvant: but dawnt be uneasy; we are three to one. Just go and comfort Miss Julee with my message."

"Ah, that I will," she said.

She was no sooner gone than they all stole out into the night, and a pitch dark night it was; but Green had a powerful dark lantern to use if necessary.

They waited, Green at the gate of Musgrove Cottage, the other two a little way up the road.

Ten o'clock struck. Some minutes passed without the expected signal from Green; and Edward and Sampson began to shiver. For it was very cold and dark, and in the next place they were honest men going to take the law into their own hands, and the law sometimes calls that breaking the law. "Confound him!" muttered Sampson: "if he does not soon come I shall run away. It is bitterly cold."

Presently footsteps were heard approaching; but no signal: it proved to be only a fellow in a smock-frock rolling home from the public-house.

Just as his footsteps died away a low hoot like a plaintive owl was heard, and they knew their game was afoot.

Presently, tramp, tramp, came the slow and stately march of him they had hunted down.

He came very slowly, like one lost in meditation: and these amateur policemen's hearts beat louder and louder, as he drew nearer and nearer.

At last in the blackness of the night a shadowy outline was visible: another tramp or two, it was upon them.

Now the cautious Mr. Green had stipulated that the pocket-book should first be felt for, and, if not there, the matter should go no farther. So Edward made a stumble and fell against Mr. Hardie and felt his left breast: the pocket-book was there:—"Yes," he whispered: and Mr. Hardie, in the act of remonstrating at his clumsiness, was pinned behind, and his arms strapped with wonderful rapidity and dexterity. Then first he seemed to awake to his danger, and uttered a stentorian

cry of terror, that rang through the night and made two of his three captors tremble.

"Cut that," said Green sternly, "or you'll get into trouble."

Mr. Hardie lowered his voice directly: "Do not kill me, do not hurt me;" he murmured, "I am but a poor man now. Take my little money; it is in my waistcoat pocket; but spare my life. You see I don't resist."

"Come, stash your gab, my lad," said Green, contemptuously, addressing him just as he would any other of the birds he was accustomed to capture. "It's not your stiff that is wanted, but Captain Dodd's."

"Captain Dodd's?" cried the prisoner with a wonderful assumption of innocence.

"Ay, the pocket-book," said Green: "here, this! this!" He tapped on the pocket-book, and instantly the prisoner uttered a cry of agony, and sprang into the road with an agility no one would have thought possible; but Edward and Green soon caught him, and, the Doctor joining, they held him, and Green tore his coat open.

The pocket-book was not there. He tore open his waistcoat; it was not in the waistcoat: but it was sewed to his very shirt on the outside.

Green wrenched it away, and bidding the other two go behind the prisoner and look over his shoulder, unseen themselves, slipped the shade of his lantern.

Mr. Hardie had now ceased to struggle and to exclaim; he stood sullen, mute, desperate; while an agitated face peered eagerly over each of his shoulders at the open pocket-book in Green's hands, on which the lantern now poured a narrow but vivid stream of light.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THERE was not a moment to lose, so Green emptied the pocket-book into his hat, and sifted the contents in a turn of the hand, announcing each discovery in a whisper to his excited, and peering, associates:—

"A lot of receipts."

"Of no use to any one but me," said the prisoner earnestly.

"Two miniatures; gold rims, pinchbeck backs."

"They are portraits of my children when young: Heaven forgive me, I could not give them up to my creditors: surely, surely, you will not rob me of them."

"Stash your gab," said Mr. Green roughly. "Here's a guinea, Queen Anne's reign."

"It belonged to my great-grandfather: take it, but you will let me redeem it; I will give 5*l.* for it, poor as I am: you can leave it on my door-step, and I'll leave the 5*l.*"

"Stow your gab. Letters; papers covered with figures. Stay, what is this? a lot of memoranda."

"They are of the most private and delicate character. Pray do not expose my family misfortunes." And Mr. Hardie, who of late had been gathering composure, showed some signs of agitation; the two figures glaring over his shoulder shared it, and his remonstrance only made

Green examine the papers keenly: they might contain some clue to the missing money. It proved a miscellaneous record: the price of Stocks at various days; notes of the official assignee's remarks in going over the books, &c. At last, however, Green's quick eye fell upon a fainter entry in pencil; figures: 1, 4; yes, actually 14,000*l.* "All right," he said: and took the paper close to the lantern, and began to spell it out:

"'This day Alfred told me to my face I had 14,000*l.* of Captain Dodd's. We had an angry discussion. What can he mean? Drs. Wycherley and Osmond, this same day, afflicted me with hints that he is deranged, or partly. I saw no signs of it before. Wrote to my brother entreating him to give me 200*l.* to replace the sum which I really have wronged this respectable and now most afflicted family of. I had better withdraw——'" Here Mr. Hardie interrupted him with sorrowful dignity: "These are mere family matters; if you are a man respect them."

Green went reading on like Fate: "'Better withdraw my opposition to the marriage, or else it seems my own flesh and blood will go about the place blackening my reputation.'"

Mr. Hardie stamped on the ground. "I tell you on my honour as a gentleman there's no money there but my grandfather's guinea. My money is all in my waistcoat pocket, where you *will not* look."

A flutter of uneasiness seemed to come over the detective: he darkened his lantern, and replaced the pocket-book hurriedly in the prisoner's breast, felt him all over in a minute, and, to keep up the farce, robbed him.

"Only eight yellow boys," said he contemptuously to his mates. He then slipped the money back into Hardie's coat-pocket, and conducted him to his own gate, tied him to it by the waist, and ordered him not to give the alarm for ten minutes on pain of death.

"I consent," said Mr. Hardie, "and thank you for abstaining from violence."

"All right, my tulip," said Mr. Green cheerfully; and drew his companions quietly away. But the next moment he began to run, and, making a sudden turn, dived into a street, then into a passage, and so winded and doubled till he got to a small public-house: he used some flash word, and they were shown a private room. "Wait here an hour for me," he whispered; "I must see who liberates him, and whether he is really as innocent as he reads, or we have been countermined by the devil's own tutor."

The unexpected turn the evidence had taken, evidence of their own choosing too, cleared Mr. Hardie with the unprofessionals. Edward embraced this conclusion as a matter of course, and urged the character of that gentleman's solitary traducer; Alfred was a traitor, and therefore why not a slanderer?

Even Sampson, on the whole, inclined to a similar conclusion.

At this crisis of the discussion a red-haired pedlar, with very large whiskers and the remains of a black eye, put his head in, and asked whether Tom Green was there. "No," said the Doctor stoutly, not desiring company of this stamp. "Don't know the lad."

The pedlar laughed: "There is not many that do know him at all hours; however, he *is* here, sir." And he whipped off the red hair, and

wiped off the black eye, and lo Green ipse. He received their compliments on his Protean powers, and told them he had been just a minute too late; Mr. Hardie was gone, and so he had lost the chance of seeing who came to help him, and of hearing the first words that passed between the two: this, he said, was a very great pity; for it would have shown him in one moment whether certain suspicions of his were correct. Pressed as to what these suspicions were, he begged to be excused saying any more for the present. The Doctor, however, would not let him off so, but insisted on his candid opinion.

"Well, sir," said Green, "I never was more puzzled in my life, owing to not being near hand when he was untied. It looks all square however. There's only one little thing that don't fit somehow."

They both asked in a breath what that was.

"The sovs. were all marked."

They asked how he knew; and had he got them in his pocket to show?

Green uttered a low chuckling laugh: "What me fake the beans, now I live on this side the hedge? never knew a cove mix his liquors that way but it hurt his health soon or late. No, I took them out of one pocket, and felt of them as I slipped them into the other. Ye see, gents, to do any good on my lay, a man must train his senses as well as his mind: he must have a hare's ear, and a hawk's eye, a bloodhound's nose, and a lady's hand with steel fingers and a silk skin. Now look at that bunch of fives," continued the master; and laid a hand white and soft as a duchess's on the table: "it can put the bracelets on a giant, or find a sharper's nail-mark on the back of the knave of clubs. The beans were marked. Which it is a small thing, but it don't fit the rest. Here's an unsuspicious gent took by surprise, in moonlight meditation fancy free, and all his little private family matters found in his innocent bosom quite promiscuous; but his beans marked: that don't dovetail nohow. Gents, did ever you hear of the man that went to the bottom of the bottomless pit to ease his mind? Well, he was the head of my family: I must go to the bottom whether there's one or not. And just now I see but one way."

"And what is that?" inquired both his companions in some alarm.

"Oh, I mustn't threaten it," said Green, "or I shall never have the stomach to do it. But dear me, this boozing ken is a very unfit place for you, you are champagne-gents not dog's nose ones. Now you part and make tracks for home, one on foot, and one in a fly. You won't see me, nor hear of me again, till I've something fresh."

And so the confederates parted, and Sampson and Edward met at Albion Villa; and Edward told his mother what they had done, and his conviction that Mr. Hardie was innocent, and Alfred a slanderer as well as a traitor: "And indeed," said he, "if we had but stopped to reflect, we should have seen how unlikely the money was not to be lost in the Agra. Why the 'Tiser says she went to pieces almost directly she struck. What we ought to have done was, not to listen to Alfred Hardie like fools, but write to Lloyd's like people in their senses. I'll do it this minute, and find out the surviving officers of the ship: they will be able to give us information on that head." Mrs. Dodd approved; and said she would write to her kind correspondent Mrs. Beresford: and she

did sit down to her desk at once. As for Sampson he returned to town next morning, not quite convinced, but thoroughly staggered; and determined for once to resign his own judgment, and abide the result of Mrs. Dodd's correspondence and Mr. Green's sagacity. All he insisted on was, that his placard about Alfred should be continued: he left money for this, and Edward against the grain consented to see it done. But placards are no monopoly: in the afternoon only a section of Sampson's was visible in most parts of the town by reason of a poster to this effect pasted half over it:

"FIFTY GUINEAS REWARD.

"Whereas yesterday evening at ten o'clock Richard Hardie, Esq. of Musgrove Cottage, Barkington, was assaulted at his own door by three ruffians, who rifled his pockets, and read his private memoranda, and committed other acts of violence, the shock of which has laid him on a bed of sickness, the above reward shall be paid to any person, or persons, who will give such information as shall lead to the detection of all or any one of the miscreants concerned in this outrage.

The above reward will be paid by Mr. Thomas Hardie, of Clare Court, Yorkshire."

On this the impartial police came to Mr. Hardie's and made inquiries. He received them in bed, and told them particulars: and they gathered from Peggy that she had heard a cry of distress, and opened the kitchen door, and that Betty and she had ventured out together, and found poor master tied to the gate with an old cord; this she produced, and the police inspected and took it away with them.

At sight of that Notice, Edward felt cold and then hot, and realised the false and perilous position into which he had been betrayed: "So much for being wiser than the law," he said: "what are we now but three footpads?" This, and the insult his sister had received, made the place poison to him; and hastened their departure by a day or two: the very next day (Thursday) an affiche on the walls of Albion Villa announced that Mr. Chippenham, auctioneer, would sell next Wednesday on the premises the greater part of the furniture, plate, china, glass, Oriental inlaid boxes and screens, with several superb India shawls, scarfs, and dresses; also a twenty-one years' lease of the villa; seventeen to run.

Edward took unfurnished apartments in London, near Russell Square: a locality in which, as he learned from the 'Tiser, the rooms were large and cheap; he packed just so much furniture as was essential; no knick-knacks. It was to go by rail on Monday; Mrs. Dodd and Julia were to follow on Tuesday: Edward to stay at Barkington and look after the sale.

Meantime their secret ally, Mr. Green, was preparing his threatened coup. The more he reflected the more he suspected that he had been outwitted by Peggy Black; she had led him on, and the pocket-book had been planted for him. If so, why Peggy was a genius, and in his own line; and he would marry her, and so kill two birds with one stone: make a Detective of her (there was a sad lack of female Detectives); and, once his wife, she would split on her master, and he

should defeat that old soldier at last, and get a handsome slice of the 14,000*l.*

He manœuvred thus; first, he went back to London for a day or two to do other jobs, and to let this matter cool: then he returned, and wrote from a town near Barkington to Peggy Black, telling her he had been sent away suddenly on a job, but his heart had remained behind with his Peggy: would she meet him at the gate at nine that evening? He had something very particular to say to her. As to the nature of the business the enclosed would give her a hint. She might name her own day, and the sooner the better.

The enclosed was a wedding ring.

At nine this extraordinary pair of lovers met at the gate; but Peggy seemed hardly at her ease; said her master would be coming out and catching her; perhaps they had better walk up the road a bit. "With all my heart," said Green; but he could not help a little sneer: "Your master?" said he: "why he is your servant, as I am. What, is he jealous?"

"I don't know what you mean, young man," said Peggy.

"I'll tell you when we are married."

"La, that is a long time to wait for my answer: why we ain't asked in church yet."

"There's no need of that; I can afford a special licence."

"Lawk a daisy: why you be a gentleman then."

"No, but I can keep my wife like a lady."

"You sounds very tempting," murmured Peggy throwing her skirt over her head—for a drizzle was beginning—and walking slower and slower.

Then he made hot love to her, and pressed her hard to name the day.

She coquetted with the question till they came near the mouth of a dark lane, called Lovers' Walk; then, as he insisted on an answer, she hung her head bashfully, and coughed a little cough. At which preconcerted signal a huge policeman sprang out of the lane and collared Mr. Green.

On this Peggy, who was all Lie from head to heel, uttered a little scream of dismay and surprise.

Mr. Green laughed.

"Well, you *are* a downy one," said he. "I'll marry you all the more for this."

The Detective put his hands suddenly inside the policeman's, caught him by the bosom with his right hand by way of fulcrum; and with his left by the chin, which he forced violently back, and gave him a slight Cornish trip at the same moment; down went the policeman on the back of his head a fearful crack: Green then caught the astonished Peggy round the neck, kissed her lips violently, and fled like the wind; removed all traces of his personal identity, and up to London by the train in the character of a young swell, with a self-fitting eyeglass and a long moustache the colour of his tender mistress's eyebrow: tow.

From town he wrote to her, made her a formal offer of marriage; and gave her an address to write to "should she at any time think more kindly of him and of his sincere affection."

I suppose he specified sincere because it was no longer sincere: he hurled the offer into Musgrove Cottage by way of an apple of discord

at least so I infer from the memorandum, with which he retired at present from the cash-hunt.

"Mr. Hardie has the stiff, I think: but, if so, it is planted somewhere; doesn't carry it about him; my Peggy is his mistress: nothing to be done till they split."

Victorious so far, Mr. Hardie had still one pressing anxiety; Dr. Sampson's placard: this had been renewed, and stared him everywhere in the face. Every copy of it he encountered made him shiver: if he had been a man of impulse, he would have torn it down wherever he saw it: but he knew that would not do. However, learning from Jane, who had it from old Betty, who had it from Sarah, that Mrs. and Miss Dodd would leave for London the day before the sale, and Edward the day after it, he thought he might venture in the busy intermediate time to take some liberties with it. This he did with excellent tact and judgment; Peggy and a billsticker were seen in conference, and, soon after, the huge bills of a travelling circus were pasted right over both the rival advertisements in which the name of Hardie figured. The consequence was, Edward raised no objection; he was full of the sale for one thing; but I suspect he was content to see his own false move pasted over on such easy terms.

One morning Peggy brought in the letters, and Jane saw one in Alfred's handwriting. She snatched it up, and cried "Papa, from Alfred!" And she left off making the tea, while her father opened it with comparative composure.

This coolness, however, did not outlast the perusal: "The young ruffian!" said he: "would you believe it, Jenny, he accuses me of being the cause of his last business."

"Let me see, papa."

He held her out the letter; but hesitated and drew it back: "My dear, it would give you pain to see your poor father treated so. Here's a specimen: 'What could they expect but that the son of a sharper would prove a traitor? You stole her money; I her affections, of which I am unworthy.' Now what do you think of that?"

"Unhappy Alfred!" said Jane. "No, papa, I would not read it, if you are insulted in it. But where is he?"

"The letter is dated Paris. See!" And he showed her the date: "but he says here, he is coming back to London directly; and he orders me in the most peremptory way to be ready with my accounts, and pay him over his fortune. Well, he is alive at all events: really my good, kind, interfering, pragmatical friend Sampson, with his placards, made me feel uneasy, more uneasy than I would own to you, Jenny."

"Unhappy Alfred!" cried Jane, with the tears in her eyes; "and poor papa!"

"Oh never mind me," said Mr. Hardie; "now that I know no harm has come to him, I really don't care a straw: I have got one child that loves me, and that I love."

"Ah yes, dear, dear papa, and that will always love you, and never, never, disobey you in small things or great." She rose from the table and sealed this with a pious kiss; and, when she sat down with a pink

flush on her delicate cheek, his hard eye melted and dwelt on her with beaming tenderness. His heart yearned over her, and a pang went through it: to think that he must deceive even her, the one sweet soul that loved him!

It was a passing remorse: the successful plotter soon predominated, and it was with unmixed satisfaction he saw her put on her bonnet directly after breakfast, and hurry off to Albion Villa to play the part of his unconscious sieve.

He himself strolled in the opposite direction, not to seem to be watching her.

He was in good spirits; felt like a general, who, after repulsing many desperate attacks successfully, orders an advance, and sees the tide of battle roll away from his bayonets. His very body seemed elastic, indomitable; he walked lustily out into the country, sniffed the perfumed hedges, and relished life. To be sure he could not walk away from all traces of his misdeeds; he fell in with objects, that to an ordinary sinner might have spoiled the walk, and even marred the spring-time; he found his creditor Maxley with grizzly beard, and bloodshot eyes, belabouring a milestone; and two small boys quizzing him, and pelting him with mud: and soon after, he met his creditor, old Dr. Phillips, in a cart, coming back to Barkington to end his days there, at the almshouse. But to our triumphant Bankrupt and Machiavel these things were literally nothing; he paced complacently on, and cared no more for either of those his wrecks, than the smiling sea itself seems to care for the dead ships and men it washed ashore a week ago.

He came home before luncheon for his gossip with Jane; but she had not returned. All the better; her budget would be the larger.

To while the time he got his file of the Times, and amused himself noting down the fluctuations in Peruvian bonds.

While thus employed he heard a loud knock at his door, and soon after Peggy's voice and a man's in swift collision. Hasty feet came along the passage, the parlour door opened, and a young man rushed in pale as ashes, and stared at him; he was breathless, and his lips moved, but no sound came.

It was Edward Dodd.

Mr. Hardie rose like a tower and manned himself to repulse this fresh assault.

The strange visitor gasped out, "You are wanted at our house."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

JANE HARDIE had found Albion Villa in the miserable state that precedes an auction; the house raw, its contents higgledy-piggledy. The stair carpets, and drawing-room carpets, were up, and in rolls in the dining-room; the bulk of the furniture was there too; the auction was to be in that room. The hall was clogged with great packages, and littered with small, all awaiting the railway carts; and Edward, dusty and deliquescent, was cording, strapping, and nailing them at the gallop, in his shirt sleeves.

Jane's heart sank at the visible signs of his departure. She sighed; and then, partly to divert his attention, told him hastily there was a letter from Alfred. On this he ran upstairs and told Mrs. Dodd; and she came down stairs, and after a conversation took Jane up softly to her friend's room.

They opened the door gently, and Jane saw the grief she was come to console; or to embitter.

Such a change! instead of the bright, elastic, impetuous, young beauty, there sat a pale languid girl, with "weary of the world" written on every part of her eloquent body; her right hand dangled by her side, and on the ground beneath it lay a piece of work she had been attempting; but it had escaped from those listless fingers: her left arm was stretched at full length on the table with an unspeakable abandon, and her brow laid wearily on it above the elbow. So lies the wounded bird, so droops the broken lily.

She did not move for Jane's light foot. She often sat thus, a drooping statue, and let people come and go unheeded.

Jane's heart yearned for her. She came softly and laid a little hand lightly on her shoulder, and, true to her creed that we must look upward for consolation, said in her ear, and in solemn, silvery tones, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Julia turned at this and flung her arms round Jane's neck, and panted heavily.

Jane kissed her, and, with the tears in her eyes, proceeded to pour out, from a memory richly stored with Scripture, those blessed words it is full of, words that in our hours of ease or biblical criticism pass over the mind like some drowsy chime; but in the bitter day of anguish and bereavement, when the body is racked, the soul darkened, shine out like stars to the mariner; seem then first to swell to their real size and meaning, and come to writhing mortals like pitying seraphim, divinity on their faces and healing on their wings.

Julia sighed heavily: "Ah," she said, "these are sweet words. But I am not ripe for them. You show me the true path of happiness: but I don't *want* to be happy; it's *him* I want to be happy. If the angels came for me and took me to heaven this moment, I should be miserable there, if I thought *he* was in eternal torment; ay, I should be as miserable there as I am here. Oh Jane, when God means to comfort me, He will show me *he* is alive; till then words are wasted on me, even Bible words."

"Tell her your news, my dear," said Mrs. Dodd quietly. She was one of those who take human nature as it is, and make the best of it.

"Julia dear," said Jane, "your fears are extravagant; indeed: Alfred is alive, we know."

Julia trembled, but said nothing.

"He has written to-day."

"Ah! To you?"

"No, to papa."

"I don't believe it. Why to him?"

"But I saw the letter, dear; I had it in my hand."

"Did you read it?" asked Julia, trembling now like an aspen, and fluttering like a bird.

"No, but I read the address, and the date inside, and I saw the handwriting; and I was offered the letter, but papa told me it was full of abuse of him, so I declined* to read it; however, I will get it for *you*."

Mrs. Dodd thanked her warmly; but asked her if she could not in the mean time give some idea of the contents.

"Oh yes, Mrs. Dodd: papa read me out a great deal of it. He was in Paris, but just starting for London: and he demanded his money and his accounts. You know papa is one of his trustees."

"Well, but," said Mrs. Dodd, "was there nothing—nothing about—?"

"Oh yes there was," said Jane, "only I—well then, for dear Julia's sake—the letter said, 'What wonder the son of a sharper should prove a traitor? *You* have stolen her money, and *I* her affections, and'—oh, I can't, I can't." And Jane Hardie began to cry.

Mrs. Dodd embraced her like a mother, and entered into her filial feelings: Mrs. Dodd had never seen her so weak, and, therefore, never thought her so amiable. Thus occupied they did not at first observe how these tidings were changing Julia.

But presently looking up they saw her standing at her full height, on fire with wrath and insulted pride.

"Ah, you have brought me comfort," she cried. "Mamma, I shall hate and scorn this man some day, as much as I hate and scorn myself now for every tear I have shed for him."

They tried to calm her, but in vain; a new gust of passion possessed the ardent young creature, and would have vent. She reddened from bosom to brow, and the scalding tears ran down her flaming cheeks, and she repeated between her clenched teeth, "My veins are not filled with skim-milk, I can tell you: you have seen how I can love, you shall see how I can hate." And with this she went haughtily out of the room, not to expose the passion which overpowered her.

Mrs. Dodd took advantage of her absence to thank Jane for her kindness, and told her she had also received some letters by this morning's post, and thought it would be neither kind on her part nor just to conceal their purport from her. She then read her a letter from Mrs. Beresford, and another from Mr. Grey, in answer to queries about the 14,000*l*.

Sharpe, I may as well observe, was at sea; Bayliss drowned.

Mrs. Beresford knew nothing about the matter.

Mr. Grey was positive Captain Dodd, when in command, had several thousand pounds in his cabin: Mrs. Beresford's Indian servant had been detected trying to steal it, and put in irons: believed the lady had not been told the cause—out of delicacy: and Captain Roberts had liberated him. As to whether the money had escaped the wreck—if on Captain Dodd's person, it might have been saved; but if not, it was certainly lost: for Captain Dodd to his knowledge had run on deck from the passengers' cabin the moment the ship struck, and had remained there till she went to pieces; and everything was washed out of her.

"Our own opinion," said Mrs. Dodd, "I mean Edward's and mine, is now, that the money was lost in the ship; and you can tell your papa so if you like."

* This was one of those involuntary inaccuracies which creep into mortal statements.

Jane thanked her, and said she thought so too; and what a sad thing it was.

Soon after this Julia returned, pale and calm as a statue, and sat down humbly beside Jane: "O, pray with me," she said: "pray that I may not hate, for to hate is to be wicked; and pray that I may not love, for to love is to be miserable."

Mrs. Dodd retired, with her usual tact and self-denial.

Then Jane Hardie, being alone with her friend, and full of sorrow, sympathy, and faith, found words of eloquence almost divine to raise her.

With these pious consolations Julia's pride and self-respect now co-operated; relieved of her great terror, she felt her insult to her fingers' ends: "I'll never degrade myself so far as to pine for another lady's lover," she said. "I'll resume my duties in another sphere, and try to face the world by degrees. I am not quite alone in it: I have my mother still—and my Redeemer."

Some tears forced their way at these brave, gentle words. Jane gave her time.

Then she said: "Begin by putting on your bonnet, and visiting with me. Come with one who is herself thwarted in the carnal affections; come with her and see how sick some are, and we two in health; how racked with pain some are, and we two at ease; how hungry some, and we have abundance; and, above all, in what spiritual deserts some lie, while we walk in the gospel light."

"Oh that I had the strength," said Julia; "I'll try."

She put on her bonnet, and went down with her friend: but at the street door the strange feeling of shame overpowered her: she blushed, and trembled, and begged to substitute the garden for the road. Jane consented, and said everything must have a beginning.

The fresh air, the bursting buds, and all the face of nature, did Julia good; and she felt it: "You little angel," said she, with something of her old impetuosity, "you have saved me. I was making myself worse by shutting myself up in that one miserable room."

They walked hand in hand for a good half hour, and then Jane said she must go: papa would miss her. Julia was sorry to part with her, and almost without thinking, accompanied her through the house to the front gate; and that was another point gained. "I never was so sorry to part with you, love," said she. "When will you come again? We leave to-morrow. I am selfish to detain you; but it seems as if my guardian angel was leaving me."

Jane smiled. "I must go," said she, "but I'll leave better angels than I am behind me. I leave you this: 'Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God!' When it seems most harsh, then it is most loving. Pray for faith to say with me, 'Lead us by a way that we know not.'"

They kissed one another, and Julia stood at the gate and looked lovingly after her, with the tears standing thick in her own violet eyes.

Now Maxley was coming down the road, all grizzly and bloodshot, baited by the boys, who had gradually swelled in number as he drew nearer the town.

Jane was shocked at their heathenish cruelty, and went off the path to remonstrate with them.

On this, Maxley fell upon her, and began beating her about the head and shoulders with his heavy stick.

The miserable boys uttered yells of dismay, but did nothing.

Julia uttered a violent scream, but flew to her friends' aid, and crying, "Oh you wretch! you wretch!" actually caught the man by the throat and shook him violently: he took his hand off Jane Hardie, who instantly sank moaning on the ground, and he cowered like a cur at the voice and the purple gleaming eyes of the excited girl.

The air filled with cries, and Edward ran out of the house to see what was the matter; but on the spot nobody was game enough to come between the furious man and the fiery girl. The consequence was her impetuous courage began to flag, and her eye to waver; the demented man found this out by some half animal instinct, and instantly caught her by the shoulder and whirled her down on her knees: then raised his staff high to destroy her.

She screamed, and was just putting up her hands, woman-like, not to see her death as well as feel it, when something dark came past her like a rushing wind, a blow, that sounded exactly like that of a paving ram, caught Maxley on the jaw; and there was Edward Dodd blowing like a grampus with rage, and Maxley on his back in the road; but men under cerebral excitement are not easily stunned, and know no pain: he bounded off the ground, and came at Edward like a Spanish bull. Edward slipped aside, and caught him another ponderous blow that sent him staggering, and his bludgeon flew out of his hand, and Edward caught it; lo! the maniac flew at him again more fiercely than ever: but the young Hercules had seen Jane bleeding on the ground: he dealt her assailant in full career such a murderous stroke with the bludgeon, that the people, who were running from all quarters, shrieked with dismay, not for Jane, but for Maxley; and well they might: that awful stroke laid him senseless, motionless, and mute, in a pool of his own blood.

"Don't kill him, sir; don't kill the man," was the cry.

"Why not?" said Edward sternly. He then kneeled over his sweetheart and lifted her in his arms like a child. Her bonnet was all broken, her eyes were turned upwards and set, and a little blood trickled down her cheek; and that cheek seemed streaked white and red.

He was terrified, agonized; yet he gasped out, "You are safe, dear, don't be frightened."

She knew the voice.

"Oh, Edward!" she said, piteously and tenderly: and then moaned a little on his broad bosom. He carried her into the house out of the crowd.

Poor old doctor Phillips, coming in to end his days in the almshouse, had seen it all: he got out of his cart and hobbled up. He had been in the army, and had both experience and skill. He got her bonnet off, and at sight of her head looked very grave.

In a minute a bed was laid in the drawing-room, and all the windows and doors open; and Edward, trembling now in every limb, ran to Musgrove Cottage, while Mrs. Dodd and Julia loosened the poor girl's dress, and bathed her wounds with tepid water (the doctor would not allow cold), and put wine carefully to her lips with a teaspoon.

"Wanted at your house, pray what for?" said Mr. Hardie superciliously.

"Oh, sir," said Edward, "such a calamity. Pray come directly. A ruffian has struck her, has hurt her terribly, terribly."

"Her! Who?" asked Mr. Hardie, beginning to be uneasy.

"Who! why Jane, your daughter, man; and there you sit chattering, instead of coming at once."

Mr. Hardie rose hurriedly and put on his hat, and accompanied him, half confused.

Soon Edward's mute agitation communicated itself to him, and he went striding and trembling by his side.

The crowd had gone with insensible Maxley to the hospital; but the traces of the terrible combat were there. Where Maxley fell the last time, a bullock seemed to have been slaughtered at the least.

The miserable father came on this, and gave a great scream like a woman, and staggered back white as a sheet.

Edward laid his hand on him, for he seemed scarce able to stand.

"No, no, no," he cried, comprehending the mistake at last; "that is not hers—Heaven forbid! That is the madman's who did it; I knocked him down with his own cudgel."

"God bless you! you've killed him, I hope."

"Oh, sir, be more merciful, and then perhaps He will be merciful to us, and not take this angel from us."

"No! no! you are right: good young man. I little thought I had such a friend in your house."

"Don't deceive yourself, sir," said Edward; "it's not you I care for:" then, with a great cry of anguish, "*I love her.*"

At this blunt declaration, so new and so offensive to him, Mr. Hardie winced, and stopped bewildered.

But they were at the gate, and Edward hurried him on. At the house door he drew back once more; for he felt a shiver of repugnance at entering this hateful house, of whose happiness he was the destroyer.

But enter it he must; it was his fate.

The wife of the poor Captain he had driven mad met him in the passage, her motherly eyes full of tears for him, and both hands held out to him like a pitying angel. "Oh, Mr. Hardie," she said in a broken voice, and took him, and led him, wonderstruck, stupified, shivering with dark fears, to the room where his crushed daughter lay.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Mr. Hardie found his daughter lying ashy pale on a little bed in the drawing-room of Albion Villa. She was now scarce conscious. The old doctor sat at her head looking very grave; and Julia kneeled over her beloved friend, pale as herself, with hands clasped convulsively, and great eyes of terror and grief.

That vivid young face, full of foreboding and woe, struck Mr. Hardie the moment he entered, and froze his very heart: the strong man

quivered and sank slowly like a felled tree by the bedside; and his face and the poor girl's whose earthly happiness he had coldly destroyed, nearly met over his crushed daughter.

"Jane, my child," he gasped; "my poor little Jane!"

"Oh let me sleep," she moaned feebly.

"Darling, it's your own papa," said Julia softly.

"Poor papa!" said she, turning rather to Julia than to him. "Let me sleep."

She was in a half lethargic state.

Mr. Hardie asked the doctor in an agitated whisper if he might move her home. The doctor shook his head: "Not by my advice; her pulse is scarce perceptible. We must not move her, nor excite her, nor yet let her sink into lethargy. She is in great danger; very great."

At these terrible words Mr. Hardie groaned: and they all began to speak below the breath.

"Edward," murmured Mrs. Dodd hurriedly, "run and put off the auction: put it off altogether: then go to the railway; nothing must come here to make a noise: and get straw put down directly. Do that first, dear."

"You are kinder to me than I deserve," muttered Mr. Hardie humbly, quite cowed by the blow that had fallen on him.

The words agitated Mrs. Dodd with many thoughts: but she whispered as calmly as she could, "Let us think of nothing now but this precious life."

Mr. Hardie begged to see the extent of the injury. Mrs. Dodd dissuaded him; but he persisted. Then the doctor showed her poor head.

At that the father uttered a scream and sat quivering. Julia buried her face in the bed-clothes directly, and sobbed vehemently. It passed faintly across the benumbed and shuddering father, "How she loves my child; they all love her:" but the thought made little impression at the time; the mind was too full of terror and woe. The doctor now asked for brandy, in a whisper. Mrs. Dodd left the room with stealthy foot, and brought it. He asked for a quill. Julia went with swift, stealthy foot, and brought it. With adroit and tender hands they aided the doctor, and trickled stimulants down her throat. Then sat like statues of grief about the bed; only every now and then eye sought eye, and endeavoured to read what the other thought. Was there hope? Was there none? And by-and-by, so roving is the mind, especially when the body is still, these statues began to thrill with thoughts of the past as well as the absorbing present.

Ay, here were met a strange party; a stranger, for its size, methinks never yet met on earth, to mingle their hearts together in one grief.

Just think! Of him who sat there with his face hidden in his hands, and his frame shuddering, all the others were the victims.

Yet the lady, whose husband he had robbed and driven mad, pitied and sympathised with him, and he saw it; the lady, whom he had insulted at the altar and blighted her young heart and life, pitied and sympathised with him; the poor old doctor pitied and sympathised, and was more like an anxious father than a physician.

Even Jane was one of his victims; for she fell by the hand of a man he had dishonestly ruined and driven out of his senses.

Thinking of all he had done, and this the end of it, he was at once crushed and melted.

He saw with awe that a mightier hand than man's was upon him; it had tossed him and his daughter into the house and the arms of the injured Dodds, in defiance of all human calculation; and he felt himself a straw in that hand: so he was, and the great globe itself. Oh if Jane should die! the one creature he loved, the one creature, bereaved of whom he could get no joy even from riches.

What would he not give to recal the past, since all his schemes had but ended in this. Thus stricken by terror of the divine wrath, and touched by the goodness and kindness of those he had cruelly wronged, all the man was broken with remorse. Then he vowed to undo his own work as far as possible: he would do anything, everything, if Heaven would spare him his child.

Now it did so happen that these resolves, earnest and sincere but somewhat vague, were soon put to the test; and, as often occurs, what he was called on to do first, was that which he would rather have done last. Thus it was: about five o'clock in the afternoon Jane Hardie opened her eyes and looked about her.

It was a moment of intense anxiety. They all made signals, but held their breath. She smiled at sight of Mr. Hardie, and said, "Papa! dear papa!"

There was great joy: silent on the part of Mrs. Dodd and Julia; but Mr. Hardie, who saw in this a good omen, Heaven recognising his penitence, burst out: "She knows me; she speaks; she will live. How good God is! Yes, my darling child, it is your own father. You will be brave and get well for my sake."

Jane did not seem to pay much heed to these words: she looked straight before her like one occupied with her own thought, and said distinctly and solemnly, "Papa—send for Alfred."

It fell on all three like a clap of thunder, those gentle but decided tones, those simple natural words.

Julia's eyes flashed into her mother's, and then sought the ground directly.

There was a dead silence.

Mr. Hardie was the one to speak. "Why for him, dear? Those who love you best are all here."

"For Heaven's sake don't thwart her, sir," said the doctor, in alarm. "This is no time to refuse her anything in your power. Sometimes the very expectation of a beloved person coming keeps them alive; stimulates the powers."

Mr. Hardie was sore perplexed.—He recoiled from the sudden exposure that might take place, if Alfred without any preparation or previous conciliatory measures were allowed to burst in upon them. And while his mind was whirling within him in doubt and perplexity, Jane spoke again; but no longer calmly and connectedly; she was beginning to wander. Presently in her wandering she spoke of Edward; called him dear Edward. Mrs. Dodd rose hastily, and her first impulse was to ask

both gentlemen to retire: so instinctively does a good woman protect her own sex against the other. But, reflecting that this was the father, she made an excuse and retired herself instead, followed by Julia. The doctor divined, and went to the window. The father sat by the bed, and soon gathered his daughter loved Edward Dodd.

The time was gone by when this would have greatly pained him.

He sighed like one overmatched by fate; but said, "You shall have him, my darling; he is a good young man, he shall be your husband; you shall be happy. Only live for my sake, for all our sakes." She paid no attention and wandered on a little; but her mind gradually cleared, and by-and-by she asked quietly for a glass of water. Mr. Hardie gave it her. She sipped, and he took it from her. She looked at him close, and said distinctly, "Have you sent for Alfred?"

"No, love, not yet."

"Not yet? ! There is no time to lose," she said gravely.

Mr. Hardie trembled. Then, being alone with her, the miserable man unable to say no, unwilling to say yes, tried to persuade her not to ask for Alfred. "My dear," he whispered, "I will not refuse you: but I have a secret to confide to you. Will you keep it?"

"Yes, papa, faithfully."

"Poor Alfred is not himself. He has delusions: he is partly insane. My brother Thomas has thought it best for us all to put him under gentle restraint for a time. It would retard his cure to have him down here and subject him to excitement."

"Papa," said Jane, "are you deceiving me, or are you imposed upon? Alfred insane! It is a falsehood. He came to me the night before the wedding that was to be. O my brother, my darling brother, how dare they say you are insane! That letter you showed me then was a falsehood? O papa!"

"I feared to frighten you," said Mr. Hardie, and hung his head.

"I see it all," she cried; "those wicked men with their dark words have imposed on you. Bring him to me that I may reconcile you all, and end all this misery ere I go hence and be no more seen."

"Oh, my child, don't talk so," cried Mr. Hardie, trembling. "Think of your poor father."

"I do," she cried, "I do. Oh, papa, I lie here between two worlds, and see them both so clear. Trust to me: and, if you love me——"

"If I love you, Jane? better than all the world twice told."

"Then don't refuse me this one favour: the last, perhaps, I shall ever ask you. I want my brother here before it is too late. Tell him he must come to his little sister, who loves him dearly, and—is dying."

"Oh no! no! no!" cried the agonised father, casting everything to the winds. "I will. He shall be here in twelve hours. Only promise me to bear up. Have a strong will; have courage. You shall have Alfred, you shall have anything you like on earth, anything that money can get you. What am I saying? I have no money; it is all gone. But I have a father's heart. Madam, Mrs. Dodd!" She came directly.

"Can you give me paper? No, I won't trust to a letter. I'll send off a special messenger this moment. It is for my son, madam. He will be here to-morrow morning. God knows how it will all end. But how

can I refuse my dying child? Oh, madam, you are good, kind, forgiving; keep my poor girl alive for me: keep telling her Alfred is coming; she cares more for him than for her poor heartbroken father."

And the miserable man rushed out, leaving Mrs. Dodd in tears for him.

He was no sooner gone than Julia came in; and clasped her mother, and trembled on her bosom. Then Mrs. Dodd knew she had overheard Mr. Hardie's last words.

Jane Hardie, too, though much exhausted by the scene with her father, put out her hand to Julia, and took hers, and said feebly, but with a sweet smile, "He is coming love; all shall be well." Then to herself as it were, and looking up with a gentle rapture in her pale face:

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

On this thought she seemed to feed with innocent joy; but for a long time was too weak to speak again.

Mr. Hardie, rushing from the house, found Edward at work outside; he was crying undisguisedly, and with his coat off, working harder at spreading the straw than both the two men together he had got to help him. Mr. Hardie took his hand and wrung it, but could not speak.

In half an hour a trusty agent he had often employed was at the station waiting for the up train, nearly due.

He came back to Albion Villa. Julia met him on the stairs with her finger to her lips. "She is sleeping; the doctor has hopes. Oh, sir, let us all pray for her day and night."

Mr. Hardie blessed her; it seemed the face of an angel so earnest, so lovely, so pious. He went home: and at the door of his own house Peggy met him with anxious looks. He told her what he had done.

"Good Heavens!" said she: "have you forgotten? He says he will kill you the first day he gets out. You told me so yourself."

"Yes, Baker said so. I can't help it. I don't care what becomes of me; I care only for my child. Leave me, Peggy; there, go; go."

He was no sooner alone than he fell upon his knees, and offered the Great Author of life and death—a bargain. "Oh God," he cried "I own my sins, and I repent them. Spare but my child, who never sinned against Thee, and I will undo all I have done amiss in Thy sight. I will refund that money on which Thy curse lies. I will throw myself on their mercy. I will set my son free. I will live on a pittance. I will part with Peggy. I will serve Mammon no more. I will attend Thine ordinances. I will live soberly, honestly, and godly all the remainder of my days; only do Thou spare my child. She is Thy servant, and does Thy work on earth, and there is nothing on earth I love but her."

And now the whistle sounded, the train moved, and his messenger was flying fast to London, with a note to Dr. Wycherley:

"Dear Sir,—My poor daughter lies dangerously wounded, and perhaps at the point of death. She cries for her brother. He must

come down to us instantly with the bearer of this. Send one of your people with him if you like. But it is not necessary. I enclose a blank cheque, signed, which please fill at your discretion.

"I am, with thanks,

"Yours in deep distress,

"RICHARD HARDIE."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

DR. SHORT arrived, approved Dr. Phillips's treatment, and said the case was severe but not hopeless, and he would call again. A bed was prepared in the house for Mr. Hardie: but neither he nor any of the Dodds closed an eye that sorrowful night.

About midnight, after a short slumber, the sufferer became uneasy, and begged to be left with Julia. Julia was sent for, and found her a good deal excited. She inquired more than once if they were quite alone, and then asked for paper and a pencil. She wrote a few lines, and made Julia put them in a cover and seal them. "Now dear friend," she said, "promise me not to open this, nor even to let your mother; it is not for your happiness that what I have written should be seen by her or you; no, no, much better not. Come; dear friend, pledge me your honour." Julia pledged her honour.

Then Jane wrote on the cover, "From a dying sister." Julia saw that; and wept sore.

Jane comforted her. "Do not weep for me, love: I am content to go, or stay. This is not my doing; so I know it must be for the best. He is leading me by a way that I know not. Oh my beloved friend, how sweet it is to lie in His hands, and know no will but His. Ay, I thank Him for crossing my will, and leading me to Himself by His own good way, and not by poor blind, foolish, mine."

In this spirit of full resignation she abode constant, and consoled her weeping friends from time to time, whenever she was quite herself.

About daybreak, being alone with her father, she shed a few tears at his lonely condition. "I fear you will miss me," said she. "Take my advice, dear; be reconciled with Alfred at once, and let Julia be your daughter, since I am leaving you. She is all humility and heart. Dying, I prize her and her affection more highly; I seem to see characters clearer, all things clearer, than I did before my summons came."

The miserable father tried to be playful and scold her: "You must not talk nor think of death," he said. "Your bridal-day is to come first; I know all; Edward Dodd has told me he loves you. He is a fine noble fellow; you shall marry him: I wish it. Now, for his sake, summon all your resolution, and make up your mind to live. Why, at your age, it needs but to say, 'I will live, I will, I will;' and when all the prospect is so smiling, when love awaits you at the altar, and on every side! If you could leave your poor doting father, do not leave your lover: and here he is with his mother crying for you. Let me comfort him; let me tell him you will live for his sake and mine."

Even this could not disturb the dying Christian. "Dear Edward,"

she said; "it is sweet to know he loves me. Ah, well, he is young; he must live without me till I become but a tender memory of his youth. And oh, I pray for him that he may cherish the words I have spoken to him for his soul's good far longer than he can remember these features, that are hastening to decay."

At ten in the morning Mr. Hardie's messenger returned without Alfred, and with a note from Dr. Wycherley to this effect, that, the order for Alfred's admission into his asylum being signed by Mr. Thomas Hardie, he could not send him out even for a day except on Thomas Hardie's authority; it would be a violation of the law. Under the circumstances, however, he thought he might venture to receive that order by telegraph. If then Mr. Hardie would telegraph Thomas Hardie in Yorkshire to telegraph him (Wycherley), Alfred should be sent with two keepers wherever Mr. T. Hardie should so direct.

Now Mr. Hardie had already repented of sending for Alfred at all. So, instead of telegraphing Yorkshire, he remained passive, and said sullenly to Mrs. Dodd, "Alfred can't come, it seems."

Thus Routine kept the brother from his dying sister.

They told Jane, with aching hearts, there was reason to fear Alfred could not arrive that day.

She only gave a meaning look at Julia, about the paper; and then she said with a little sigh, "God's will be done."

This was the last disappointment Heaven allowed Earth to inflict on her; and the shield of Faith turned its edge.

One hour of pain, another of delirium, and now the clouds that darken this mortal life seemed to part and pass, and Heaven to open full upon her. She spoke of her coming change no longer with resignation; it was with rapture. "Oh!" she cried, "to think that from this very day I shall never sin again, shall never again offend Him by unholy temper, by un-Christ-like behaviour!"

The strong and healthy wept and groaned aloud; but she they sorrowed for was all celestial bliss. In her lifetime she had her ups and downs of religious fervour; was not without feverish heats, and cold misgivings and depression; but all these fled at that dread hour when the wicked are a prey to dark misgivings, or escape into apathy. This timid girl, that would have screamed at a scratch, met the King of Terrors with smiles and triumph. For her the grave was Jordan, and death was but the iron gate of life everlasting. Mors janua vitæ. Yet once or twice she took herself to task: but only to show she knew what the All-Pure had forgiven her. "I often was wanting in humility," she said; "I almost think that if I were to be sent back again into this world of sin and sorrow I am leaving behind, I should grow a little in humility; for I know the ripe Christian is like the ripe corn, holds his head lower than when he was green; and the grave it seems to be ripening *me*. But what does it matter? since He who died for me is content to take me as I am. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, oh, come quickly! Relieve Thy servant from the burden of the flesh, and of the sins and foibles that cling to it and keep her these many years from Thee."

This prayer was granted; the body failed more and more; she could not swallow even a drop of wine; she could not even praise her Redeemer: that is to say, she could not speak. Yet she lay and

triumphed. With hands put together in prayer, and eyes full of praise and joy unspeakable, she climbed fast to God. While she so mounted in the spirit, her breath came at intervals unusually long, and all were sent for to see Death conquer the body and be conquered by the soul.

At last, after an unnaturally long interval, she drew a breath like a sigh. They waited for another; waited, waited in vain.

She had calmly ceased to live.

The old doctor laid down her hand reverently, and said "She is with us no more." Then with many tears, "Oh, may we all meet where she is now, and may I go to her the first."

Richard Hardie was led from the room in a stupor.

Immediately after death all the disfiguring effect of pain retired, and the happy soul seemed to have stamped its own celestial rapture on the countenance at the moment of leaving it; a rapture so wonderful, so divine, so more than mortal calm, irradiated the dead face. The good Christians she left behind her looked on and feared to weep, lest they should offend Him, who had taken her to Himself, and set a visible seal upon the house of clay that had held her. "Oh, mamma," cried Julia with fervour, "look! look! Can we, dare we, wish that angel back to this world of misery and sin?" And it was some hours before she cooled, and began to hang on Edward's neck and weep his loss and hers, as weep we mortals must, though the angels of Heaven are rejoicing.

Thus died in the flower of her youth, and by what we call a violent death, the one child Richard Hardie loved; member of a religious party whose diction now and then offends one to the soul: but the root of the matter is in them; allowance made for those passions, foibles, and infirmities of the flesh, even you and I are not entirely free from, they live fearing God; and die loving Him.

There was an inquest next day, followed in due course by a public trial of James Maxley. But these are matters which, though rather curious and interesting, must be omitted, or touched hereafter and briefly.

The effect of Jane's death on Richard Hardie was deplorable. He saw the hand of Heaven; but did not bow to it: so it filled him with rage, rebellion, and despair. He got his daughter away and hid himself in the room with her; scarce stirring out by night or day. He spoke to no one; he shunned the Dodds: he hated them. He said it was through visiting their house she had met her death, and at their door. He would not let himself see it was he who had sent her there with his lie. He loathed Alfred, calling him the cause of all.

He asked nobody to the funeral: and, when Edward begged permission to come, he gave a snarl like a wild beast and went raging from him. But Edward *would* go: and at the graveside pitying Heaven relieved the young fellow's choking heart with tears: but no such dew came to that parched old man, who stood on its other side like the withered Archangel, his eyes gloomy and wild, his white cheek ploughed deep with care

and crime and anguish, his lofty figure bowed by his long warfare, his soul burning and sickening by turns, with hatred and rebellion, with desolation and despair.

He went home and made his will; for he felt life hang on him like lead, and that any moment he might kill himself to be rid of it. Strange to say, he left a sum of money to Edward Dodd. A moment before, he didn't know he was going to do it: a moment after, he was half surprised he had done it, and minded to undo it; but would not take the trouble. He went up to London, and dashed into speculation as some in their despair take to drink. For this man had but two passions; avarice, and his love for his daughter. Bereaved of her, he must either die, or live for gain. He sought the very cave of Mammon; he plunged into the Stock Exchange.

When Mr. Hardie said, "Alfred can't come, it seems," Mrs. Dodd misunderstood him, naturally enough. She thought the heartless young man had sent some excuse: had chosen to let his sister die neglected rather than face Julia: "As if she would leave her own room while *he* was in my house," said Mrs. Dodd, with sovereign contempt. From this moment she conceived a horror of the young man. Edward shared it fully, and the pair always spoke of him under the title of "the Wretch:" this was when Julia was not by. In her presence he was never mentioned. By this means she would in time forget him, or else see him as they saw him.

And as, after all, they knew little to Mr. Hardie's disadvantage, except what had come out of "the Wretch's" mouth, and as moreover their hearts were softened towards the father by his bereavement, and their sight of his misery, and also by his grateful words, they quite acquitted him of having robbed them, and felt sure the fourteen thousand pounds was at the bottom of the sea.

They were a little surprised that Mr. Hardie never spoke nor wrote to them again; but being high minded and sweet tempered, they set it down to all-absorbing grief, and would not feel sore about it.

And now they must leave the little villa where they had been so happy, and so unhappy.

The scanty furniture went first; Mrs. Dodd followed, and arranged it in their apartments. Julia would stay behind to comfort Edward, inconsolable herself. The auction came off. Most of the things went for cruelly little money compared to their value: and with the balance the sad young pair came up to London, and were clasped in their mother's arms. The tears were in her tender eyes. "It is a poor place to receive my treasures," she said: Edward looked round astonished; "It was a poor place," said he, "but you have made a little palace of it, somehow or another."

"My children's love can alone do that," replied Mrs. Dodd, kissing them both again.

Next day they consulted together how they were to live. Edward wished to try and get his father into a public asylum; then his mother would have a balance to live upon out of her income. But Mrs. Dodd rejected this proposal with astonishment. In vain Edward cited the 'Tiser that public asylums are patterns of comfort, and cure twice as

many patients as the private ones do. She was deaf alike to the 'Tiser and to statistics. "Do not argue me out of my common sense," said she. "My husband, your father, in a public asylum, where anybody can go and stare at my darling!"

She then informed them she had written to her Aunt Bazalgette and her Uncle Fountain, and invited them to contribute something towards David's maintenance.

Edward was almost angry at this. "Fancy asking favours of *them*," said he.

"Oh, I must not sacrifice my family to false pride," said Mrs. Dodd; "besides they are entitled to know."

While waiting for their answers, a word about the parties, and their niece.

Our Mrs. Dodd, born Lucy Fountain, was left at nineteen to the care of two guardians: 1, her Uncle Fountain, an old bachelor, who loved comfort, pedigree, and his own way; 2, her Aunt Bazalgette, who loved flirting, dressing, and her own way; both charming people, when they got their own way; verjuice, when they didn't: and, to conclude, egotists deep as ocean. From guardians they grew match-makers and rivals by proxy: Uncle schemed to graft Lucy on to a stick called Talboys, that came in with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, known in pedigrees as "the Norman Conquest." Aunt, wife of a merchant of no Descent, except from a high stool, devoted her to Richard Hardie. An unlooked-for obstacle encountered both: Lucy was not amorous. She loved these two egotists, and their quadrupeds; but there she stopped dead short. They persisted; and, while they pulled her to and fro and ruffled her native calm, David Dodd, first mate of the Something or other East Indiaman—brown cheek, honest speech, heart of gold—fell deep in love and worshipped her at a distance. His timidity and social insignificance made him harmless; so egotist Fountain had him in to dessert to spin yarns; egotist Bazalgette invited him to her house to flirt with. At this latter place he found Hardie and Talboys both courting Lucy; this drove him mad, and in his fury he popped. Lucy declined him secundum artem: he went away blessing her, with a manly sob or two. Lucy cried a little and took a feminine spite against his rivals, who remained to pester her. Now Talboys, spurred by uncle, had often all but popped; only some let, hindrance, or just impediment had still interposed: once her pony kept prancing at each effort he made towards Hymen; they do say the subtle virgin kept probing the brute with a hair pin, and made him caracole and spill the treacle as fast as it came her way. However, now Talboys elected to pop by sea. It was the element his ancestors had invaded fair England by; and on its tranquil bosom a lover is safe from prancing steeds, and the myriad anti-pops of terra firma. Miss Lucy consented to the water excursion demurely, designing to bring her sickly wooer to the point and so get rid of him for ever and ever. Plot and counter-plot were baffled by the elements: there came an anti-pop out of the south-west called a gale. Talboys boated so skilfully that he and his intended would have been united without ceremony by Father Nep, at the bottom of the British Channel, but for David Dodd, who was hovering near in jealous anguish and a cutter. He saved them both, but in the doing of it missed his ship, and profes-

sional ruin faced him. Then good-hearted Lucy was miserable, and appealed to Mr. Bazalgette, and he managed somehow to get David made captain of the Rajah. The poor girl thought she had squared the account with David; but he refused the ship unless she would go halves, and while her egotists bullied and vexed her, he wrought so upon her pity, and teased her so, that to get rid of his importunity she married him. In time she learned to love him ten times better than if she had begun all flames. Uncle and aunt cut her tolerably dead for some years; Uncle came round the first; some antiquarian showed him that Dodd was a much more ancient family than Talboys. "Why, sir, they were lords of sixteen manors under the Heptarchy, and hold some of them to this day." Mrs. Bazalgette, too, had long corresponded with her periodically, and on friendly terms.

The answers came on the same day, curiously enough. Uncle Fountain, ruined by railway speculation, was living on an allowance from creditors; but his house was at their service if they liked to live with him—and board themselves.

Mrs. Bazalgette's was the letter of a smooth woman, who has hoarded imperishable spite. She reminded her niece after all these years, that her marriage with David was an act of disobedience and ingratitude. She then enumerated her own heavy expenses, all but the 400*l.* a year she spent in bedizening her carcase, and finally, amidst a multitude of petty insults, she offered to relieve Mrs. Dodd of——Julia. Now Poetry has reconciled us to an asp in a basket of figs; but here was a scorpion in a bundle of nettles. Poor Mrs. Dodd could not speak after reading it. She handed it to Edward, and laid her white forehead wearily in her hand. Edward put the letter in an envelope, and sent it back with a line in his own hand declining all further correspondence with the writer.

"Now then, ladies," said he, "don't you be cast down. Let this be a warning to us, never to ask favours of anybody. Let us look the thing in the face; we must work or starve: and all the better for us. Hard work suits heavy hearts. Come, have you any plan?"

"To be sure we have," said Julia eagerly. "I mean to go for a governess, and then I shall cost mamma nothing, and besides I can send her the money the people give me."

"A pretty plan!" said Edward sadly; "what, we three part company? Don't you feel lonely enough without that? I do, then. How can we bear our burdens at all, if we are not to be all together to cheer one another along the weary road? What, are we to break up? Is it not enough to be bereaved?"

He could say no more for the emotion his own words caused him; thinking of Jane he broke down altogether, and ran out of the room.

However, he came back in an hour with his eyes red, but his heart indomitable; determined to play a man's part for all their sakes. "You ladies," said he, with something of his old genial way, that sounded so strange to one looking at his red eyes, and inspired a desire to hug him, "are full of talent, but empty of invention. The moment you are ruined or that sort of thing, it is *go* for a governess, *go* for a companion, *go* here, *go* there, in search of what? Independence? No; Dependence. Besides all this *going* is bosh. Families are strong if they stick together, and if

they go to pieces they are weak. I learned one bit of sense out of that mass of folly they call antiquity; and that was the story of the old bloke with his twelve sons, and fagot to match. 'Break 'em apart,' he said; and each son broke his stick as easy as shelling peas. 'Now break the twelve all tied together:' devil a bit could the duffers break it then. Now we are not twelve, we are but three: easy to break one or two of us apart, but not the lot together. No; nothing but death shall break this fagot, for nothing less shall part us three."

He stood like a Colossus, and held out his hands to them; they clung round his neck in a moment, as if to illustrate his words; clung tight, and blessed him for standing so firm and forbidding them to part.

Mrs. Dodd sighed, after the first burst of enthusiastic affection, and said: "If he would only go a step further and tell us what to do in company."

"Ay, there it is," said Julia. "Begin with me. What can I do?"

"Why, paint."

"What, to sell? Oh dear, my daubs are not good enough for that."

"Stuff! Nothing is too bad to *sell*."

"I really think you might," said Mrs. Dodd; "and I will help you."

"No, no, mamma, I want you for something better than the fine arts. You must go in one of the great grooves: Female vanity: you must be a dressmaker; you are a genius at it."

"My mamma a dressmaker," cried Julia: "oh, Edward, how can you? how dare you? poor, poor mamma!"

"Do not be so impetuous, dear. I think he is right: yes, it is all I am fit for. If ever there was a Heaven-born dressmaker, it's me."

"As for myself," said Edward, "I shall look out for some business in which physical strength goes further than intellectual attainments. Luckily there are plenty such. Breaking stones is one. But I shall try a few others first."

It is easy to settle on a business, hard to get a footing in one. Edward, convinced that the dressmaking was their best card, searched that mine of various knowledge, the 'Tiser, for an opening: but none came. At last one of those great miscellaneous houses in the City advertised for a lady to cut cloaks. He proposed to his mother to go with him. She shrank from encountering strangers. No, she would go to a fashionable dressmaker she had employed some years, and ask her advice. Perhaps Madame Blanch would find her something to do. "I have more faith in the 'Tiser," said Edward, clinging to his idol.

Mrs. Dodd found Madame Blanch occupied in trying to suit one of those heart-breaking idiots, to whom dress is the one great thing, and all things else, sin included, the little ones. She had tried on a scarf three times; and it discontented her when on, and spoilt all else when off. Mrs. Dodd saw, and said obligingly, "Perhaps were I to put it on you could judge better." Mrs. Dodd, you must know, had an admirable art of putting on a shawl or scarf. With apparent nonchalance she settled the scarf on her shapely shoulders so happily, that the fish bit, and the scarf went into its carriage; forty guineas, or so. Madame cast a rapid but ardent glance of gratitude Dodd-wards. The customer began to go, and after fidgeting to the door and back for twenty minutes actually went somehow. Then madame turned round, and said, "I'm sure, ma'am, I

am much obliged to you; you sold me that scarf: and it is a pity we couldn't put her on your bust and shoulders, ma'am, then perhaps a scarf might please her. What can I do for you, ma'am?"

Mrs. Dodd blushed, and with subdued agitation told Madame Blanch that this time she was come not to purchase but to ask a favour. Misfortune was heavy on her; and, though not penniless, she was so reduced by her husband's illness and the loss of 14,000*l.* by shipwreck, that she must employ what little talents she had to support her family.

The woman explored her from head to foot to find the change of fortune in some corner of her raiment: but her customer was as well, though plainly dressed as ever; and still looked an easy-going duchess.

"Could Madame Blanch find her employment in her own line? What talent I have," said Mrs. Dodd humbly, "lies in that way. I could not cut as well as yourself, of course; but I think I can as well as some of your people."

"That I'll be bound you can," said Madame Blanch drily. "But dear, dear, to think of your having come down so. Have a glass of wine to cheer you a bit; do now, that is a good soul."

"Oh no, madam. I thank you; but wine cannot cheer me: a little bit of good news to take back to my anxious children, that would cheer me, madam. *Will* you be so good?"

The dressmaker coloured and hesitated; she felt the fascination of Dignity donning Humility, and speaking Music: but she resisted. "It won't do, at least here. I shouldn't be mistress in my own place. I couldn't drive you like I am forced to do the rest; and, then, I should be sure to favour you, being a real lady, which is my taste, and you always will be, rich or poor; and then all my ladies would be on the bile with jealousy."

"Ah, madam," sighed Mrs. Dodd, "you treat me like a child; you give me sweetmeats, and refuse me food for my family."

"No, no," said the woman hastily, "I don't say I mightn't send you out some work to do at home."

"Oh, thank you madam." N.B. The dressmaker had dropped the Madam, so the lady used it now at every word.

"Now stop a bit," said Madam Blanch. "I know a firm that's in want. Theirs is easy work by mine, and they cut up a piece of stuff every two or three days. She then wrote on one of her own cards, Messrs. Cross, Fitchett, Copland, and Tylee, 11, 12, 13, and 14, Primrose Lane, City. "Say I recommend you. To tell the truth, an old hand of my own was to come here this very morning about it, but she hasn't kept her time; so this will learn her business doesn't stand still for lie-a-beds to catch it."

Mrs. Dodd put the card in her bosom and pressed the hand extended to her by Madame Zaire Blanch; whose name was Sally White, spinster. She went back to her children and showed them the card, and sank gracefully into a chair, exhausted as much by the agitation of asking favours as by the walk. "Cross, Fitchett, Copland? Why they were in the 'Tiser yesterday," said Edward: "look at this; a day lost by being wiser than the 'Tiser."

"I'll waste no more then," said Mrs. Dodd, rising quietly from the chair. They begged her to rest herself first. No, she would not "I

saw this lost by half an hour," said she. "Succeed or fail, I will have no remissness to reproach myself with." And she glided off in her quiet way, to encounter Cross, Fitchett, Copland, and Tylee, in the lane where a primrose was caught growing—six hundred years ago. She declined Edward's company rather peremptorily. "Stay and comfort your sister," said she. But that was a blind; the truth was, she could not bear her children to mingle in what she was doing. No, her ambition was to ply the scissors and thimble vigorously, and so enable them to be ladies and gentlemen at large. She being gone, Julia made a parcel of water-colour drawings, and sallied forth all on fire to sell them. But, while she was dressing, Edward started on a cruise in search of employment. He failed entirely. They met in the evening, Mrs. Dodd resigned, Edward dogged, Julia rather excited. "Now let us tell our adventures," she said. "As for me, shop after shop declined my poor sketches. They all wanted something about as good, only a little different: nobody complained of the grand fault, and that is their utter badness. At last one old gentleman examined them, and oh! he was so fat; there, round. And he twisted his mouth *so*" (imitating him) "and squinted into them *so*: then I was full of hope; and said to myself, 'Dear mamma and Edward!' And so, when he ended by saying 'No,' like all the rest, I burst out crying like a goose."

"My poor girl," cried Mrs. Dodd, with tears in her own eyes, "why expose yourself to these cruel rebuffs?"

"Oh, don't waste your pity, mamma; those great babyish tears were a happy thought of mine; he bought two directly to pacify me; and there's the money. Thirty shillings!" And she laid it proudly on the table.

"The old cheat," said Edward; "they were worth two guineas apiece, I know."

"Not they; or why would not anybody else give twopence for them?"

"Because pictures are a Drug."

He added that even talent was not saleable unless it got into the Great Grooves; and then looked at Mrs. Dodd: she replied that unfortunately those Grooves were not always accessible. The City firm had received her stiffly, and inquired for whom she had worked. "Children, my heart fell at that question. I was obliged to own myself an amateur and beg a trial. However, I gave Madame Blanch's card: but Mr.—I don't know which partner it was—said he was not acquainted with her: then he looked a little embarrassed, I thought, and said the Firm did not care to send its stuff to ladies not in the business; I might cut it to waste, or——He said no more; but I do really think he meant I might purloin it."

"Why wasn't I there to look him into the earth? Oh, mamma, that you should be subjected to all this!"

"Be quiet, child; I had only to put on my armour; and do you know what my armour is? Thinking of my children. So I put on my armour, and said quietly, we were not so poor but we could pay for a piece of cloth should I be so unfortunate as to *spoil* it; and I offered in plain terms to deposit the price as security. But he turned as stiff at that as his yard measure; 'that was not Cross and Co.'s way of doing

business,' he said, But it is unreasonable to be dejected at a repulse or two: and I am not out of spirits; not much:" with this her gentle mouth smiled; and her patient eyes were moist.

The next day, just after breakfast, was announced a gentleman from the City. He made his bow and produced a parcel, which proved to be a pattern cloak. "Order ladies," said he briskly, "from Cross, Fitchett, and Co., Primrose Lane. Porter outside with the piece. You can come in, sir." Porter entered with a bale. "Please sign this, ma'am." Mrs. Dodd signed a receipt for the stuff, with an undertaking to deliver it in cloaks at 11, Primrose Lane, in such a time. Porter retreated. The other said, "Our Mr. Fitchett wishes you to observe this fall in the pattern. It is new."

"I will, sir. Am I to trouble you with any money—by way of deposit, sir?"

"No orders about it, ma'am. Ladies, your most obedient. Good morning, sir."

And he was away.

All this seemed like a click or two of City clock-work: followed by rural silence. Yet in that minute commerce had walked in upon genteel poverty, and left honest labour and modest income behind her.

Great was the thankfulness, strange and new the excitement. Edward was employed to set up a very long deal table for his mother to work on, Julia to go and buy tailors' scissors. Calculations were made how to cut the stuff to advantage, and in due course the heavy scissors were heard snick, snick, snicking all day long.

Julia painted zealously, and Edward, without saying a word to them, walked twenty miles a day hunting for a guinea a week; and finding it not. Not but what employment was often bobbed before his eyes: but there was no grasping it. At last he heard of a place peculiarly suited to him; a packing foreman's in a warehouse at Southwark; he went there, and was referred to Mr. A.'s private house. Mr. A. was in the country for a day. Try Mr. B. Mr. B. was dining with the Lord Mayor. Returning belated, he fell in with a fire; and, sad to say, life was in jeopardy: a little old man had run out at the first alarm, when there was no danger, and, as soon as the fire was hot, had run in again for his stockings, or some such treasure. Fire does put out some people's reason; clean. While he was rummaging madly, the staircase caught, and the smoke cut off his second exit, and drove him up to a little staircase window at the side of the house. Here he stood, hose in hand, scorching behind and screeching in front. A ladder had been brought: but it was a yard short: and the poor old man danced on the window-ledge and dare not come down to a gallant fireman who stood ready to receive him at great personal peril. In the midst of shrieks and cries and shouts of encouragement, Edward, a practised gymnast, saw a chance. He ran up the ladder like a cat, begged the fireman to clasp it tight; then got on his shoulders and managed to grasp the window-sill: he could always draw his own weight up by his hands: so he soon had his knee on the sill, and presently stood erect. He then put his left arm inside the window, collared the old fellow with his right, and, half per-

suasion, half force, actually lowered him to the ladder with one Herculean arm amidst a roar that made the Borough ring; such a strain could not long be endured; but the fireman speedily relieved him by seizing the old fellow's feet and directing them on to the ladder, and so, propping him by the waist, went down before him, and landed him safe. Edward waited till they were down: then begged them to hold the ladder tight below; he hung from the ledge, got his eye well on the ladder below him, let himself quietly drop, and caught hold of it with hands of iron, and twisting round, came down the ladder on the inside hand over head without using his feet, a favourite gymnastic exercise of his learnt at the Modern Athens. He was warmly received by the crowd and by the firemen. "You should be one of us, sir," said a fine young fellow who had cheered him and advised him all through. "I wish to Heaven I was," said Edward: the other thought he was joking, but laughed and said, "Then you should talk to our head man after the business: there is a vacancy, you know."

Edward saw the fire out, and rode home on the engine. There he applied to the head man for the vacancy.

"You are a stranger to me, sir," said the head man. "And I am sure it is no place for you; you are a gentleman."

"Well; is there anything ungentlemanly in saving people's lives and property?"

"Hear! hear!" said a comic fireman.

The compliment began to tell, though. Others put in their word. "Why, Mr. Baldwin, if a gentleman ain't ashamed of us, why should we be ashamed of him?"

"Where will ye get a better?" asked another; and added, "He is no stranger; we've seen him work."

"Stop a bit," said the comic fireman: "what does the dog say? just call him, sir, if you please; his name is Charlie."

Edward called the fire-dog kindly; he came and fawned on him; then gravely snuffed him all round, and retired wagging his tail gently, as much as to say, "I was rather taken by surprise at first, but, on the whole, I see no reason to recal my judgment."

"It is all right," said the firemen in chorus; and one that had not yet spoken to Edward now whispered him mysteriously, "Ye see that there dog he knows more than we do."

After the dog, a biped oracle at head-quarters was communicated with, and late that very night Edward was actually enrolled a fireman; and went home warmer at heart than he had been for some time. They were all in bed; and when he came down in the morning, Julia was reading out of the 'Tiser a spirited and magniloquent description of a fire in Southwark, and of the heroism displayed by a young gentleman unknown, but whose name the writer hoped at so much the line would never be allowed to pass into oblivion, and be forgotten. In short, the 'Tiser paid him in one column for years of devotion. Now Edward, of course, was going to relate his adventure; but the journal told it so gloriously, he hesitated to say, "I did all that." He just sat and stared, and wondered, and blushed, and grinned like an imbecile.

Unfortunately looks seldom escaped the Doddesses. "What is that

for?" inquired Julia, reproachfully. "Is that sheepish face the thing to wear when a sister is reading out an heroic action? Ah, these are the things that make one long to be a man, to do them. What *are* you thinking about, dear?"

"Well, I am thinking the 'Tiser is pitching it rather strong."

"My love, what an expression!"

"Well, then, to be honest, I agree with you that it is a jolly thing to fight with fire and save men's lives; and I am glad you see it in that light; for now you will approve the step I have taken. Ladies, I have put myself in the way of doing this sort of thing every week of my life. I'm a fireman."

"You are jesting, I trust?" said Mrs. Dodd anxiously.

"No, mamma. I got the place late last night, and I'm to enter on my duties and put on the livery next Monday. Hurrah!"

Instantly the admirers of fiery heroes at a distance overflowed with grief and mortification at the prospect of one in their own family. They could not speak at all at first: and, when they did, it was only "Cruel! cruel!" from Julia; and "Our humiliation is now complete," from Mrs. Dodd.

They soon dashed Edward's spirits, and made him unhappy; but they could not convince him he had done wrong. However, in the heat of remonstrance, they let out at last that they had just begun to hope by dint of scissors and paint-brush to send him back to Oxford. He also detected, under a cloud of tender, loving, soothing, coaxing and equivocating expressions, their idea of a Man: to wit, a tall, strong, ornamental creature, whom the women were to cocker up, and pet, and slave for; and be rewarded by basking, dead tired, in an imperial smile or two let fall by their sovereign protégé from his arm-chair. And, in fact, good women have often demoralised their idols down to the dirt by this process; to be sure their idols were sorryish clay, to begin.

Edward was anything but flowery, so he paraded no manly sentiments in reply; he just bluntly ridiculed the idea of his consenting to prey on them; and he said humbly, "I know I can't contribute as much to our living as you two can—the petticoats carry the brains in our family—but, be a burden to you? Not if I know it."

"Pride! pride! pride!" objected Julia, lifting her grand violet orbs like a pensive Madonna.

"And such pride! The pride that falls into a fire-bucket," suggested prosaic mamma.

"That is cutting," said Edward: "but, soyons de notre siècle; flunkeyism is on the decline. I'll give you something to put in both your pipes:

> Honour and rank from no condition rise.
> Act well thy part; in that the honour lies."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Dodd, "only first choose your part: and let your choice be reasonable."

"Mine was Hobson's; and he never chooses wrong. Come, come, said he, and appealed calmly to their reason: by which means he made no impression at all. Then he happened to say, "Besides, I *must* do something; I own to you I am more cast down than I choose to show.

Mother, I feel like lead ever since she died." Now on this, their faces filled with sympathy directly. So encouraged he went on to say; "but when I got my hand on that old duffer's collar, and lowered him to the ladder, and the fire shot roaring out of the window after him, too late to eat him, and the crowd cheered the fireman and me, I did feel warm about the waistcoat, and, for the first time this ever so long, life seemed not quite ended; I felt there was a little bit of good left, that even a poor dunce like me could do, and she could approve; if she can look down and see me, as I hope she can."

"There, there," said Mrs. Dodd tearfully, "I am disarmed But, my darling, I do not know what you are talking about: stay; why Edward, surely—I hope—you were not the young gentleman in the paper: the one that risked his life so nobly; so foolishly—if it was you."

"Why, mother, didn't I tell you it was me?" said Edward colouring.

"No, that you did not," said Julia. "Was it? was it? oh do be quick and tell one. There, it was."

"Well it was: ah, I remember now; that splendiferous account shut me up. Oh I say, didn't the 'Tiser pitch it strong?"

"Not at all," cried Julia; "I believe every word, and ever so much more. Mamma, we have got a hero: and here he is at breakfast with us, like an ordinary mortal." She rose suddenly with a burst of her old fire and fell upon him and kissed him, and said earnestly how proud she was of him: "and so is mamma; she may say what she likes."

"Proud of him! ah that I am; very proud: and very unhappy. *Heroes are my horror.* How often, and how earnestly have I prayed that my son might not be brave like his father; but stay quietly at home out of harm's way."

Here remonstrance ended: the members of this family, happy by nature, though unhappy by accident, all knew when to yield to each other.

Unfortunately, in proportion as all these excitements great and small died, and her life became quiet and uniform, the depth of Julia's wound showed itself more and more. She never sang nor hummed, as she used to do, going about the house. She never laughed. She did burst out with fervid sentiments now and then; but very rarely: on the whole a pensive languor took the place of her lovely impetuosity. Tears rushed in a moment to her eyes with no visible cause. She often stole to the window, and looked all up and down the street: and when she was out of doors, she looked down every side-street she passed; and sometimes, when a quick light step came behind them, or she saw a tall young gentleman at a great distance, her hand twitched her mother's arm or trembled on it. And, always, when they came home, she lingered a moment at the door-step and looked all round before she went in.

At all these signs one half of Mrs. Dodd's heart used to boil with indignation, and the other half melt with pity. For she saw her daughter was looking for "the Wretch." Indeed Mrs. Dodd began to fear she had done unwisely in ignoring "the Wretch;" Julia's thoughts dwelt on him none the less; indeed all the more as it seemed: so the

topic interdicted by tacit consent bade fair to become a barrier between her and Mrs. Dodd, hitherto her bosom friend as well as her mother. This was intolerable to poor Mrs. Dodd: and at last she said one day, "My darling, do not be afraid of me; rob me of your happy thoughts if you will, but oh, not of your sad ones."

Julia began to cry directly. "Oh no, mamma," she sobbed, "do not you encourage me in my folly. I know I have thrown away my affections on one who——I shall never see him again: shall I, mamma? Oh to think I can say those words, and yet go living on."

Mrs. Dodd sighed. "And if you saw him, would that mend the chain he has chosen to break?"

"I don't know; but if I could only see him, to part friends! It is cruel to hate him now he has lost his sister; and then I have got her message to give him. And I want to ask him why he was afraid of me; why he could not tell me he had altered his mind: did he think I wanted to have him against his will? Oh, mamma," said she imploringly, "he *seemed* to love me; he *seemed* all truth. I am a poor unfortunate girl."

Mrs. Dodd had only caresses to soothe her with. She could not hold out any hopes.

One day Julia asked her timidly if she might be a district visitor: "My dear friend was: and advised me to be one too; but I was wilful in those days and chose to visit by fits and starts, and be independent. I am humbled now a little: may I, mamma? Since she died every word of hers seems a law to me."

Mrs. Dodd assented cordially; as she would to anything else her wounded one had proposed.

This project brought Julia into communication with the new curate; and who should it prove to be but Mr. Hurd? At sight of him she turned white and red, and the whole scene in the church came back to her. But Mr. Hurd showed considerable tact for so young a man; he spoke to her in accents of deep respect, but confined his remarks strictly to the matter in hand. She told her mother when she got home; and expressed her gratitude to Mr. Hurd, but said she wished they did not live in the same parish with him. This feeling, however, wore off by degrees, as her self-imposed duties brought her more and more into contact with him, and showed her his good qualities.

As for Mr. Hurd, he saw and understood her vivid emotion at sight of him; saw and pitied; not without wonder that so beautiful a creature should have been jilted. And from the first he marked his sense of Alfred's conduct by showing her a profound and chivalrous respect, which he did not bestow on other young ladies in his parish; on the contrary, he rather received homage from them than bestowed it. By-and-by he saw Julia suppress if not hide her own sorrow, and go sore-hearted day by day to comfort the poor and afflicted: he admired and almost venerated her for this. He called often on Mrs. Dodd, and was welcome. She concealed her address for the present from all her friends except Dr. Sampson; but Mr. Hurd had discovered her; and ladies do not snub the clergy. Moreover, Mr. Hurd was a gentleman, and inclined to High Church. This she liked. He was very good-looking too, and quiet in his manners. Above all, he seemed to be doing her

daughter good; for Julia and Mr. Hurd had one great sentiment in common. When the intimacy had continued some time on these easy terms, Mrs. Dodd saw that Mr. Hurd was falling in love with Julia, and that sort of love warm, but respectful, which soon leads to marriage, especially when the lover is a clergyman. This was more than Mrs. Dodd bargained for; she did not want to part with her daughter, and under other circumstances, would have drawn in her horns. But Mr. Hurd's undisguised homage gratified her maternal heart, coming so soon after that great insult to her daughter; and then she said to herself, "At any rate he will help me cure her of 'the Wretch.'" She was not easy in her mind, though; could not tell what would come of it all. So she watched her daughter's pensive face as only mothers watch; and saw a little of the old peach bloom creeping back.

That was irresistible: she let things go their own way, and hoped for the best.

## CHAPTER XL.

THE tenacity of a private lunatic asylum is unique. A little push behind your back and you slide into one; but to get out again is to scale a precipice with crumbling sides. Alfred, luckier than many, had twice nearly escaped: yet now he was tighter in than ever. His father at first meant to give him but a year or two of it, and let him out on terms, his spirit broken, and Julia married. But his sister's death was fatal to him. By Mrs. Hardie's settlement the portion of any child of hers dying a minor, or intestate and childless, was to go to the other children; so now the prisoner had inherited his sister's ten thousand pounds, and a good slice of his bereaved enemy's and father's income. But this doubled his father's bitterness,—that he, the unloved one, should be enriched by the death of the adored one!—and also tempted his cupidity: and unfortunately shallow legislation conspired with that temptation. For, when an Englishman, sane or insane, is once pushed behind his back into a madhouse, those relatives who have hidden him from the public eye, i.e. from the eye of justice, can grab hold of his money behind his back, as they certified away his wits behind his back, and can administer it in the dark, and embezzle it, chanting "But for us the 'dear deranged' would waste it." Nor do the monstrous enactments which confer this unconstitutional power on subjects, and shield its exercise from the light and safeguard of Publicity, affix any penalty to the abuse of that power, if by one chance in a thousand detected. In Lunacy Law extremes of intellect meet; the British senator plays at Satan; and tempts human frailty and cupidity beyond what they are able to bear.

So behold a son at twenty-one years of age devoted by a father to imprisonment for life. But stop a minute; the mad statutes, which by the threefold temptation of Facility, Obscurity, and Impurity, insure the occasional incarceration and frequent detention of sane but moneyed men, do provide, though feebly, for their bare liberation, if perchance they should not yield to the genius loci, and the natural effect of confinement plus anguish, by going mad, or dying. The Commissioners of Lunacy had power to liberate Alfred in spite of his relations. And that

power, you know, he had soberly but earnestly implored them to exercise.

After a delay that seemed as strange to him as postponing a hand to a drowning man, he received an official letter from Whitehall. With bounding heart he broke the seal, and devoured the contents. They ran thus:

"SIR,—By order of the Commissioners of Lunacy I am directed to inform you that they are in the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, which will be laid before the Board at their next meeting.

"I am, &c."

Alfred was bitterly disappointed at the small advance he had made. However, it was a great point to learn that his letters were allowed to go to the Commissioners at all, and would be attended to by degrees.

He waited and waited, and struggled hard to possess his soul in patience; at times his brain throbbed and his blood boiled, and he longed to kill the remorseless, kindless monsters who robbed him of his liberty, his rights as a man, and his Julia: but he knew this would not do; that what they wanted was to gnaw his reason away, and then who could disprove that he had always been mad? Now he felt that brooding on his wrong would infuriate him; so he clenched his teeth, and vowed a solemn vow that nothing should drive him mad. By advice of a patient he wrote again to the Commissioners begging for a special Commission to inquire into his case; and, this done, with rare stoicism, self-defence, and wisdom in one so young, he actually sat down to read hard for his first class. Now, to do this, he wanted the Ethics, Politics, and Rhetoric of Aristotle, certain Dialogues of Plato, the Comedies of Aristophanes, the first-class Historians, Demosthenes, Lucretius, a Greek Testament, Wheeler's Analysis, Prideaux, Horne, and several books of reference sacred and profane. But he could not get these books without Dr. Wycherley, and unfortunately he had cut that worthy dead in his own asylum.

"The Scornful Dog" had to eat wormwood pudding and humble pie. He gulped these delicacies as he might; and Dr. Wycherley showed excellent qualities; he entered into his maniac's studies with singular alacrity, supplied him with several classics from his own shelves, and borrowed the rest at the London Library. Nor did his zeal stop there: he offered to read an hour a day with him, and owned it would afford him the keenest gratification to turn out an Oxford first classman from his asylum. This remark puzzled Alfred, and set him thinking; it bore a subtle family resemblance to the observations he heard every day from the patients; it was so one-eyed.

Soon Alfred became the doctor's pet maniac. They were often closeted together in high discourse, and indeed discussed Psychology, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy with indefatigable zest, long after common sense would have packed them both off to bed, the donkeys. In fact, they got so thick that Alfred thought it only fair to say one day, "Mind, doctor, all these pleasant fruitful hours we spend together so sweetly will not prevent my indicting you for a conspiracy as soon as I get out: it will rob the retribution of half its relish though."

"Ah, my dear young friend and fellow-student," said the doctor blandly, "let us not sacrifice the delights of our profitable occupation of imbibing the sweets of intellectual intercourse to vague speculations as to our future destiny. During the course of a long and not, I trust, altogether unprofitable career, it has not unfrequently been my lot to find myself on the verge of being indicted, sued, assassinated, hung. Yet here I sit, as yet unimmolated on the altar of phrenetic vengeance. This is ascribable to the fact that my friends and pupils always adopt a more favourable opinion of me long before I part with them; and ere many days (and this I divine by infallible indicia), *your* cure will commence in earnest; and, in proportion as you progress to perfect restoration of the powers of judgment, you will grow in suspicion of the fact of being under a delusion, or rather I should say a very slight perversion and perturbation of the forces of your admirable intellect, and a proper subject for temporary seclusion. Indeed this consciousness of insanity is the one diagnostic of sanity that never deceives me: and, on the other hand, an obstinate persistence in the hypothesis of perfect rationality demonstrates the fact that insanity yet lingers in the convolutions and recesses of the brain, and that it would not be humane as yet to cast the patient on a world, in which he would inevitably be taken some ungenerous advantage of."

Alfred ventured to inquire whether this was not rather paradoxical.

"Certainly," said the ready doctor; "and paradoxicality is an indicial characteristic of truth in all matters beyond the comprehension of the vulgar."

"That *sounds* rational," said the maniac, very drily.

One afternoon, grinding hard for his degree, he was invited down stairs to see two visitors.

At that word he found out how prison tries the nerves. He trembled with hope, and fear. It was but for a moment: he bathed his face and hands to compose himself; made his toilet carefully, and went into the drawing-room, all on his guard. There he found Dr. Wycherley and two gentlemen; one was an ex-physician, the other an ex-barrister, who had consented to resign feelessness and brieflessness for a snug 1500*l.* a year at Whitehall. After a momentary greeting they continued the conversation with Dr. Wycherley, and scarcely noticed Alfred. They were there pro formâ; a plausible lunatic had pestered the Board, and extorted a visit of ceremony. Alfred's blood boiled, but he knew it must not boil over. He contrived to throw a short, pertinent remark in every now and then. This, being done politely, told; and at last Dr. Eskell, Commissioner of Lunacy, smiled and turned to him: "Allow me to put a few questions to you."

"The more the better, sir," said Alfred.

Dr. Eskell then asked him to describe minutely, and in order, all he had done since seven o'clock that day. And he did it. Examined him in the multiplication table. And he did it. And, while he was applying these old-fashioned tests, Wycherley's face wore an expression of pity, that was truly comical. Now this Dr. Eskell had an itch for the classics: so he went on to say, "You have been a scholar, I hear."

"I am not old enough to be a scholar, sir," said Alfred; "but I am a student."

"Well, well; now can you tell me what follows this line?

Jusque datum sceleri canimus populumque potentem."

"Why, not at the moment."

"Oh, surely you can," said Dr. Eskell, ironically. "It is in a tolerably well-known passage. Come, try."

"Well, I'll *try*," said Alfred, sneering secretly. "Let me see:

Mum—mum—mum—populumque potentem,
In sua victrici conversum viscera dextrâ."

"Quite right; now go on, if you can."

Alfred, who was playing with his examiner all this time, pretended to cudgel his brains, then went on, and warmed involuntarily with the lines:

"Cognatasque acies et rupto fœdere regni
Certatum totis concussi viribus orbis
In commune nefas; infestis que obvia signis
Signa, pares aquilas, et pila minantia pilis."

"He seems to have a good memory," said the examiner, rather taken aback.

"Oh, that is nothing for him," observed Wycherley;

"He has Horace all by heart; you'd wonder:
And mouths out Homer's Greek like thunder."

The great faculty of Memory thus tested, Dr. Eskell proceeded to a greater; Judgment. "Spirited lines those, sir."

"Yes, sir; but surely rather tumid. 'The whole *forces* of the shaken globe?' But little poets love big words."

"I see; you agree with Horace, that so great a work as an epic poem should open modestly, with an invocation."

"No, sir," said Alfred. "I think that rather an arbitrary and peevish canon of friend Horace. The Æneid, you know, begins just as he says an Epic ought not to begin; and the Æneid is the greatest Latin Epic. In the next place, the use of Modesty is to keep a man from writing an Epic Poem at all; but, if he will have that impudence, why then he had better have the courage to plunge into the Castalian stream, like Virgil and Lucan, not crawl in funking and holding on by the Muse's apron-string. But—excuse me—quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt? what have the Latin poets to do with this modern's sanity or insanity?"

Mr. Abbott snorted contemptuously in support of the query. But Dr. Eskell smiled, and said: "Continue to answer me as intelligently, and you may find it has a great deal to do with it."

Alfred took this hint, and said artfully, "Mine was a thoughtless remark; of course a gentleman of your experience can test the mind on any subject however trivial." He added, piteously, "Still, if you would but leave the poets, who are all half crazy themselves, and examine me in the philosophers of Antiquity, surely it would be a higher criterion."

Dr. Wycherley explained in a patronising whisper, "He labours under

an abnormal contempt for poetry, dating from his attack. Previously to that he actually obtained a prize poem himself."

"Well, doctor; and after that am I wrong to despise poetry?"

They might have comprehended this on paper, but spoken it was too keen for them all three. The visitors stared. Dr. Wycherley came to their aid: "You might examine my young friend for hours, and not detect the one crevice in the brilliancy of his intellectual armour."

The maniac made a face as one that drinketh verjuice suddenly. "For pity's sake, doctor, don't be so inaccurate: say a spot on the brilliancy, or a crevice in the armour; but not a crevice in the brilliancy. My good friend here, gentlemen, deals in conjectural certificates and broken metaphors. He dislocates more tropes, to my sorrow, than even his friend Shakespeare, whom he thinks a greater philosopher than Aristotle, and who calls the murder of an individual sleeper the murder of sleep, confounding the concrete with the abstract, and then talks of taking arms against a sea of troubles; query, a cork jacket and a flask of brandy."

"Well, Mr. Hardie," said Dr. Eskell, rather feebly, "let me tell you those passages which so shock your *peculiar* notions, are among the most applauded."

"Very likely, sir," retorted the maniac, whose logic was up; "but applauded only in a nation where the *floods* clap their hands every Sunday morning, and we all pray for peace, giving as our exquisite reason that we have got the God of hosts on our side in war."

Mr. Abbott, the other commissioner, had endured all this chat with an air of weary indifference. He now said to Dr. Wycherley, "I wish to put you a question or two in private."

Alfred was horribly frightened: this was the very dodge that had ruined him at Silverton House. "Oh no, gentlemen," he cried, imploringly. "Let me have fair play. You have given me no secret audience; then why give my accuser one? I am charged with a single delusion; for mercy's sake go to the point at once, and examine me on that head."

"Now you talk sense," said Mr. Abbott; as if the previous topics had been chosen by Alfred.

"But that will excite him," objected Dr. Eskell: "it always does excite them."

"It excites the insane, but not the sane," said Alfred. "So there is another test; you will observe whether it excites *me*." Then, before they could interrupt him, he glided on: "The supposed hallucination is this: I strongly suspect my father, a bankrupt—and therefore dishonest—banker, of having somehow misappropriated a sum of fourteen thousand pounds, which sum is known to have been brought from India by one Captain Dodd, and has disappeared."

"Stop a minute," said Mr. Abbott. "Who knows it, besides you?"

"The whole family of the Dodds. They will show you his letter from India, announcing his return with the money."

"Where do they live?"

"Albion Villa, Barkington."

Mr. Abbott noted the address in his book, and Alfred, mightily cheered and encouraged by this sensible act, went on to describe the various indications, which, insufficient singly, had by their united force driven him

to his conclusion. When he described David's appearance and words on his father's lawn at night, Wycherley interrupted him quietly: "Are you quite sure this was not a vision, a phantom of the mind heated by your agitation, and your suspicions?"

Dr. Eskell nodded assent, knowing nothing about the matter.

"Pray, doctor, was I the only person who saw this vision?" inquired Alfred, slily.

"I conclude so," said Wycherley, with an admirable smile.

"But why do you conclude so? because you are one of those who reason in a circle of assumptions. Now it happens that Captain Dodd was seen and felt on that occasion by three persons besides myself."

"Name them," said Mr. Abbott, sharply.

"A policeman called Reynolds, another policeman, whose name I don't know, and Miss Julia Dodd. The policemen helped me lift Captain Dodd off the grass, sir; Julia met us close by, and we four carried Dr. Wycherley's phantom home together to Albion Villa."

Mr. Abbott noted down all the names, and then turned to Dr. Wycherley. "What do you say to that?"

"I say it is a very important statement," said the doctor, blandly; "and that I am sure my young friend would not advance it unless he was firmly persuaded of its reality."

"Much obliged, doctor; and you would not contradict me so rashly in a matter I know all about and you know nothing about, if it was not your fixed habit to found facts on theories instead of theories on facts."

"There, that is enough," said Mr. Abbott. "I have brought you both to an issue at last. I shall send to Barkington, and examine the policemen and the Dodds."

"Oh, thank you, sir," cried Alfred with emotion. "If you once apply genuine tests like that to my case, I shall not be long in prison."

"Prison?" said Wycherley, reproachfully.

"Have you any complaint, then, to make of your treatment here?" inquired Dr. Eskell.

"No, no, sir," said Alfred warmly. "Dr. Wycherley is the very soul of humanity. Here are no tortures, no handcuffs nor leg-locks, no brutality, no insects that murder Sleep—without offence to Logic. In my last asylum the attendants inflicted violence, here they are only allowed to endure it. And, gentlemen, I must tell you a noble trait in my enemy there: nothing can make him angry with madmen; their lies, their groundless and narrow suspicions of him, their deplorable ingratitude to him, of which I see examples every day that rile *me* on his account; all these things seem to glide off him, baffled by the infinite kindness of his heart, and the incomparable sweetness of his temper; and he returns the duffers good for evil with scarcely an effort."

At this unexpected tribute the water stood in the doctor's eyes. It was no more than the truth; but this was the first maniac he had met intelligent enough to see his good qualities clearly and express them eloquently.

"In short," continued Alfred, "to be happy in his house all a man wants is to be insane. But, as I am not insane, I am miserable: no convict, no galley slave is so wretched as I am, gentlemen. And what is my crime?"

"Well, well," said Dr. Eskell kindly, "I think it likely you will not be very long in confinement." They then civilly dismissed him; and on his departure asked Dr. Wycherley his candid opinion. Dr. Wycherley said he was now nearly cured; his ability to discuss his delusion without excitement was of itself a proof of that. But in another month he would be better still. The doctor concluded his remarks thus:

"However, gentlemen, you have heard him: now judge for yourselves whether anybody can be as clever as he is, without the presence of more or less abnormal excitement of the organs of intelligence."

It was a bright day for Alfred: he saw he had made an excellent impression on the Commissioners, and, as luck does not always come single, after many vain attempts to get a letter posted to Julia, he found this very afternoon a nurse was going away next day. He offered her a guinea, and she agreed to post a letter. Oh the happiness it was to the poor prisoner to write it, and unburden his heart and tell his wrongs. He kept his manhood for his enemies; his tears fell on the paper he sent to his forlorn bride. He had no misgivings of her truth: he judged her by himself: gave her credit for anxiety, but not for doubt. He concluded a long, ardent, tender letter by begging her to come and see him, and, if refused admission, to publish his case in the newspapers, and employ a lawyer to proceed against all the parties concerned in his detention. Day after day he waited for an answer to his letter; none came. Then he began to be sore perplexed, and torn with agonising doubts. What if her mind was poisoned too! What if she thought him mad! What if some misfortune had befallen her! What if she had believed him dead, and her heart had broken! Hitherto he had seen his own trouble chiefly: but now he began to think day and night on hers; and though he ground on for his degree not to waste time, and not to be driven mad, yet it was almost superhuman labour; sighs issued from his labouring breast while his hard, indomitable brain laboured away, all uphill, at Aristotle's Divisions and Definitions.

On the seventh day, the earliest the mad statute allowed, the two Commissioners returned, and this time Mr. Abbott took the lead, and told him that the policeman Reynolds had left the force, and the Dodds had left the town, and were in London, but their address not known.

At this, Alfred was much agitated. She was alive, and perhaps near him.

"I have heard a good deal of your story," said Mr. Abbott, "and coupling it with what we have seen of you, we think your relatives have treated you, and a young lady of whom everybody speaks with respect——"

"God bless you for saying that! God bless you!"

"—treated you both, I say, with needless severity."

Dr. Eskell then told him the result of the Special Commission, now closed. "I believe you to be cured," said he; "and Mr. Abbott has some doubts whether you were ever positively insane. We shall lay your case before the Board at once, and the Board will write to the party who signed the order, and propose to him to discharge you at once."

At this magnificent project Alfred's countenance fell, and he stared with astonishment. "What! have you not the power to do me justice, without soliciting Injustice to help you?"

"The Board has the power," said Dr. Eskell; "but for many reasons they exercise it with prudence and reserve. Besides, it is only fair to those who have signed the order, to give them the graceful office of liberating the patient: it paves the way to reconciliation."

Alfred sighed. The Commissioners, to keep up his heart, promised to send him copies of their correspondence with the person who had signed the order. "Then," said Mr. Abbott kindly, "you will see your case is not being neglected."

The following précis, though imperfect, will give some idea of the correspondence:

1. The Board wrote to Thomas Hardie, letting him know the result of the Special Commission, and requesting him to discharge his nephew.

Thomas quaked. Richard smiled, and advised Thomas to take no notice. By this a week was gained to Injustice, and lost to Justice.

2. The Board pointed out Thomas Hardie's inadvertence in not answering No. 1; enclosed copy of it, and pressed for a reply.

Thomas quaked, Richard smiled.

3. Thomas Hardie to the Board. From what he had heard, it would be premature to discharge Alfred. Should prefer to wait a month or two.

4. Board to Alfred, conveying this in other terms.

5. Alfred to Board, warning them against this proposal. To postpone justice was to refuse justice, certainly for a time, probably for ever.

6. The Board to Thomas Hardie, suggesting that if not released immediately Alfred ought to have a trial—i.e. be allowed to go into the world with a keeper.

7. Alfred to the Board, begging that Dr. Sampson, an honest independent physician, might be allowed to visit him and report to them.

8. The Board to Alfred, declining this for the present as unadvisable, they being in correspondence with the person who had signed the order—with a view to his liberation.

9. T. Hardie to the Board, shuffling, and requesting time to make further inquires.

10. The Board, suggesting there should be some reasonable limit to delay.

11. T. Hardie, asking for a month to see about it.

12. The Board, suggesting a week.

13. Alfred Hardie, asking permission to be visited by a solicitor with a view to protection of his liberty and property.

14. The Board, declining this, pending their correspondence with other parties; but asking him for the names and addresses of all his trustees.

15. Thomas Hardie, informing the Board he had now learned Alfred had threatened to kill his father as soon as ever he should get out, and leaving the Board to discharge him on their own responsibility if they chose after this warning: but declining peremptorily to do so himself.

16, 17, 18. The Board, by advice of Mr. Abbott, to Alfred's trustees,

warning them against any alienation of Alfred's money, under the notion that he was legally a lunatic; and saying that a public Inquiry appeared inevitable, owing to Mr. T. Hardie's unwillingness to enter into their views.

19. To Alfred, inquiring whether he wished to encounter the expense of Chancery proceedings to establish his sanity.

20. Alfred to the Board, imploring them to use their powers and discharge him without further delay, and assuring them he meditated no violence on his liberation, but should proceed against all parties under legal advice.

21. The Board to T. Hardie, warning him that he must in future pay Alfred's maintenance in Asylum out of his own pocket, and pressing him either to discharge the young man, or else to apply to the Lord Chancellor for a Commision de Lunatico Inquirendo, and enclosing copy of a letter from Wycherley saying the patient was harmless.

22. T. Hardie respectfully declining to do either, but reminding the Commissioners that the matter could be thrown into Chancery without his consent, only the expense, which would be tremendous, would fall on the lunatic's estate, which might hereafter be regretted by the party himself. He concluded by promising to come to town and visit Alfred with his family physician, and write further in a week.

a

keeper in the suburbs of London, and elected a Mastership, whether anon.

The correspondence had already occupied three months, and kept Alfred in a fever of the mind; of all the maddening things with which he had been harassed by the pretended curers of insanity, this tried him hardest. To see a dozen honest gentlemen wishing to do justice, able to do justice by one manly stroke of the pen, yet forego their vantage-ground, and descend to coax an able rogue to do their duty and undo his own interest and rascality! To see a strong cause turned into a weak one by the timidity of champions clad by law in complete steel; and a rotten cause, against which Law and Power, as well as Truth, Justice, and Common Sense, had now declared, turned into a strong one by the pluck and cunning of his one unarmed enemy! The ancients feigned that the ingenious gods tortured Tantalus in hell by ever-present thirst, and water flowing to just the outside of his lips. A Briton can thirst for liberty as hard as Tantalus or hunted deer can thirst for cooling springs: and this soul-gnawing correspondence brought liberty, and citizenhood, and love, and happiness, to the lips of Alfred's burning, pining, aching heart, again, and again, and again; then carried them away from him in mockery. Oh the sickening anguish of Hope deferred, and deferred:

The Hell it is in suing long to bide.

But indeed his hopes began to sicken for good when he found that the Board would not allow any honest independent physician to visit him, or any solicitor to see him. At first, indeed, they refused it because Mr. Thomas Hardie was going to let him out: but when T. Hardie would not move at their request, then, on a fresh application,

they refused it, giving as their reason that they had already refused it. Yet in so keen a battle he would not throw away a chance: so he determined to win Dr. Wycherley altogether by hook or by crook, and got a certificate of sanity from him. Now a single white lie, he knew, would do the trick. He had only to say that Hamlet was mad. And "Hamlet was mad" is easily said.

Dr. Wycherley was a collector of mad people, and collectors are always amateurs, and very seldom connoisseurs. His turn of mind coöperating with his interests, led him to put down any man a lunatic, whose intellect was manifestly superior to his own. Alfred Hardie, and one or two more contemporaries, had suffered by this humour of the good doctor's. Nor did the dead escape him entirely. Pascal, according to Wycherley, was a madman with an illusion about a precipice; John Howard a moral lunatic in whom the affections were reversed; Saul a moping maniac with homicidal paroxysms and nocturnal visions; Paul an incoherent lunatic, who in his writings flies off at a tangent, and who admits having once been the victim of a photopsic illusion in broad daylight; Nebuchadnezzar a lycanthropical lunatic; Joan of Arc a theomaniac; Bobby Burton and Oliver Cromwell melancholy maniacs Napoleon an ambitious maniac, in whom the sense of impossibility became gradually extinguished by visceral and cerebral derangement: Porson an oinomaniac; Luther a phrenetic patient of the old demoniac breed, alluded to by Shakespeare:

> One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold.
> That is the madman.

But without intending any disrespect to any of these gentlemen, he assigned the golden crown of Insanity to Hamlet. To be sure this character tells his friends in the play he shall *feign* insanity, and swears them not to reveal the reason; and after this hint to his friends and the pit (it is notorious he was not written for readers) he keeps his word, and does it as cleverly as if his name was David or Brutus instead of Hamlet; indeed, like Edgar, he rather overdoes it, and so puzzles his enemies in the play, and certain German criticasters and English mad doctors in the closet, and does not puzzle his bosom friend in the play one bit, nor the pit for whom he was created. Add to this his sensibility, and his kindness to others, and his eloquent grief at the heart-rending situation, which his father's and mother's son was placed in and had brains to realise, though his psychological critics, it seems, have not; and add to all that the prodigious extent of his mind, his keen observation, his deep reflection, his brilliant fancy, united for once in a way with the great Academic, or judicial, intellect, that looks down and sees all the sides of everything—and what can this rare intellectual compound be? Wycherley decided the question. Hamlet was too much greater in the world of mind than S. T. Coleridge and his German criticasters; too much higher, deeper, and broader than Esquirol, Pinel, Sauze, Haslam, Munro, Pagan, Wigan, Prichard, Romberg, Wycherley, and such small deer, to be anything less than a madman.

Now, in their midnight discussions, Dr. Wycherley more than once alluded to the insanity of Hamlet; and offered proofs. But Alfred declined the subject as too puerile. "A man must exist before he can

be insane," said the Oxonian philosopher, severe in youthful gravity But when he found that Dr. Wycherley, had he lived in Denmark at the time, would have conferred cannily with Hamlet's uncle, removed that worthy relative's disbelief in Hamlet's insanity, and signed the young gentleman away behind his back into a lunatic asylum, Alfred began to sympathise with this posthumous victim of Psychological Science. "I believe the bloke was no madder than I am," said he. He got the play, studied it afresh, compared the fiction with the legend, compared Hamlet humbugging his enemies and their tool, Ophelia, with Hamlet opening his real mind to himself or his Horatio the very next moment; contrasted the real madness the author has portrayed in the plays of Hamlet and Lear by the side of these extravagant imitations, to save, if possible, even dunces, and dreamers, and criticasters from being taken in by the latter; and at their next séance pitched into the doctor's pet chimera, and what with logic, fact, ridicule, and the author's lines, knocked it to atoms.

Now, in their midnight discussions, Dr. Wycherley had always handled the question of Alfred Hardie's Sanity or Insanity with a philosophical coolness, the young man admired, and found it hard to emulate; but this philosophic calmness deserted him the moment Hamlet's insanity was disputed, and the harder he was pressed, the angrier, the louder, the more confused the Psychological physician became; and presently he got furious, burst out of the anti-spasmodic or round-about style and called Alfred a d—d ungrateful, insolent puppy, and went stamping about the room; and, finally, to the young man's horror, fell down in a fit of an epileptic character, grinding his teeth and foaming at the mouth.

Alfred was filled with regret, and, though alarmed, had the presence of mind not to call for assistance. The fit was a very mild one in reality, though horrible to look at. The doctor came to, and asked feebly for wine. Alfred got it him, and the doctor, with a mixture of cunning and alarm in his eye, said he had fainted away, or nearly. Alfred assented coaxingly, and looked sheepish. After this he took care never to libel Hamlet's intellect again by denying his insanity; for he was now convinced of what he had long half suspected, that the doctor had a bee in his own bonnet; and Alfred had studied true insanity all this time, and knew how inhumane it is to oppose a monomaniac's foible; it only infuriates and worries him. No power can convince him.

But now he resolved to play on the doctor's foible. It went against his conscience; but the temptation was so strong. He came to him with a hang-dog air:

"Doctor," said he, "I have been thinking over your arguments, and I capitulate. If Hamlet ever existed, he was as mad as a March hare." And he blushed at this his first quibble.

Dr. Wycherley beamed with satisfaction.

"My young friend, this gives me sincere pleasure; not on my account, but on your own. There goes one of your illusions then. Now tell me—the 14,000*l.*! Have you calmly reconsidered that too?"

Alfred hung his head, and looked guiltier and guiltier.

"Why," said he, "that never amounted to anything more than a

strong suspicion. It has long ceased to occupy my mind in excess. However, should I ever be so fortunate as to recover my liberty, I have no objection to collect the evidence about it pro and con., and then make you the judge instead of myself." This he delivered with an admirable appearance of indifference.

"Very well, sir," said the doctor drily. "Then, now I have a piece of good news for *you*."

"Oh, doctor, what is that?"

"Your cure is complete; that is all! You are now a sane man, as sane as I am."

Alfred was a little disappointed at this piece of news; but recovering himself, asked him to certify that and let him send the certificate to the Board. Dr. Wycherley said he would with pleasure.

"I'll bring it to you when I make my round," said he.

Alfred retired triumphant, and went in at Plato with a good heart.

In about an hour Dr. Wycherley paid him the promised visit. But what may not an hour bring forth? He came with mortification and regret in his face to tell Alfred that an order of transfer had been signed by the proper parties, and countersigned by two Commissioners, and he was to go to Dr. Wolf's asylum that day.

Alfred groaned. "I knew my father would out-wit my feeble friends somehow or other," said he. "What is his game? do you know?"

"I suppose to obtain a delay; and meantime get you into an asylum where they will tell the Commissioners you are worse again, and perhaps do something to make their words good. Dr. Wolf, between ourselves, will say or do almost anything for money. And his asylum is conducted on the old system; though he pretends not."

"My dear friend," said Alfred, "will you do me a favour?"

"How could I deny you anything at this sorrowful moment?"

"Here is an advertisement I want inserted in the Morning Advertiser."

"Oh, I can't do that, I fear."

"Look at it before you break my heart by refusing me."

Dr. Wycherley looked at it, and said it was innocent, being unintelligible: and he would insert it himself.

"Three insertions, dear doctor, said Alfred. "Here is the money."

The doctor then told him sorrowfully he must packs up his things Dr. Wolf's keepers were waiting for him.

The moment of parting came. Then Alfred solemnly forgave Dr. Wycherley for signing away his wits, and thanked him for all his kindness and humanity. "We shall never meet again, I fear," said he; "I feel a weight of foreboding here about my heart I never felt before; yet my trials have been many and great. I think the end is at hand. Dr. Wolf's keepers received him, and their first act was to handcuff him. The cold steel struck into him deeper than his wrist, and reminded him of Silverton Grove; he could not suppress a shudder. The carriage rolled all through London with him. He saw the Parks with autumn's brown and golden tints: he saw the people, some rich, some poor, but none of them prisoners. He saw a little girl all rags. "Oh, if I could be as ragged as you are," he said, "and free."

At last they reached Drayton House: a huge old mansion, fortified into a jail. His handcuffs were whipped off in the yard. He was ushered into a large, gloomy drawing-room. Dr. Wolf soon came to him, and they measured each other by the eye like two prize-fighters. Dr. Wolf's eye fell under Alfred's, and the latter felt he was capable of much foul play. He was one of the old bull-necked breed: and contained the bull-dog and the spaniel in his single nature. I hope you will be comfortable here, sir," said he, doggedly.

"I will try, sir."

"The first-class patients dine in half an hour."

"I will be ready, sir."

"Full dress in the evening; there are several ladies." Alfred assented by a bow. Dr. Wolf rang a bell, and told a servant to show Mr. Hardie his room.

He had just time to make his toilet when the bell rang for dinner.

As he went down a nurse met him, held up something white to him as she came, lowered it quickly, and dropped it at his feet in passing.

It was a billet-doux.

It was twisted into a pretty shape, scented, and addressed to Mr. Hardie, in a delicate Italian hand, and in that pale ink which seems to reflect the charming timidity of the fair who use it.

He wondered; carried it into a recess; then opened it and read it.

It contained but this one line:

"*Drink nothing but water at dinner.*"

These words in that delicate Italian hand sent a chill through Alfred. What on earth was all this? Was he to be poisoned? Was his life aimed at now instead of his reason? What was this mysterious drama prepared for him the very moment he set his foot in the place, perhaps before? A poisoner, and a friend! Both strangers. He went down to dinner: and contrived to examine every lady and gentleman at the table. But they were all strangers. Presently a servant filled his glass with beer; he looked and saw it was poured from a small jug holding only his portion. Alfred took his ring off his finger, and holding the glass up dropped his ring in.

"What is that for?" inquired one or two.

"Oh, my ring has a peculiar virtue, it tells me what is good for me. Ah! what do I see? my ruby changes colour. Fetch me a clean glass." And he filled it with water from a caraffe. "No, sir, leave the beer. I'll analyse it in my room after dinner; I'm a chemist."

Dr. Wolf changed colour, and was ill at ease. Here was a bold and ugly customer. However, he said nothing, and felt sure his morphia could not be detected in beer by any decomposer but the stomach. Still he was rather mystified.

In the evening Alfred came dressed into the drawing-room, and found several gentlemen and ladies there. One of the ladies seemed to attract the lion's share of male homage. Her back was turned to Alfred: but it was a beautiful back, with great magnificent neck and shoulders, and a skin like satin; she was tall but rounded and symmetrical, had a massive but long and shapely white arm, and perfect hand: and masses

of thick black hair sat on her grand white poll like a raven on a marble pillar.

It was not easy to get near her; for the mad gentlemen were fawning on her all round; like Queen Elizabeth's courtiers.

However, Dr. Wolf, seeing Alfred standing alone, said, "Let me introduce you," and took him round to her. The courtiers fell back a little. The lady turned her stately head, and her dark eyes ran lightly all over Alfred in a moment.

He bowed, and blushed like a girl. She curtseyed composedly and without a symptom of recognition—deep water runs still—and Dr. Wolf introduced them ceremoniously.

"Mr. Hardie—Mrs. Archbold."

## CHAPTER XLI.

On Alfred's leaving Silverton, Mrs. Archbold was prostrated. It was a stunning blow to her young passion, and left her weary, desolate.

But she was too strong to lie helpless under disappointed longings. Two days she sat stupified with the heartache; after that she bustled about her work in a fervour of half-crazy restlessness, and ungovernable irritability, quenched at times by fits of weeping. As she wept apart, but raged and tyrannised in public, she soon made Silverton House Silverton Oven, especially to those who had the luck to be of her sex. Then Baker timidly remonstrated; at the first word she snapped him up and said a change would be good for both of them: he apologised; in vain: that very day she closed by letter with Dr. Wolf, who had often invited her to be his "Matron." Her motive, half hidden from herself, was to be anywhere near her favourite.

Installed at Drayton House, she waited some days, and coquetted woman-like with her own desires, then dressed neatly but soberly, and called at Dr. Wycherley's; sent in a note explaining who she was with a bit of soft sawder, and asked to see Alfred.

She was politely but peremptorily refused. She felt this rebuff bitterly. She went home stung and tingling to the core. But Bitters wholesome be: offended pride now allied with strong good sense to wither a wild affection; and, as it was no longer fed by the presence of its object, her wound healed, all but the occasional dull throbbing that precedes a perfect cure.

At this stage of her convalescence Dr. Wolf told her in an off-hand way that Mr. Hardie, a patient of doubtful insanity, was coming to his asylum, to be kept there by hook or by crook. (She was entirely in Wolf's confidence, and he talked of these things to her in English.) The impenetrable creature assented outwardly, with no sign of emotion whatever, but one flash of the eye, and one heave of the bosom swiftly suppressed. She waited calmly and patiently till she was alone; then yielded to joy and triumph; they seemed to leap inside her. But this very thing alarmed her. "Better for me never to see him again," she thought. "His power over me is too terrible. Ah, good-bye to the peace

and comfort I have been building up! He will scatter them to the winds. He has."

She tried not to think of him too much. And, while she was so struggling, Wolf let out that Alfred was to have morphia at dinner the first day; morphia, the accursed drug with which these dark men in these dark places coax the reason away out of the head by degrees, or with a potent dose stupify the victim, then act surprise, alarm; and make his stupor the ground for applying medical treatment to the doomed wretch. Edith Archbold knew the game, and at the word morphia, Pity and Passion rose in her bosom irresistible. She smiled in Dr. Wolf's face, and hated him; and secretly girt herself up to baffle him, and protect Alfred's reason, and win his heart through his gratitude.

She received him as I have related, to throw dust in Dr. Wolf's eyes: but she acted so admirably that some went into Alfred's. "Ah," thought he, "she is angry with herself for her amorous folly; and, with the justice of her sex, she means to spite poor me for it." He sighed; for he felt her hostility would be fatal to him. To give her no fresh offence, he fell into her manner, and treated her with a world of distant respect. Then again, who else but she could have warned him against poison? Then again, if so, why look so cold and stern at him? He cast one or two wistful glances at her; but the artful woman of thirty was impenetrable in public to to the candid man of twenty-one. Even her passion could not put them on an equality.

That night he could not sleep. He lay wondering what would be the next foul practice, and how he should parry it.

He wrote next morning to the Commissioners that two of their number, unacquainted with the previous proceedings of the Board, had been surprised into endorsing an order of transfer to an asylum bearing a very inferior character to Dr. Wycherley's; the object of this was clearly foul play. Accordingly, Dr. Wolf had already tried to poison his reason, by drugging his beer at dinner. He added that Dr. Wycherley had now signed a certificate of his sanity, and implored the Board to inspect it, and discharge him at once, or else let a solicitor visit him at once, and take the requisite steps towards a public inquiry.

While waiting anxiously for the answer, it cost him all his philosophy to keep his heart from eating itself. But he fought the good fight of Reason: he invited the confidences of the quieter mad people, and established a little court, and heard their grievances, and by impartial decisions and good humour won the regard of the moderate patients and of the attendants, all but three; Rooke, the head keeper, a morose burly ruffian; Hayes, a bilious subordinate, Rooke's shadow; and Vulcan, a huge mastiff that would let nobody but Rooke touch him; he was as big as a large calf, and formidable as a small lion, though nearly toothless with age. He was let loose in the yard at night, and was an element in the Restraint system; many a patient would have tried to escape but for Vulcan. He was also an invaluable howler at night, and so co-operated with Dr. Wolf's bugs and fleas to avert sleep, that vile foe to insanity and all our diseases, private asylums included.

Alfred treated Mrs. Archbold with a distant respect that tried her

hard. But that able woman wore sweetness and unobtrusive kindness, and bided her time.

In Drayton House the keeperesses eclipsed the keepers in cruelty to the poorer patients. No men except Dr. Wolf and his assistant had a pass-key into their department, so there was nobody they could deceive, nobody they held worth the trouble. In the absence of male critics they showed their real selves, and how wise it is to trust that gentle sex in the dark with irresponsible power over females. With unflagging patience they applied the hourly torture of petty insolence, needless humiliation, unreasonable refusals, to the poor madwomen; bored them with the poisoned gimlet, and made their hearts bleeding pincushions. But minute cruelty and wild caprice were not enough for them, though these never tired nor rested; they must vilify them too with degrading and savage names. Billinsgate might have gone to school to Drayton House. Inter alia they seemed in love with a term that Othello hit upon; only they used it not once, but fifty times a day, and struck decent women with it on the face, like a scorpion whip; and then the scalding tears were sure to run in torrents down their silly, honest, burning cheeks. But this was not all; they had got a large tank in a flagged room, nominally for cleanliness and cure, but really for bane and torture. For the least offence, or out of mere wantonness, they would drag a patient stark naked across the yard, and thrust her bodily under water again and again, keeping her down till almost gone with suffocation, and dismissing her more dead than alive with obscene and insulting comments ringing in her ears, to get warm again in the cold. This my ladies called "tanking."

In the ordinary morning ablutions they tanked without suffocating. But the immersion of the whole body in cold water was of itself a severe trial to those numerous patients in whom the circulation was weak; and as medical treatment, hurtful and even dangerous. Finally these keeperesses, with diabolical insolence and cruelty, would bathe twenty patients in this tank, and then make them drink that foul water for their meals.

"The dark places of the land are full of horrible cruelty."

One day they tanked so savagely that Nurse Eliza, after months of sickly disapproval, came to the new redresser of grievances, and told.

What was he to do? He seized the only chance of redress; he ran panting with indignation to Mrs. Archbold, and blushing high, said imploringly, "Mrs. Archbold, you used to be kind hearted——" and could say no more for something rising in his throat.

Mrs. Archbold smiled encouragingly on him, and said softly, "I am the same I always was—to you Alfred."

"Oh, thank you; then pray send for Nurse Eliza, and hear the cruelties that are being done to the patients within a yard of us."

"You had better tell me yourself, if you want me to pay any attention."

"I can't. I don't know how to speak to a lady of such things as are done here. The brutes! the cowardly she-devils! Oh, how I should like to kill them."

Mrs. Archbold laughed a little at his enthusiam (fancy caring so what was done to a pack of women), and sent for Nurse Eliza. She came,

and being questioned told Mrs. Archbold more than she had Alfred. "And, ma'am," said she, whimpering, "they have just been tanking one they had no business to touch; it is Mrs. Dale, her that is so close on her confinement. They tanked her cruel they did, and kept her under water till she was nigh gone. I came away; I couldn't stand it."

Alfred was walking about in a fury, and Nurse Eliza, in making this last revolting communication, lowered her voice for him not to hear: but his senses were quick. I think he heard, for he turned and came quickly to them.

"Mrs. Archbold, you are strong and brave—for a woman; oh, do go in to them and take them by the throat and shake the life out of them, the merciless, cowardly beasts! Oh that I could be a woman for an hour, or they could be men, I'd soon have my foot on some of the wretches."

Mrs. Archbold acted Ignition. "Come with me both of you," she said, and they were soon in the female department. Up came keeperesses directly, smirking and curtseying to her, and pretending not to look at Adonis. "Which of you nurses tanked Mrs. Dale?" said she, sternly.

"'Twasn't I, ma'am, 'twasn't I."

"Oh, fie!" said Eliza to one, "you know you were at the head of it."

She pointed out two as the leaders. The Archbold instantly had them seized by the others—who, with treachery equal to their cowardice, turned eagerly against their fellow-culprits, to make friends with Power—and, inviting all the sensible maniacs who had been tanked, to assist or inspect, she bared her own statuesque arms, and, ably aided, soon plunged the offenders, screaming, crying, and whining, like spaniel bitches whipped, under the dirty water. They swallowed some, and appreciated their own acts. Then she forced them to walk twice round the yard with their wet clothes clinging to them, hooted by the late victims.

"There," said Alfred, "let that teach you men will not own hyænas in petticoats for women."

Poor Alfred took all the credit of this performance; but in fact, when the Archbold invited him to bear a hand, he showed the white feather.

"*I* won't touch the blackguardesses," said he, haughtily turning it off on the score of contempt. "*You* give it them! Again! again! Brava!"

Mosaic retribution completed, Mrs. Archbold told the nurses if ever "tanking" recurred she would bundle the whole female staff into the street, and then have them indicted by the Commissioners.

These virtuous acts did Edith Archbold for love for a young man. Whether mad women or sane, women pregnant, or the reverse, were tanked or not, she cared at heart no more than whether sheep were washed or no in Ettrick's distant dale. She was retiring with a tender look at Alfred, and her pulse secretly unaccelerated by sheep-washing of she-wolves, when her grateful favourite appealed to her again:

"Dear Mrs. Archbold, shall we punish and not comfort? This poor Mrs. Dale!"

The Archbold could have boxed his ears. "Dear boy," she murmured tenderly, "you teach us all our duty." She visited the tanked one, found her in a cold room after it, shivering like ague, and her teeth chattering. Mrs. Archbold had her to the fire, and got her warm clothes

and a pint of wine, and probably saved her life and her child's—for love of a young man.

Why I think Mrs. Dale would otherwise have left this shifting scene, Mrs. Carey, the last woman in her condition they tanked and then turned into a flagged cell that only wanted one frog of a grotto, was found soon after moribund; on which they bundled her out of the asylum to die. She did die next day, at home, but murdered by the asylum; and they told the Commissioners she died through her friends taking her away from the asylum too soon. The Commissioners had nothing to do but believe this, and did believe it. Inspectors who visit a temple of darkness, lies, cunning, and hypocrisy, four times a year, know mighty little of what goes on there the odd three hundred and sixty-one days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and fifty-seven seconds.*

"Now, Alfred," said Mrs. Archbold, "I can't be everywhere, or know everything; so you come to me when anything grieves you; and let me be the agent of your humanity."

She said this so charmingly he was surprised into kissing her fair hand; then blushed, and thanked her warmly. Thus she established a chain between them. When he let too long elapse without appealing to her, she would ask his advice about the welfare of this or that patient; and so she cajoled him by the two foibles she had discerned in him—his vanity and his humanity.

Besides Alfred, there were two patients in Drayton House who had never been insane; a young man, and an old woman; of whom anon. There were also three ladies and one gentleman, who had been deranged, but had recovered years ago. This little incident, Recovery, is followed in a public asylum by instant discharge; but, in a private one, Money, not Sanity, is apt to settle the question of egress. The gentleman's case was scarce credible in the nineteenth century: years ago, being undeniably cracked, he had done what Dr. Wycherley told Alfred was a sure sign of sanity; i.e. he had declared himself insane: and had even been so reasonable as to sign his own order and certificates, and so imprison himself illegally, but with perfect ease; no remonstrance against that illegality from the guardians of the law! When he got what plain men call sane, he naturally wanted to be free, and happening to remember he alone had signed the order of imprisonment, and the imaginary doctor's certificates, he claimed his discharge from illegal confinement. Answer: "First obtain a legal order for your discharge." On this he signed an order for his discharge. "That is not a legal order."—"It is as legal as the order on which I am here." Granted; but, legally or not, the asylum has *got* you; the open air has not got you. Possession is ninety-nine points of Lunacy law. Die your own illegal prisoner, and let your kinsfolk eat your land, and drink your consols, and bury you in a pauper's shroud. All that Alfred could do for these victims was to promise to try and get them out some day, D.V. But there was a weak-minded youth, Francis Beverley, who had the honour to be under the protection of the Lord Chancellor. Now a lunatic or a Softy protected by that functionary is literally a lamb protected by a wolf, and that wolf ex officio the cruelest, cunningest old

* Arithmetic of my boyhood. I hear the world revolves some minutes quicker now.

mangler and fleecer of innocents in Christendom. Chancery lunatics are the richest class, yet numbers of them are flung among pauper and even criminal lunatics, at a few pounds a year, while their committees bag four-fifths of the money that has been assigned to keep the patient in comfort.

Unfortunately the protection of the Chancellor extends to Life and Reason, as well as Fleece; with the following result:

In public asylums about forty per cent. are said to be cured.

In private ones twenty-five per cent. at least; most of them poorish.

Of Chancery Lunatics not five per cent.

Finally, one-third of all the Chancery Lunatics do every six years exchange the living tombs they are fleeced and bullied in for dead tombs where they rest; and go from the sham protection of the Lord Chancellor of England to the real protection of their Creator and their Judge.

These statistics have been long before the world, and are dead figures to the Skimmer of things, but tell a dark tale to the Reader of things, so dark, that I pray Heaven to protect me, and all other weak inoffensive persons, from the protection of my Lord Chancellor in this kind.

Beverley was so unfortunate as to exist before the date of the above petition; and suffered the consequences.

He was an aristocrat by birth, noble on both sides of his house, and unluckily had money. But for that he would have been a labouring man, and free. My Lord Protector committed him with six hundred pounds a year maintenance money to the care of his committee, the Honourable Fynes Beverley.

Now this corporate, yet honourable, individual, to whom something was committed, and so Chancery Lane called him in its own sweet French the thing committed, was a gentleman of birth, breeding, and intelligence. He undertook to take care of his simple cousin; and what he did take care of was himself.

### The Sub-letting Swindle.

1. The Honourable Fynes Beverley, Anglo-French committee, or crown tenant, sub-let soft Francis for 300*l.* a year, pocketed 300*l.*, and washed his hands of Frank.

2. Mr. Heselden, the sub-tenant, sub-let the Softy of high degree for 150*l.*, pocketed the surplus, and washed his hands of him.

3. The 150*l.* man sub-let him to Dr. Wolf at 60*l.* a year, pouched the surplus, and washed his hands of him.

And now what on earth was left for poor Dr. Wolf to do? Could he sub-embezzle a Highlander's breeks? Could he subtract more than her skin from off the singed cat? Could he peel the core of a rotten apple? Could he pare a grated cheese rind? Could he flay a skinned flint? Could he fleece a hog after Satan had shaved it as clean as a bantam's egg?

Let no man dare to limit genius; least of all the genius of extortion.

Dr. Wolf screwed comparatively more out of young Frank than did any of the preceding screws. He turned him into a servant of all work and half starved him; money profit, 45*l.* out of the 60*l.*, or three-fourths, whereas the others had only bagged one-half. But by this means he got a

good servant without wages, and on half a servant's food, clearing 22*l.* and 12*l.* in these two items.

Victim of our great national vice and foible, Vicariousness, this scion of a noble house, protected in theory by the Crown, vicariously sub-protected by the Chancellor, sub-vicariously sub-sham-protected by his kin, was really flung unprotected into the fleece market, and might be seen—at the end of the long chain of subs, pros, vices, locos, shams, shuffles, swindles, and lies—shaking the carpets, making the beds, carrying the water, sweeping the rooms, and scouring the sordid vessels, of thirty patients in Drayton House, not one of whom was his equal either in birth or wealth; and of four menials, who were all his masters and hard ones. His work was always doing, never done. He was not the least mad nor bad, but merely of feeble intellect all round. Fifty thousand gentlemen's families would have been glad of him at 300*l.* a year, and made a son and a brother of him. But he was under the vicarious protection of the Lord Chancellor. Thin, half-starved, threadbare, out at elbows, the universal butt, scoffed at by the very lunatics, and especially ill treated by the attendants whose work he did gratis, he was sworn at, jeered, insulted, cuffed and even kicked, every day of his hard, hard life. And yet he was a gentleman, though a soft one; his hands, his features, his carriage, his address, had all an indefinable stamp of race. How had it outlived such crushing, degrading usage? I don't know; how does a daisy survive the iron roller? Alfred soon found him out, and, to everybody's amazement, especially Frank's, remonstrated gently but resolutely and eloquently, and soon convinced the majority, sane and insane, that a creature so meek and useful merited especial kindness, not cruelty. One keeper, The Robin, alias Tom Wales, an ex-prize-fighter, was a warm convert to this view. Among the maniacs only one held out, and said contemptuously he couldn't see it.

"Well," said Alfred, "lay a finger on him after this, and I'll lay a hand on you, and aid your intellectual vision."

Rooke and Hayes treated remonstrance with open and galling contempt. Yet the tide of opinion changed so, they did not care to defy it openly: but they bullied poor Beverley now and then on the sly, and he never told. He was too inoffensive for this world. But one day, as Alfred was sitting with his door ajar, writing a letter of earnest expostulation to the Commissioners, who had left his first unanswered, he heard Hayes at the head of the stairs call roughly "Frank! Frank!"

"Sir," replied the soft little voice of young Beverley.

"Come, be quick young shaver."

"I'm coming sir," and up ran Beverley.

"Here take this tray down stairs."

"Yes, sir."

"Stop, there's a bit of bread for you." And Hayes chucked him a crust, as one throws it to another man's dog.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Beverley, stooping down for it, and being habitually as hungry as a ratcatcher's tyke, took an eager bite in that position.

"How dare you eat it there," said Hayes brutally: "take it to your own crib: come, mizzle." And with that lent him a contemptuous kick behind, which owing to his position sent him off his balance flat on the

tray; a glass broke under him; poor young Mr. Beverley uttered a cry of dismay, for he knew Hayes would not own himself the cause; Hayes cursed him for an awkward idiot, and the oath went off into a howl, for Alfred ran out at him brimful of Moses, and with a savage kick in the back and blow on the neck administered simultaneously hurled him headforemost down the stairs. Alighting on the seventh step, he turned a somersault, and bounded like a ball on to the landing below, and there lay stupified. He picked himself up by slow degrees, and glared round with speechless awe and amazement up at the human thunderbolt that had shot out on him and sent him flying like a feather. He shook his fist, and limped silently away all bruises and curses, to tell Rooke and concert vengeance. Alfred, trembling still with ire, took Beverley to his room (the boy was as white as a sheet), and encouraged him, and made him wash properly, brushed his hair, dressed him in a decent tweed suit he had outgrown, and taking him under his arm, and walking with his own nose haughtily in the air, paraded him up and down the asylum, to show them all the best man in the house respected the poor soft gentleman. Ah, what a grand thing it is to be young! Beverley clung to his protector too much like a girl, but walked gracefully and kept step, and every now and then looked up at Alfred with a loving adoration, that was sweet yet sad to see. Alfred marched him to Mrs. Archbold, and told his tale; for he knew Hayes would misrepresent it, and get him into trouble. She smiled on the pair; gently deplored her favourite's impetuosity, entreated him not to go fighting with that great monster Rooke, and charmed him by saying, "Well, and Frank *is* a gentleman, when he is dressed like one."

"Isn't he," said Alfred eagerly. "And whose fault is it he is not always dressed like one? Whose fault that here's an earl's nephew, 'Boots' in Hell?"

"Not yours, Alfred, nor mine," was the honeyed reply.

In vain did Mr. Hayes prefer his complaint to Dr. Wolf. The Archbold had been before him, and the answer was, "Served you right."

These and many other good deeds did Alfred Hardie in Drayton House. But, as the days rolled on, and no answer came from the Commissioners, his own anxiety, grief, and dismay, left him less and less able to sympathise with the material but smaller wrongs around him. He became silent, dejected.

At last he came to Mrs. Archbold, and said sternly his letters to the Commissioners were intercepted.

"I can't believe that," said she. "It is against the law."

So it was: but law and custom are two.

"I am sure of it," said he; "and may the eternal curse of Heaven light on the cowardly traitor and miscreant who has done it." And he stalked gloomily away.

When he left her, she sighed at this imprecation from his lips; but did not repent. "I *can't* part with him," she said despairingly; "and if I did not stop his poor dear letters, Wolf would:" and the amorous crocodile shed a tear, and persisted in her double-faced course.

By-and-by, when she saw him getting thinner and paler, and his bright face downcast and inexpressibly sad, she shared his misery; ay, shed scalding tears for him; yet could not give him up; for her will was

as strong as the rest of her was supple: and hers was hot love, but not true love like Julia's.

Perhaps a very subtle observer seeing this man and woman wax pale and spiritless together in one house, might have divined her secret. Dr. Wolf then was no such observer, for she made him believe she had a rising penchant for him. He really had a strong one for her.

While Alfred's visible misery pulled at her heart-strings, and sometimes irritated, sometimes melted her, came curious complications; one of which requires preface.

Mrs. Dodd then was not the wife to trust blindly where her poor husband was concerned; she bribed so well that a keeperess in David's first asylum told her David had been harshly used by an attendant. She instantly got Eve Dodd to take him away: and transfer him to a small asylum nearer London, and kept by a Mrs. Ellis. "Women are not cruel to men," said the sagacious Lucy Dodd.

But, alas! if women are not cruel where sex comes in and mimics that wider sentiment, Humanity, women are deadly economical. Largely gifted with that household virtue, Mrs. Ellis kept two few servants, and, sure consequence in a madhouse, too many strait-jackets, hobbles, muffs, leg-locks, body-belts, &c. &c. Hence half her patients were frequently kept out of harm's way by cruel restraints administered, not out of hearty cruelty, but female parsimony. Mrs. and Miss Dodd invaded the house one day when the fair economist was out, and found seven patients out of the twelve kept out of mischief thus: one in a restraint chair, two hobbled like asses, two chained like dogs, and two in straight-waistcoats, and fastened to beds by webbing and straps; amongst the latter David, though quiet as a lamb.

Mrs. Dodd cried over him as if her heart would break, and made Miss Dodd shift him to a large asylum, where I believe he was very well used. But here those dreadful newspapers interfered; a prying into sweet secluded spots. They diversified Mrs. Dodd's breakfast by informing her that the doctor of this asylum had just killed a patient; the mode of execution bloodless and sure, as became fair science. It was a man between sixty and seventy; an age at which the heart can seldom stand very much shocking, or lowering, especially where the brain is diseased. So they placed him in a shower-bath, narrow enough to impede respiration, without the falling water, which of necessity drives out air. In short a vertical box with holes all round the top.

Here the doctor ordered him a cold shower-bath of unparalleled duration; half an hour. To be followed by an unprecedented dose of tartar emetic. This double-barrelled order given, the doctor went away. (Formula.)

The water was down to forty-five degrees Fahrenheit. Half an hour's shower-bath at that temperature in a roomy bath would kill the youngest and strongest man in her Majesty's dominions.

For eight-and-twenty mortal minutes the poor old man stood in this vertical coffin under this cold cascade. Six hundred gallons of icy water were in that his last hour, his last half-hour, discharged upon his devoted head and doomed body.

He had to be helped away from this death-torrent he had walked into in high spirits, poor soul.

Even this change awakened no misgivings, no remorse; though you or I, or any man or women picked at hazard out of the streets, would at once have seen that he was dying, he was duly dosed by the fire with four spoonfuls of antimonial tincture—*to mak' sicker*. But even the "Destructive Art of Healing" cannot slay the slain. The old man cheated the emetic; for, before it could hurt him, he died of the bath; and his body told its own sad tale; to use the words of a medical eye-witness, it was "A PIECE OF ALABASTER." The death-torrent had driven the whole circulation from the surface.*

Mrs. Dodd was terrified, and in spite of Sampson's assurance that this was the asylum of all others they would not settle another patient in until the matter should have blown over, got Eve Dodd to write to Dr. Wolf, and offer 300*l.* a year if he would take David at once, and treat him with especial consideration.

He showed this letter triumphantly to Mrs. Archbold, and she, blinded for a moment by feeling, dissuaded him from receiving Captain Dodd. He stared at her. "What, turn away a couple of thousand pounds?"

"But they will come to visit him; and perhaps see *him*."

"Oh, that can be managed. You must be on your guard: and I'll warn Rooke. I can't turn away money on a chance."

One day Alfred found himself locked into his room. This was unusual: for, though they called him a lunatic in words, they called him sane by all their acts. He half suspected that the Commissioners were in the house.

Had he known who really was in the house, he would have beaten himself to pieces against the door.

At dinner there was a new patient, very mild and silent, with a beautiful large brown eye, like some gentle animal's.

Alfred was very much struck with this eye, and contrived to say a kind word to him after dinner. Finding himself addressed by a gentleman, the new comer handled his forelock, and made a sea scrape, and announced himself as William Thompson; he added with simple pride, "Able Seaman;" then, touching his forelock again, "Just come aboard, your honour." After this, which came off glibly, he was anything but communicative. However, Alfred contrived to extract from him that he was rather glad to leave his last ship, on account of having been constantly impeded there in his duties by a set of lubbers, that clung round him and kept him on deck whenever the first lieutenant ordered him into the top.

The very next day, pacing sadly the dull gravel of his prison yard, Alfred heard a row; and there was the able seamen struggling with the

* This mode of execution is well known in the United States. They settle refractory prisoners with it periodically. But half an hour is not needed; twenty minutes will do the trick. 'Harper's Weekly,' a year or two ago, contained an admirable woodcut of a negro's execution by water. In this remarkable picture you see the poor darkie seated powerless, howling and panting his life away under the deadly cascade: and there stands the stolid turnkey, erect, formal, stiff as a ramrod, pulling the deadly string with a sort of drill exercise air, and no more compunction nor reflection than if he himself was a machine constructed to pull strings or triggers on his own string being pulled by butcher or fool. A picture well studied, and so worth study.

Robin and two other keepers: he wanted to go to his duties in the fore-top: to wit the fork of a high elm-tree in the court-yard. Alfred had half a mind not to interfere. "Who cares for *my* misery?" he said. But his better nature prevailed, and he told the Robin he was sure going up imaginary rigging would do Thompson more good than harm.

On this the men reluctantly gave him a trial, and he went up the tree with wonderful strength and agility, but evident caution. Still Alfred quaked when he crossed his thighs tight over a limb of the tree forty feet from earth, and went carefully and minutely through the whole process of furling imaginary sails. However, he came down manifestly soothed by the performance, and, singular phenomenon, he was quite cool; and it was the spectators on deck who perspired.

"And what a pleasant voice he has," said Alfred; "it quite charms my ear: it is not like a mad voice. It is like—I'm mad myself."

"And he has got a fiddle, and plays it like a hangel, by all accounts," said the Robin; "only he won't touch it but when he has a mind."

At night Alfred dreamed he heard Julia's sweet mellow voice speaking to him; and he looked, and lo! it was the able seaman. He could sleep no more, but lay sighing.

Ere the able seaman had been there three days, Mrs. Dodd came unexpectedly to see him: and it was with the utmost difficulty Alfred was smuggled out of the way. Mrs. Archbold saw by her loving anxiety these visits would be frequent, and, unless Alfred was kept constantly locked up, which was repugnant to her, they would meet some day. She knew there are men who ply the trade of spies, and where to find them; she set one of them to watch Mrs. Dodd's house, and learn her habits, in hopes of getting some clue as to when she might be expected.

Now it so happened that, looking for one thing, she found another which gave her great hopes and courage. And then the sight of Alfred's misery tried her patience, and then he was beginning half to suspect her of stopping his letters. Passion, impatience, pity, and calculation, all drove her the same road, and led to an extraordinary scene, so impregnated with the genius of the madhouse—a place where the passions run out to the very end of their tether—that I feel little able to describe it; I will try and indicate it.

One fine Sunday afternoon then she asked Alfred languidly would he like to walk in the country.

"Would I like? Ah, don't trifle with a prisoner," said he sorrowfully.

She shook her head. "No, no, it will not be a happy walk; Rooke, who hates you, is to follow us with that terrible mastiff, to pull you down if you try to escape. I could not get Dr. Wolf to consent on any other terms; Alfred, let us give up the idea. I fear your rashness."

"No, no, I won't try to escape—from you. I have not seen a blade of grass this six months."

The accomplished dissembler hesitated, yielded. They passed through the yard and out at the back door, which Alfred had so often looked

wistfully at; and by-and-by reached a delicious pasture; a light golden haze streamed across it; Nature never seemed so sweet, so divine, to Alfred before; the sun as bright as midsummer, though not the least hot, the air fresh, yet genial, and perfumed with Liberty and the smaller flowers of earth; Beauty glided rustling by his side, and dark eyes subdued their native fire into softness whenever they turned on him; and scarce fifty yards in the rear hung a bully and a mastiff ready to tear him down if he should break away from beauty's light hand, that rested so timidly on his. He was young, and stout-hearted, and relished his peep of liberty and nature, though blotted by Vulcan and Rooke. He chatted to Mrs. Archbold in good spirits. She answered briefly, and listlessly.

At last she stopped under a young chestnut-tree as if overcome with a sudden reflection, and turning half away from him leaned her head and hand upon a bough, and sighed. The attitude was pensive and womanly. He asked her with innocent concern what was the matter; then faintly should he take her home. All her answer was to press his hand with hers that was disengaged, and, instead of sighing, to cry.

The novice in woman's wiles set himself to comfort her—in vain: to question her—in vain at first, but by degrees she allowed him to learn that it was for him she mourned; and so they proceeded on the old, old plan, the man extorting from the woman bit by bit just so much as she wanted all along to say, and would have poured in a stream if let quite alone.

He drew from his distressed friend that Dr. Wolf for reasons of his own had made special inquiries about the Dodds; that she had fortunately or unfortunately heard of this, and had questioned the person employed, hoping to hear something that might comfort Alfred. "Instead of that," said she, "I find Miss Dodd is like most girls; out of sight is out of mind with her."

"What do you mean?" said Alfred, trembling suddenly.

"Do not ask me. What a weak fool I was to let you see I was unhappy for you."

"The truth is the truth," gasped Alfred: "tell me at once."

"Must I? I am afraid you will hate me; for I should hate any one who told me your faults. Well, then—if I must—Miss Dodd has a beau."

"It is a lie!" cried Alfred furiously.

"I wish it was. But she has two in fact, both of them clergymen: however, one seems the favourite; at least they are engaged to be married; it is Mr. Hurd, the curate of the parish she lives in. By what I hear she is one of the religious ones: so perhaps that has brought the pair to an understanding."

At these words a cold sickness rushed all over Alfred, beginning at his heart. He stood white and stupified a moment: then, in the anguish of his heart, broke out into a great and terrible cry: it was like a young lion wounded with a poisoned shaft.

Then he was silent, and stood stock still, like petrified despair.

Mrs. Archbold was prepared for an outburst: but not of this kind. His anguish was so unlike a woman's that it staggered her. Her

good and bad angels, to use an expressive though somewhat too poetical phrase, battled for her. She had an impulse to earn his gratitude, for life, to let him out of the asylum ere Julia should be Mrs. Hurd, and even liberty come too late for true love. She looked again at the statue of grief by her side: and burst out crying in earnest.

This was unfortunate. Shallow pity exuding in salt water leaves not enough behind to gush forth in good deeds.

She only tried to undo her own work in part; to comfort him a little with common-places: she told him in a soothing whisper there were other women in the world besides this inconstant girl, others who could love him as he deserved.

He made no answer to all she could say, but just waved his hand once impatiently. Petty consolation seemed to sting him.

She drew back discouraged: but only for a while. He was silent.

With one grand serpentine movement she came suddenly close to him, and, standing half behind him, laid her hand softly on his shoulder, and poured burning love in his ear. "Alfred," she murmured, "we are both unhappy; let us comfort one another. I had pity on you at Silverton House, I pity you now: pity *me* a little in turn; take me out of this dreadful house, out of this revolting life, and let me be with you. Let me be your housekeeper, your servant, your slave. This news that has shocked you so has torn the veil from my eyes; I thought I had cooled my love down to friendship and tender esteem; but no, now I see you as unhappy as myself, now I can speak and wrong no one, I own I —oh Alfred my heart burns for you, bleeds for you, yearns for you, sickens for you, dies for you."

"Oh, hush! hush! Mrs. Archbold. You are saying things you will blush for the next moment."

"I blush now, but cannot hush; I have gone too far. And your happiness as well as mine is at stake. No young girl can understand or value such a man as you are: but I, like you, have suffered; I, like you, am constant; I, like you, am warm and tender; at my age a woman's love is bliss to him who can gain it; and I love you with all my soul, Alfred; I worship the ground you walk on, my sweet, sweet boy. Say you the word, dearest, and I will bribe the servants, and get the keys, and sacrifice my profession for ever to give you liberty (see how sweet the open face of nature is, sweeter than anything on earth, but love); and all I ask is a little, little of your heart in return. Give me a chance to make you mine for ever; and, if I fail, treat me as I shall deserve; desert me at once; and then I'll never reproach you; I'll only die for you; as I have lived for you ever since I first saw your heavenly face."

The passionate woman paused at last, but her hot cheek and heaving bosom and tender convulsive hand prolonged the pleading.

I am afraid few men of her own age would have resisted her; for voice and speech and all were burning, melting, and winning: and then, so reasonable, lads; she did not stipulate for constancy.

But Alfred turned round to her blushing and sorrowful. "For shame!" he said; "this is not love: you abuse that sacred word. Indeed, if you had ever really loved, you would have pitied me and

Julia long ago, and respected our love; and saved us by giving me my freedom long ago. I am not a fool: do you think I don't know that you are my jailer, and the cunningest and most dangerous of them all?"

"You cruel, ungrateful!" she sobbed.

"No; I am not ungrateful either," said he, more gently. "You have always come between me and that kind of torture which most terrifies vulgar souls; and I thank you for it. Only, if you had also pitied the deeper anguish of my heart, I should thank you more still. As it is, I forgive you for the share you have had in blasting my happiness for life; and nobody shall ever know what you have been mad enough in an unguarded moment to say; but for pity's sake talk no more of love, to mock my misery."

Mrs. Archbold was white with ire long before he had done this sentence. "You insolent creature," said she; "you spurn my love; you shall feel my hate."

"So I conclude," said he, coldly: "such love as yours is hard by hate."

"It is," said she: "and I know how I'll combine the two. To-day I loved you, and you spurned me; ere long you shall love me and I'll despise you; and not spurn you."

"I don't understand you," said Alfred, feeling rather uneasy.

"What," said she, "don't you see how the superior mind can fascinate the inferior? Look at Frank Beverley; how he follows you about and fawns on you, like a little dog."

"I prefer his sort of affection to yours."

"A gentleman and a man would have kept that to himself; but you are neither one nor the other; or you would have taken my offer, and then run away from me the next day, you fool. A man betrays a woman; he doesn't insult her. Ah, you admire Frank's affection; well, you shall imitate it. You couldn't love me like a man; you shall love me like a dog."

"How will you manage that, pray?" he inquired with a sneer.

"I'll drive you mad."

She hissed this fiendish threat out between her white teeth.

"Ay, sir," she said, "hitherto your reason has only encountered men. You shall see now what an insulted woman can do. A lunatic you shall be ere long, and then I'll make you love me, dote on me, follow me about for a smile: and then I'll leave off hating you, and love you once more, but not the way I did five minutes ago."

At this furious threat Alfred ground his teeth, and said: "Then I give you my honour that the moment I see my reason the least shaken, I'll kill *you*: and so save myself from the degradation of being your lover on any terms."

"Threaten your own sex with that," said the Archbold contemptuously; "you may kill me whenever you like; and the sooner the better. Only, if you don't do it very quickly, you shall be my property my brain-sick, love-sick, slave."

## CHAPTER XLI.

AFTER a defiance so bitter and deadly, Alfred naturally drew away from his inamorata. But she, boiling with love and hate, said bitterly, "We need not take Mr. Rooke into our secrets. Come, sir, your arm!"

He stuck it out ungraciously, and averted his head; she took it, suppressed with difficulty a petty desire to pinch, and so walked by his side; he was as much at his ease as if promenading jungles with a panther. She felt him quiver with repugnance under her soft hand; and prolonged the irritating contact. She walked very slowly, and told him with much meaning she was waiting for a signal. "Till then," said she, "we will keep one another company;" biting the word with her teeth as it went out.

By-and-by a window was opened in the asylum, and a table-cloth hung out. Mrs. Archbold pointed it out to Alfred; he stared at it; and after that she walked him rapidly home in silence. But, as soon as the door was double-locked on him, she whispered triumphantly in his ear:

"Your mother-in-law was expected to-day; that signal was to let me know she was gone."

"My mother-in-law!" cried the young man, and tried in vain to conceal his surprise and agitation.

"Ay; your mother-in-law, that shall never be: Mrs. Dodd."

"Mrs. Dodd here!" said Alfred, clasping his hands. Then he reflected, and said coolly: "It is false; what should she come here for?"

"To see your father-in-law."

"My father-in-law? What, is he here, too?" said Alfred, with an incredulous sneer.

"Yes, the raving maniac that calls himself Thompson, and that you took to from the first: he is your precious father-in-law—that shall never be."

Alfred was now utterly amazed, and bewildered. Mrs. Archbold eyed him in silent scorn.

"Poor man," said he, at last; and hung his head sorrowfully. "No wonder then his voice went so to my heart. How strange it all is? and how will it all end?"

"In your being a madman instead of an insolent fool," hissed the viper.

At this moment Beverley appeared at the end of the yard. Mrs. Archbold whistled him to her like a dog. He came running zealously "Who was that called while I was out?" she inquired

"A polite lady, madam: she said sir to me, and thanked me."

"That sounds like Mrs. Dodd," said the Archbold quietly.

"Ah, but," continued Frank, "there was another with her: a beautiful young lady; oh, so beautiful!"

"Miss Julia Dodd," said the Archbold grimly.

Alfred panted, and his eyes roved wildly in search of a way to escape and follow her; she could not be far off.

"Anybody else, Frank?" inquired Mrs. Archbold.

"No more ladies, madam; but there was a young gentleman all in black; I think he was a clergyman; or a butler."

"Ah, that was her husband that is to be; that was Mr. Hurd. She can go nowhere without him, not even to see her old beau."

At these words, every one of them an adder, Alfred turned on her furiously, and his long arm shot out of its own accord, and the fingers opened like an eagle's claw. She saw, and understood, but never blenched. Her vindictive eye met his dilating flashing orbs unflinchingly.

"You pass for a woman," he said, "and I am too wretched for anger." He turned from her with a deep convulsive sob, and, almost staggering, leaned his brow against the wall of the house.

She had done what no man had as yet succeeded in; she had broken his spirit. And here a man would have left him alone. But the rejected beauty put her lips to his ear, and whispered into them: "This is only the beginning." Then she left him, and went to his room and stole all his paper, and pens, and ink, and his very Aristotle. He was to have no occupation now, except to brood, and brood, and brood.

As for Alfred, he sat down upon a bench in the yard a broken man: up to this moment he had hoped his Julia was as constant as himself. But no; either she had heard he was mad, and with the universal credulity had believed it, or perhaps, not hearing from him at all believed herself forsaken; and was consoling herself with a clergyman. Jealousy did not as yet infuriate Alfred. Its first effect resembled that of a heavy blow. Little Beverley found him actually sick, and ran to the Robin. The ex-prizefighter brought him a thimbleful of brandy: but he would not take it. "Ah no, my friends," he said, "that cannot cure me; it is not my stomach; it is my heart. Broken! broken!"

The Robin retired muttering. Little Beverley kneeled down beside him, and kissed his hand with a devotion that savoured of the canine. Yet it was tender, and the sinking heart clung to it. "Oh, Frank!" he cried, "my Julia believes me mad, or thinks me false, or something, and she will marry another before I can get out to tell her all I have endured was for loving her. What shall I do? God protect my reason! What will become of me?"

He moaned, and young Frank sorrowed over him, till the harsh voice of Rooke summoned him to some menial duty. This discharged, he came running back; and sat on the bench beside his crushed benefactor without saying a word. At last he delivered this sapient speech: "I see. You want to get out of this place."

Alfred only sighed hopelessly.

"Then I must try and get you out," said Frank. Alfred shook his head.

"Just let me think," said Frank, solemnly; and he sat silent looking like a young owl: for thinking soon puzzled him, and elicited his intellectual weakness; whereas in a groove of duties he could go as

smoothly as half the world, and but for his official, officious, Protector, might just as well have been Boots at the Swan, as Boots and Chambermaid at the Wolf.

So now force and cunning had declared war on Alfred, and feebleness in person enlisted in his defence. His adversary lost no time; that afternoon Rooke told him he was henceforth to occupy a double-bedded room with another patient.

"If he should be violent in the middle of the night, sing out, and we will come—if we hear you," said the keeper with a malicious smile.

The patient turned out to be the able seaman. Here Mrs. Archbold aimed a double stroke; to shake Alfred's nerves, and show him how very mad his proposed father-in-law was. She thought that, if he could once be forced to realise this, it might reconcile him to not marrying the daughter.

The first night David did get up and paraded an imaginary deck for four mortal hours. Alfred's sleep was broken; but he said nothing; and David turned in again, his watch completed.

Not a day passed now but a blow was struck. Nor was the victim passive; debarred writing materials, he cut the rims off several copies of the Times, and secreted them: then catching sight of some ink-blots on the back of Frank's clothes-brush, scraped them carefully off, melted them in a very little water, and with a toothpick scrawled his wrongs to the Commissioners; he rolled the slips round a half-crown, and wrote outside, "Good Christian, keep this half-crown, and take the writing to the Lunacy Commissioners at Whitehall, for pity's sake." This done he watched, and, when nobody was looking, flung his letter, so weighted, over the gates; he heard it fall on the public road.

Another day he secreted a spoonful of black currant preserve, diluted it with a little water, and wrote a letter, and threw it into the road as before: another day, hearing the Robin express disgust at the usage to which he was now subjected, he drew him apart, and offered him a hundred pounds to get him out. Now the ex-prizefighter was rather a tender-hearted fellow, and a great detester of foul play. What he saw made him now side heartily with Alfred; and all he wanted was to be indemnified for his risk.

He looked down and said, "You see, sir, I have a wife and child to think of."

Alfred offered him two hundred pounds.

"That is more than enough, sir," said the Robin; "but you see I can't do it alone. I must have a pal in it. Could you afford as much to Garrett? He is the likeliest; I've heard him say as much as that he was sick of the business."

Alfred jumped at the proposal: he would give them two hundred apiece.

"I'll sound him," said the Robin; "don't you speak to him, whatever. He might blow the gaff. I must begin by making him drunk: then he'll tell me his real mind."

One fine morning the house was made much cleaner than usual; the rotatory chair, in which they used to spin a maniac like a teetotum, the restraint chairs, and all the paraphernalia, were sent into the stable,

and so disposed that, even if found, they would look like things scorned and dismissed from service: for Wolf, mind you, professed the non-restraint system.

Alfred asked what was up, and found all this was in preparation for the quarterly visit of the Commissioners; a visit intended to be a surprise; but Drayton House always knew when they were coming, and the very names of the two thunderbolts that thought to surprise them.

Mrs. Archbold communicated her knowledge in off-hand terms. "It is only two old women; Bartlett and Terry."

The gentlemen thus flatteringly heralded arrived next day. One an aged, infirm man, with a grand benevolent head, bald front and silver hair, and the gold-headed cane of his youth, now a dignified crutch; the other an ordinary looking little chap enough: with this merit; he was what he looked. They had a long interview with Mrs. Archbold first, for fear they should carry a naked eye into the asylum; Mr. Bartlett, acting on instructions, very soon inquired about Alfred; Mrs. Archbold's face put on friendly concern directly. "I am sorry to say he is not so well as he was a fortnight ago; not nearly so well. We have given him walks in the country, too; but I regret to say they did him no real good; he came back much excited, and now he shuns the other patients, which he used not to do." In short she gave them the impression that Alfred was a moping melancholiac.

"Well, I had better see him," said Mr. Bartlett, "just to satisfy the Board."

Alfred was accordingly sent for, and asked with an indifferent air how he was.

He said he was very well in health, but in sore distress of mind at his letters to the Commissioners being intercepted by Mrs. Archbold or Dr. Wolf.

Mrs. Archbold smiled pityingly. Mr. Bartlett caught her glance, and concluded this was one of the patient's delusions. (Formula.)

Alfred surprised the glances, and said, "You can hardly believe this, because the act is illegal. But a great many illegal acts, that you never detect, are done in asylums. However, it is not a question of surmise; I sent four letters in the regular way since I came. Here are their several dates. Pray make a note to inquire whether they have reached Whitehall or not."

"Oh, certainly, to oblige you," said Mr. Bartlett, and made the note.

Mrs. Archbold looked rather discomposed at that.

"And now, gentlemen," said Alfred, "since Mrs. Archbold has had a private interview, which I see she has abused to poison your mind against me, I claim as simple justice a private interview to disabuse you."

"You are the first patient ever told me to walk out of my own drawing-room," said Mrs. Archbold, rising white with ire and apprehension, and sweeping out of the room.

By this piece of female petulance she gave the enemy a point in the game; for, if she had insisted on staying, Mr. Bartlett was far too weak to have dismissed her. As it was, he felt shocked at Alfred's rudeness: and so small a thing as justice did not in his idea counterbalance

so great a thing as discourtesy; so he listened to Alfred's tale with the deadly apathy of an unwilling hearer. "Pour on: I will endure," as poor Lear says.

As for Dr. Terry, he was pictorial, but null; effete; emptied of brains by all-scooping Time. If he had been detained that day at Drayton House, and Frank Beverley sent back in his place to Whitehall, it would have mattered little to him, less to the nation, and nothing to mankind.

At last Mr. Bartlett gave Alfred some hopes he was taking in the truth; for he tore a leaf out of his memorandum-book, wrote on it, and passed it to Dr. Terry. The ancient took it with a smile, and seemed to make an effort to master it, but failed; it dropped simultaneously from his finger and his mind.

Not a question was put to Alfred; so he was fain to come to an end; he withdrew suddenly, and caught Mrs. Archbold at the keyhole. "Noble adversary!" said he, and stalked away, and hid himself hard by: and no sooner did the inspectors come out, and leave the coast clear, than he darted in and looked for the paper Mr. Bartlett had passed to Dr. Terry.

He found it on the floor: and took it eagerly up; and full of hope, and expectation, read these words:

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE STUFF THE MATRON'S GOWN IS MADE OF? I SHOULD LIKE TO BUY MRS. BARTLETT ONE LIKE IT.

Alfred stood and read this again, and again: he searched for some hidden symbolical meaning in the words. High-minded, and deeply impressed with his own wrongs, he could not conceive a respectable man, paid fifteen hundred a year to spy out wrongs, being so heartless hard as to write this single comment during the earnest recital of a wrong so gigantic as his. Poor Alfred learned this to his cost, that to put small men into great places is to create monsters. When he had realised the bitter truth, he put the stony-hearted paper in his pocket, crept into the yard, and sat down, and, for all he could do, scalding tears ran down his cheeks.

"Homunculi quanti sunt!" he sobbed; "homunculi quanti sunt!"

Presently he saw Dr. Terry come wandering towards him alone. The Archbold had not deigned to make him safe; senectitude had done that. Alfred, all heart-sick as he was, went to the old gentleman out of veneration for the outside of his head—which was Shakespearian—and pity for his bodily infirmity; and offered him an arm. The doctor thanked him sweetly, and said, "Pray young man have you anything to communicate?"

Then Alfred saw that the ancient man had already forgotten his face, and so looking at him with that rare instrument of official inspection, the naked eye, had seen he was sane; and consequently taken him for a keeper.

How swiftly the mind can roam, and from what a distance gather the materials of a thought! Flashed like lightning through Alfred's mind this line from one of his pets, the Greek philosophers:

Και τουτο μεγιστης εστι τεχνης αγαθα ποιειν τα κακα.

"And this is the greatest stroke of art, to turn an evil into a good."

Now the feebleness of this aged Inspector was an evil: the thing then

was to turn it into a good. Shade of Plato behold how thy disciple worked thee! "Sir," said he, sinking his voice mysteriously, "I have: but I am a poor man: you won't say I told you: it's as much as my place is worth."

"Confidence, strict confidence," replied Nestor, going over beaten tracks; for he had kept many a queer secret with the loyalty which does his profession so much honour.

"Then, sir, there's a young gentleman confined here, who is no more mad than you and I; and never was mad."

"You don't say so."

"That I do, sir: and they know they are doing wrong, sir: for they stop all his letters to the Commissioners; and that is unlawful, you know. Would you like to take a note of it all, sir?"

The old fogie said he thought he should, and groped vaguely for his note-book: he extracted it at last like a loose tooth, fumbled with it, and dropped it: Alfred picked it up fuming inwardly.

The ancient went to write, but his fingers were weak and hesitating, and by this time he had half forgotten what he was going to say. Alfred's voice quavered with impatience; but he fought it down, and offered as coolly as he could to write it for him: the offer was accepted, and he wrote down in a feigned hand, very clear,

"Drayton House, Oct. 5. A sane patient, Alfred Hardie, confined here from interested motives. Has written four letters to the Commissioners, all believed to be intercepted. Communicated to me in confidence by an attendant in the house. Refer to the party himself, and his correspondence with the Commissioners from Dr. Wycherley's: also to Thomas Wales, another attendant; and to Dr. Wycherley: also to Dr. Eskell and Mr. Abbott, Commissioners of Lunacy."

After this stroke of address Alfred took the first opportunity of leaving him, and sent Frank Beverley to him.

Thus Alfred, alarmed by the hatred of Mrs. Archbold, and racked with jealousy, exerted all his intelligence and played many cards for liberty. One he kept in reserve; and a trump card too. Having now no ink nor colouring matter, he did not hesitate, but out penknife, up sleeve, and drew blood from his arm, and with it wrote once more to the Commissioners, but kept this letter hidden for an ingenious purpose. What that purpose was my reader shall divine.

## CHAPTER XLII.

We left Julia Dodd a district visitor. Working in a dense parish she learned the depths of human misery, bodily and mental.

She visited an honest widow, so poor that she could not afford a farthing dip, but sat in the dark. When friends came to see her they sometimes brought a candle to talk by.

She visited a cripple who often thanked God sincerely for leaving her the use of one thumb.

She visited a poor creature who for sixteen years had been afflicted with a tumour in the neck, and had lain all those years on her back with her head in a plate; the heat of a pillow being intolerable. Julia

found her longing to go, and yet content to stay: and praising God in all the lulls of that pain, which was her companion day and night.

But were I to enumerate the ghastly sights, the stifling loathsome odours, the vulgar horrors upon horrors this refined young lady faced, few of my readers would endure on paper for love of truth, what she endured in reality for love of suffering humanity, and of Him whose servant she aspired to be.

Probably such sacrifices of selfish ease and comfort are never quite in vain; they tend in many ways to heal our own wounds: I won't say that bodily suffering is worse than mental; but it is realised far more vividly by a spectator. The grim heart-breaking sights she saw arrayed Julia's conscience against her own grief; the more so when she found some of her most afflicted ones resigned, and even grateful. "What," said she, "can they, all rags, disease, and suffering, bow so cheerfully to the will of Heaven, and have I the wickedness, the impudence, to repine?"

And then, happier than most district visitors, she was not always obliged to look on helpless, or to confine her consolations to good words. Mrs. Dodd was getting on famously in her groove. She was high in the confidence of Cross and Co., and was inspecting eighty ladies, as well as working; her salary and profits together were not less than five hundred pounds a year, and her one luxury was charity, and Julia its minister. She carried a good honest basket, and there you might see her Bible wedged in with wine, and meat, and tea and sugar: and still, as these melted in her round, a little spark of something warm would sometimes come in her own sick heart. Thus by degrees she was attaining not earthly happiness, but a grave and pensive composure.

Yet across it gusts of earthly grief came sweeping often; but these she hid till she was herself again.

To her mother and brother she was kinder, sweeter, and dearer if possible, than ever. They looked on her as a saint; but she knew better; and used to blush with honest shame when they called her so. "Oh don't, pray don't," she would say with unaffected pain. "Love me as if I was an angel; but do not praise me; that turns my eyes inward and makes me see myself. I am not a Christian yet, nor anything like one."

Returning one day from her duties very tired, she sat down to take off her bonnet in her own room, and presently heard snatches of an argument, that made her prick those wonderful little ears of hers which could almost hear through a wall. The two concluding sentences were a key to the whole dialogue.

"Why disturb her?" said Mrs. Dodd. "She is getting better of 'the Wretch;' and my advice is, say nothing: what harm can that do?"

"But then it is so unfair, so ungenerous, to keep anything from the poor girl that may concern her."

At this moment Julia came softly into the room with her curiosity hidden under an air of angelic composure.

Her mother asked after Mrs. Beecher, to draw her into conversation. She replied quietly that Mrs. Beecher was no better, but very thankful for the wine Mrs. Dodd had sent her. This answer given, she went without any apparent hurry and sat by Edward, and fixed two loving

imploring eyes on him in silence. O, subtle sex! This feather was to turn the scale, and make him talk unquestioned. It told. She was close to him too, and mamma at the end of the room.

"Look here, Ju," said he, putting his hands in his pockets, "we two have always been friends as well as brother and sister; and somehow it does not seem like a friend to keep things dark:" then to Mrs. Dodd: "She is not a child, mother, after all; and how can it be wrong to tell her the truth, or right to suppress the truth? Well then, Ju, there's an advertisement in the 'Tiser, and it's a regular riddle. Now mind, I don't really think there is anything in it; but it is a droll coincidence, very droll; if it wasn't there are ladies present, and one of them a district visitor, I would say, d—d droll. So droll," continued he, getting warm, "that I should like to punch the advertiser's head."

"Let me see it, dear," said Julia. "I dare say it is nothing worth punching about."

"There," said Edward. "I've marked it."

Julia took the paper, and her eye fell on this short advertisement:

AILEEN AROON.—DISTRUST APPEARANCES.

Looking at her with some anxiety, they saw the paper give one sharp rustle in her hands, and then quiver a little. She bowed her head over it, and everything seemed to swim. But she never moved: they could neither of them see her face, she defended herself with the paper. The letters cleared again, and, still hiding her face, she studied and studied the advertisement.

"Come, tell us what you think of it," said Edward. "Is it anything? or a mere coincidence?"

"It is a pure coincidence," said Mrs. Dodd, with an admirable imitation of cool confidence.

Julia said nothing; but she now rose and put both arms round Edward's neck, and kissed him fervidly again and again, holding the newspaper tight all the time.

"There," said Mrs. Dodd: "see what you have done."

"Oh, it is all right," said Edward cheerfully. "The British fireman is getting hugged no end. Why what is the matter? have you got the hiccough, Ju?"

"No; no! You are a true brother. I knew all along that he would explain all if he was alive: and he *is* alive." So saying she kissed the 'Tiser violently more than once; then fluttered away with it to her own room ashamed to show her joy, and yet not able to hide it.

Mrs. Dodd shook her head sorrowfully: and Edward began to look rueful and doubt whether he had done wisely. I omit the discussion that followed. But the next time his duties permitted him to visit them Mrs. Dodd showed him the 'Tiser in her turn, and with her pretty white taper finger, and such a look, pointed to the following advertisement:

AILEEN AROON.—I *do* DISTRUST APPEARANCES. But if you ever loved me explain them at once. I have something for you from your dear sister.

"Poor simple girl," said Mrs. Dodd, "not to see that, if he could explain at all, he *would* explain, not go advertising an enigma after acting a mystification. And to think of my innocent dove putting in that she had something for him from his sister; a mighty temptation for such a wretch!"

"It was wonderfully silly," said Edward; "and such a clever girl, too; but you ladies can't stick to one thing at a time; begging your pardon, mamma."

Mrs. Dodd took no notice of this remark.

"To see her lower herself so!" she said, "O my son, I am mortified." And Mrs. Dodd leaned her cheek against Edward's, and sighed.

"Now don't you cry, mammy," said he, sorrowfully. "I'll break every bone in his skin for your comfort."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Dodd anxiously; "what, are you not aware she would hate you?"

"Hate me! her brother!"

"She would hate us all if we laid a finger on that wretch. Pray interfere no more, love; foolish child, talking to me about women, and it is plain you know nothing of their hearts: and a good thing *for* you." She then put on maternal authority (nobody could do it more easily) and solemnly forbade all violence.

He did not venture to contradict her now; but cherished his resolution all the more, and longed for the hour when he might take "the Wretch" by the throat, and chastise him, the more publicly the better.

Now, the above incident that revealed Julia's real heart, which she had been hiding more or less all this time from those who could not sympathise with her, took eventually a turn unfavourable to "the Wretch." So he might well be called. Her great and settled fear had always been that Alfred was dead. Under the immediate influence of his father's cunning, she had for a moment believed he was false; but so true and loving a heart could not rest in that opinion. In true love so long as there is one grain of uncertainty, there is a world of faith and credulous ingenuity. So, as Alfred had never been seen since, as nobody could say he was married to another, there was a grain of uncertainty as to his unfaithfulness, and this her true heart magnified to a mountain.

But now matters wore another face. She was sure he had written the advertisement. Who but he, out of the few that take the words of any song to heart, admired Aileen Aroon? Who but he out of the three or four people who might possibly care for that old song, had appearances to explain away? and who but he knew they took in the Morning Advertiser? She waited then for the explanation she had invited. She read the advertising column every day over and over.

Not a word more.

Then her womanly pride was deeply wounded. What; had she courted an explanation where most ladies would have listened to none; and courted it in vain!

Her high spirit revolted. Her heart swelled against the repeated insults she had received: this last one filled the bitter cup too high.

And then her mother came in and assured her he had only inserted that advertisement to keep her in his power. He has heard you

are recovering, and are admired by others more worthy of you esteem.

Julia cried bitterly at these arguments, for she could no longe combat them.

And Mr. Hurd was very attentive and kind. And when he spok to Julia, and Julia turned away, her eye was sure to meet Mrs. Dodd' eye imploring her secretly not to discourage the young man to much. And so she was gently pulled by one, and gently thrus by another, away from her first lover and towards his successor.

It is an old, old story. Fate seems to exhaust its malice on our firs love. For the second the road is smoother. Matters went on so some weeks, and it was perfectly true that Mr. Hurd escorted both ladies one day to Drayton House, at Julia's request, and not Mrs. Dodd's. Indeed, the latter lady was secretly hurt at his being allowed to come with them.

One Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Dodd went alone to Drayton House by appointment. David was like a lamb, but, as usual, had no knowledge of her. Mrs. Archbold told her a quiet, intelligent, patient had taken a great fancy to him, and she thought this was adding much to his happiness. "May I see him to thank him?" asked Mrs. Dodd. "Oh, certainly," said Mrs. Archbold; "I'll inquire for him." She went out, but soon returned, saying, "He is gone out for a walk with the head keeper: we give him as much air and amusement as we can; we hope soon to send him out altogether, cured." "Truly kind and thoughtful," said Mrs. Dodd. Soon after, she kissed Mrs. Archbold, and pressed a valuable brooch upon her: and then took leave. However, at the gate she remembered her parasol. Mrs. Archbold said she would go back for it. Mrs. Dodd would not hear of that: Mrs. Archbold insisted, and settled the question by going. She was no sooner in the house, than young Frank Beverley came running to Mrs. Dodd, and put the missing parasol officiously into her hand. "Oh, thank you, sir," said she; "will you be so kind as to tell Mrs. Archbold I have it." And with this they parted, and the porter opened the gate to her, and she got into her hired cab. She leaned her head back, and, as usual, was lost in the sorrowful thoughts of what had been, and what now was. Poor wife, each visit to Drayton House opened her wound afresh. On reaching the stones, there was a turnpike. This roused her up. she took out her purse and paid it. As she drew back to her seat, she saw out of the tail of her feminine eye the edge of something white under her parasol. She took up the parasol, and found a written paper pinned on to it: she detached this paper, and examined it all over with considerable curiosity. It consisted of a long slip about an inch and a quarter broad, rolled like tape, and tied with packthread. She could not see the inside, of course, but she read the superscription: it was firmly but clearly written, in red ink apparently.

Of the words I shall only say at present that they were strong and simple, and that their effect on the swift intelligence and tender heart of Mrs. Dodd was overpowering. They knocked at her heart; they drew from her an audible cry of pity more eloquent than a thousand speeches: and the next moment she felt a little faint; for she knew now

the appeal was not in red ink, but in something very fit to pass between the heart of woe and the heart of pity. She smelt at her salts, and soon recovered that weakness: and next her womanly bosom swelled so with the milk of human kindness that her breath came short. After a little struggle she gushed out aloud, "Ah, that I will, poor soul; this very moment."

Now, by this time she was close to her own house

She stopped the cab at her door, and asked the driver if his horse was fresh enough to carry her to the Board of Lunacy: "It is at Whitehall, sir," said she. "Lord bless you, ma'am," said the cabman, "Whitehall? why my mare would take you to Whitechapel and back in an hour, let alone Whitehall."

Reassured on that point Mrs. Dodd went in just to give the servant an order: but as she stood in the passage, she heard her children's voices, and also a friend's; the genial, angry tones of Alexander Sampson, M.D.

She thought, "Oh I *must* just show them all the paper, before I go with it;" and so after a little buzz about dinner and things with Sarah, mounted the stairs, and arrived among them singularly apropos, as it happened.

Men like Sampson, who make many foes, do also make stauncher friends than ever the Hare does, and are faithful friends themselves. The boisterous doctor had stuck to the Dodds in all their distresses; and if they were ever short of money, it certainly was not his fault: for almost his first word, when he found them in a lodging, was, "Now, ye'll be wanting a Chick. Gimme pen and ink, and I'll just draw ye one; for a hundre." This being declined politely by Mrs. Dodd, he expostulated. "Mai—dear—Madam, how on airth can yo go on in such a place as London without a Chick?"

He returned to the charge at his next visit, and scolded her well for her pride. "Who iver hard of refusing a chick? a small inoffensive chick, from an old friend like me? Come now, behave! Just a wee chick: I'll let y' off for fifty."

"Give us your company and your friendship," said Mrs. Dodd; "we value them above gold: we will not rob your dear children, while we have as many fingers on our hands as other people."

On the present occasion Dr. Sampson, whose affectionate respect for the leading London physicians has already displayed itself, was inveighing specially against certain specialists, whom, in the rapidity of his lusty eloquence, he called the Mad Ox. He favoured Julia and Edward with a full account of the maniform enormities he had detected them in during thirty years' practice; and so descended to his present grievance. A lady, an old friend of his, was being kept in a certain asylum month after month because she had got money and relations, and had once been delirious. "And why was she delirious? because she had a brain fever she got well in a fortnight." This lady had thrown a letter over the wall addressed to him; somebody had posted it: he had asked the Commissioners to let him visit her; they had declined for the present. "Yon Board always sides with the strong against the weak," said he. So now

he had bribed the gardener, and made a midnight assignation with the patient; and was going to it with six stout fellows to carry her off by force. "That is my recipe for alleged Insanity," said he. "The business will be more like a mejæval knight carrying off a namorous nun out of a convint, than a good physician saving a pashint from the Mad Ox. However, Mrs. Saampson's in the secret; I daunt say sh' approves it; for she doesn't. She says, 'Go quitely to the Board o' Commissioners.' Sis I, 'My dear, Boards are a sort of cattle that go too slow for Saampson, and no match at all for the Mad Ox.'"

At this conjuncture, or soon after, Mrs. Dodd came in with her paper in her hand, a little flurried for once, and, after a hasty curtsey, said,

"Oh, Doctor Sampson, oh, my dears, what wickedness there is in the world! I'm going to Whitehall this moment; only look at what was pinned on my parasol at Drayton House."

The writing passed from hand to hand, and left the readers looking very gravely at one another. Julia was quite pale and horror-stricken. All were too deeply moved, and even shocked, to make any commonplace comment; for it looked and read like a cry from heart to hearts.

> *"If you are a Christian, if you are human, pity a sane man here confined by fraud, and take this to the Board of Lunacy at Whitehall. Torn by treachery from her I love, my letters all intercepted, pens and paper kept from me, I write this with a toothpick and my blood on a rim of 'The Times.' Oh God, direct it to some one who has suffered, and can feel for another's agony."*

Dr. Sampson was the first to speak. "There," said he, under his breath: "didn't I tell you? This man is sane. There's sanity in every line."

"Well, but," said Edward, "do you mean to say that in the present day——"

"Mai—dearr—sirr. Mankind niver changes. Whativer the muscles of man *can* do in the light, the mind and conscience of man will consent to do in the dark."

Julia said never a word.

Mrs. Dodd, too, was for action not for talk. She bade them all a hasty adieu, and went on her good work.

Ere she got to the street door, she heard a swift rustle behind her and it was Julia flying down to her, all glowing and sparkling with her old impetuosity, that had seemed dead for ever. "No, no," she cried panting with generous emotion; "it is to me it was sent. *I* am torn from him I love, and by some treachery I dare say: and *I* have suffered oh you shall never know what I have suffered. Give it *me*, oh pray pray, pray give it *me*. *I'll* take it to Whitehall."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

If we could always know at the time what we are doing!

Two ladies carried a paper to Whitehall out of charity to a stranger.

Therein the elder was benefactress to a man she never spoke of but as "the Wretch;" the younger held her truant bridegroom's heart, I may say, in her hand all the road and was his protectress. Neither recognised the handwriting: for no man can write his own hand with a toothpick.

They reached Whitehall, and were conducted upstairs to a gentleman of pleasant aspect but powerful brow, seated in a wilderness of letters.

He waved his hand, and a clerk set them chairs: he soon after laid down his pen, and leaned gravely forward to hear their business. They saw they must waste no time; Julia looked at her mother, rose, and took Alfred's missive to his desk, and handed it him with one of her eloquent looks, grave and pitiful. He seemed struck by her beauty and her manner.

"It was pinned on my parasol, sir, by a poor prisoner at Drayton House," said Mrs. Dodd.

"Oh, indeed," said the gentleman, and began to read the superscription with a cold and wary look. But thawed visibly as he read. He opened the missive, and ran his eye over it. The perusal moved him not a little: a generous flush mounted to his brow; he rang the bell sharply. A clerk answered it: the gentleman wrote on a slip of paper, and said earnestly, "Bring me every letter that is signed with that name, and all our correspondence about him."

He then turned to Mrs. Dodd, and put her a few questions, which drew out the main facts I have just related. The papers were now brought in. "Excuse me a moment," said he, and ran over them. "I believe the man is sane," said he, "and that you will have enabled us to baffle a conspiracy, a heartless conspiracy."

"We do hope he will be set free, sir," said Mrs. Dodd, piteously.

"He shall, madam, if it is as I suspect. I will stay here all night but I will master this case; and lay it before the Board myself without delay."

Julia looked at her mother, and then asked if it would be wrong to inquire "the poor gentleman's name?"

"Humph!" said the official; "I ought not to reveal that without his consent. But stay! he will owe you much, and it really seems a pity he should not have an opportunity of expressing his gratitude. Perhaps you will favour me with your address: and trust to my discretion; of course, if he does not turn out as sane as he seems, I shall never let him know it."

Mrs. Dodd then gave her address; and she and Julia went home with a glow about the heart selfish people, thank Heaven, never know.

Unconsciously these two had dealt their enemy and Alfred's a heavy

blow; had set the train to a mine. Their friend at the office was a man of another stamp than Alfred had fallen in with.

Meantime Alfred was subjected to hourly mortifications and irritations. He guessed the motive, and tried to baffle it by calm self-possession: but this was far more difficult than heretofore, because his temper was now exacerbated and his fibre irritated by broken sleep (of this poor David was a great cause), and his heart inflamed and poisoned by that cruel, that corroding passion jealousy.

To think, that while he was in prison, a rival was ever at his Julia's ear, making more and more progress in her heart! This corroder was his bitter companion day and night; and perhaps of all the maddeners human cunning could have invented this was the worst. It made his temples beat and his blood run boiling poison. Indeed, there were times when he was so distempered by passion that homicide seemed but an act of justice, and suicide a legitimate relief. For who could go on for ever carrying Hell in his bosom up and down a prison yard? He began to go alone: to turn impatiently from the petty troubles and fathomless egotism of those afflicted persons he had hitherto forced his sore heart to pity. Pale, thin, and wo-begone, he walked the weary gravel, like the lost ones in that Hall of Eblis, whose hearts were a devouring fire. Even an inspector with a naked eye would no longer have distinguished him at first sight from a lunatic of the unhappiest class, the melancholiac.

Ipse suum cor edens hominum vestigia vitans.

Mrs. Archbold looked on and saw this sad sight not with the pity it would once have caused, but with a sort of bitter triumph lightened by no pleasure, and darkened by the shadow of coming remorse. Yet up to this time she had shown none of that inconstancy of purpose which marks her sex; while she did go far to justify the poet's charge:

Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned.

Rooke had a hint to provoke Alfred to violence such as would justify them in subjecting so popular a patient to bodily restraint, composing draughts, and other quick maddeners. Rooke entered into the game zealously from two motives; he was devoted to Mrs. Archbold, and he hated Alfred, who had openly defied him, and mortified his vanity about Frank Beverley.

One Saturday Alfred was ordered out to walk with Rooke and Hayes and Vulcan. He raised no objection: suspected, felt homicidal, suppressed the impulse, and by this self-command he got time to give that letter to Beverley with instructions.

But, all the walk, he was saying to himself that Julia was in the house, and he was kept away from her, and a rival with her; this made him sicken and rage by turns. He came back in a state verging on fury.

On entering the yard poor Beverley, who had done his bit of cunning, and by reaction now relapsed into extra simplicity, came running, and said, "I've done it; she has got it."

"What have you done? Who has got what?" cried Rooke.

"Don't tell, Frank."

"If you don't I'll shake your life out, ye young blackguard," cried Rooke, seizing him and throttling him till he was black in the face.

Alfred's long-pent fury broke out: he gnashed his teeth and dashed his fist in Rooke's face.

Rooke staggered back and bellowed with pain and anger, then rushing at him incautiously, received a stinger that staggered him, and nearly closed his right eye. He took the hint, and put himself in a posture that showed he was skilled in the art of self-defence. He stopped two blows neatly, and returned a heavy one upon the ribs. Alfred staggered back some steps, but steadied himself, and, as Rooke rushed in too hastily to improve his advantage, caught him heavily on the other eye, but lost his own balance a little, which enabled Rooke to close; then came a sharp short rally of re-echoing blows, and Rooke not to be denied, got hold of his man, and a wrestling bout ensued, in which Alfred being somewhat weakened by misery and broken rest, Rooke's great weight and strength enabled him, after a severe struggle, to fall with his antagonist under him, and knock the breath out of his body for the moment. Then Hayes, who had stood prudently aloof, came in and helped handcuff him; they could not walk up and down him for the Robin, who stood by with a professional air to see fair play.

"Ah, cold iron is your best chance," he said satirically. "Never you mind, sir: you hit quick and well: I'd back *you* at long odds in the ring: both his peepers are in deep mourning." He added, "A cow can beat a man wrestling."

When Alfred was handcuffed they turned him loose. It soon transpired, however, that he was now a dangerous maniac (Formula) and to be confined in the noisy ward.

On hearing this he saw the trap he had fallen into; saw and trembled: he asked himself what on earth he should do; and presently the saying came back to him, "And this is the highest stroke of art to turn evil into good." He argued thus: Wolf's love of money is my great evil: he will destroy me for money, do anything for money. Then suppose I offer him money to be honest. He begged an interview with Dr. Wolf on business. This was accorded at once. He asked the doctor plump whether he received a large sum to detain him under pretence of insanity.

"Not very, considering the trouble you sometimes give, Mr. Hardie," was the dry reply.

"Well, then, Justice shall outbid rascality for once. I am a sane man, and you know it; a man of my word, and you know it. I'll give you a thousand pounds to let me out of this place."

Dr. Wolf's eyes sparkled.

"You shall have any bond or security you like; and the money within a week of my deliverance."

Dr. Wolf said he should be delighted to do it, if he could conscientiously.

At this piece of hypocrisy Alfred's cheek reddened, and he could not speak.

"Well, well, I do see a great change in you for the better," said Dr. Wolf. "If, as I suspect, you are convalescent, I will part with you without a thousand pounds or a thousand pence."

Alfred stared. Had he mistaken his man?

"I'll tell you what, though," said the smooth doctor. "I have got two pictures, one by Raphael, one by Correggio."

"I know them," said the quick-witted Alfred; "they are worth more than a thousand pounds."

"Of course they are, but I would take a thousand pounds from *you*."

"Throw me in my liberty, and I'll make it guineas."

"We will see about that." And with this understanding the men of business parted. Dr. Wolf consulted Mrs. Archbold then and there.

"Impossible," said she; "the law would dissolve such a bargain, and you would be exposed and ruined."

"But a thousand pounds!" said the poor doctor.

"Oh, he offered me more than that," said Mrs. Archbold.

"You don't mean to say so; when was that?"

"Do you remember one Sunday that I walked him out, to keep clear of Mrs. Dodd? Have you not observed that I have not repeated the experiment?"

"Yes. But I really don't know why."

"Will you promise me faithfully not to take any notice if I tell you?"

The doctor promised.

Then she owned to him with manifest reluctance that Alfred had taken advantage of her kindness, her indiscretion, in walking alone with him, and made passionate love to her. "He offered me not a thousand pounds," said she, "but his whole fortune, and his heart, if I would fly with him from *these odious walls*; that was his expression."

Then seeing out of a corner of her eye that the doctor was turning almost green with jealousy, this artist proceeded to describe the love-scene between her and Alfred, with feigned hesitation, yet minute detail; only she inverted the parts; Alfred in her glowing page made the hot love; she listened abashed, confused, and tried all she could think of to bring him to better sentiments. She concluded this chapter of history inverted with a sigh, and said, "So now he hates me, I believe, poor fellow."

"Do you regret your refusal?" asked Dr. Wolf uneasily.

"Oh no, my dear friend. Of course my judgment says that few women at my age and in my position would have refused. But we poor women seldom go by our judgments." And she cast a tender look down at the doctor's feet.

In short, she worked on him so, that he left Alfred at her disposition, and was no sooner gone to his other asylum six miles off, than the calumniated was conducted by Hayes and Rooke through passage after passage, and door after door, to a wing of the building connected with the main part only by a covered way. As they neared it, strange noises became audible. Faint at first, they got louder and louder. Singing, roaring, howling like wolves. Alfred's flesh began to creep. He stopped at the covered way: he would have fought to his last gasp sooner than go further; but he was handcuffed. He appealed to the keepers: but

he had used them both too roughly; they snarled and forced him on, and shut him into a common flagged cell, with a filthy truckle-bed in it, and all the vessels of gutta-percha. Here he was surrounded by the desperate order of maniacs he at present scarcely knew but by report. Throughout that awful night he could never close his eyes for the horrible unearthly sounds that assailed him. Singing, swearing, howling like wild beasts! His right-hand neighbour reasoned high of faith and works, ending each pious argument with a sudden rhapsody of oaths and never slept a wink. His left-hand neighbour alternately sang, and shouted, "Cain was a murderer, Cain was a murderer;" and howled like a wolf, making night hideous. His opposite neighbour had an audience, and every now and then delivered in a high nasal key, "Let us curse and pray;" varying it sometimes thus: "Brethren, let us work double tides." And then he would deliver a long fervent prayer, and follow it up immediately with a torrent of blasphemies so terrific that coming in such a contrast they made Alfred's body wet with perspiration to hear a poor creature so defy his Creator. No rest, no peace. When it was still, the place was like the grave; and ever and anon loud sharp tremendous burst a thunderclap of curses, and set those poor demented creatures all yelling again for half an hour, making the tombs ring. And at clock-like intervals a harmless but dirty idiot, who was allowed to roam the ward, came and chanted through the keyhole, "Everything is nothing, and nothing is everything."

This was the only observation he had made for many years.

His ears assailed with horrors, of which you have literally no conception, or shadow of a conception, his nose poisoned with ammoniacal vapours, and the peculiar wild-beast smell that marks the true maniac, Alfred ran wildly about his cell trying to stop his ears, and trembling for his own reason. When the fearful night rolled away, and morning broke, and he could stand on his truckle-bed and see the sweet hoar-frost on a square yard of grass level with his prison bars, it refreshed his very soul, and affected him almost to tears. He was then, to his surprise, taken out, and allowed to have a warm bath and to breakfast with David and the rest; but I suspect it was done to watch the effect of the trial he had been submitted to. After breakfast, having now no place to go, he lay on a bench, and there exhausted nature overpowered him, and he fell fast asleep.

Mrs. Archbold came by on purpose, and saw him. He looked very pale and peaceful. There was a cut on his forehead due to Rooke's knuckles. Mrs. Archbold looked down, and the young figure and haughty face seemed so unresisting and peaceful sad, she half relented, and shed some bitter tears. That did not, however, prevent her setting her female spies to watch him more closely than ever.

He awoke cold but refreshed, and found little Beverley standing by him with wet eyes. Alfred smiled and held out his hand like a captive monarch to his faithful vassal. "They shan't put you in the noisy ward again," sobbed Frank. "This is your last night here."

"Hy, Frank, you rascal, my boots!" roared Rooke from an open window.

"Coming, sir—coming!"

Alfred's next visitor was the Robin. He came whispering, "It is all

right with Garrett, sir, and he has got a key of the back gate; but you must get back to your old room, or we can't work."

"Would to Heaven I could, Robin; another night or two in the noisy ward will drive me mad, I think."

"Well, sir, I'll tell you what you do: which we all have to do it at odd times: hold a candle to the devil: here she comes: I think she is everywhere all at one time. The Robin then sauntered away, affecting nonchalance: and Alfred proceeded to hold the candle as directed. "Mrs. Archbold," said he, timidly, rising from his seat at her approach.

"Sir," said she haughtily, and affecting surprise.

"I have a favour to ask you, madam. Would you be so kind as to let me go back to my room?"

"What, you have found I am not so powerless as you thought!"

"I find myself so weak, and you so powerful, that—you can afford to be generous."

"I have no more power over you than you have over me."

"I wish it was so."

"I'll prove it," said she. "Who has got the key of your room? Hayes?" She whistled, and sent for him; and gave him the requisite order before Alfred. Alfred thanked her warmly.

She smiled, and went away disposed to change her tactics, and, having shown him how she could torment, try soothing means, and open his heart by gratitude.

But presently looking out of her window she saw the Robin and him together; and somehow they seemed to her subtle, observant eyes, to be plotting. The very suspicion was fatal to that officer. His discharge was determined on. Meantime she set her spies to watch him, and tell her if they saw or heard anything.

Now Mrs. Archbold was going out to tea that evening, and, as soon as ever this transpired, the keepers secretly invited the keeperesses to a party in the first-class patients' drawing-room. This was a rare opportunity, and the Robin and Garrett put their heads together accordingly.

In the dusk of the evening the Robin took an opportunity and slipped a new key of the back gate into Alfred's hand, and told him "the trick was to be done that very night:" he was to get Thompson to go to bed early: and, instead of taking off his clothes, was to wait in readiness. "We have been plying Hayes already," said the Robin, "and, as soon as *she* is off, we shall hocuss him, and get the key; and, while they are all larking in the drawing-room, off you go to Merrimashee."

"Oh, you dear Robin! You have taken my breath away. But how about Vulcan?"

"Oh, we know how to make him amiable: a dog-fancier, a friend of mine, has provided the ondeniable where dogs is concerned: whereby Garrett draws the varmint into the scullery, and shuts him in, while I get the key from the other. *It's* all right."

"Ah, Robin," said Alfred, "it sounds too good to be true. What? this my last day here!"

The minutes seemed to creep very slowly till eight o'clock came. Then he easily persuaded David to go to bed; Hayes went up and unlocked the door for them: it closed with a catch-lock. Hayes was drunk, but full of discipline, and insisted on the patients putting out

their clothes; so Alfred made up a bundle from his portmanteau, and threw it out. Hayes eyed it suspiciously, but was afraid to stoop and inspect it closer: for his drunken instinct told him he would pitch on his head that moment: so he retired grumbling, and dangling his key.

At the end of the corridor he met Mrs. Archbold full dressed, and with a candle in her hand. She held the candle up and inspected him; and a little conversation followed that sobered Mr. Hayes for a minute or two.

Mrs. Archbold was no sooner gone to her little tea-party than all the first-class ladies and gentlemen were sent to bed to get a good sleep for the good of their health, and the keepers and keeperesses took their place. and romped, and made such a row sleep was not easy within hearing of them. They sat on the piano, they sang songs to a drum accompaniment played on the table, they danced, drank, flirted, and enjoyed themselves like schoolboys. Hayes alone was gloomy, and morose: so the Robin and Garrett consoled him, drank with him, and soothed him with the balm of insensibility: in which condition they removed him under charitable pretences, and searched his pockets in the passage for the key of Alfred's room.

To their infinite surprise and disappointment it was not upon him.

The fact is, Mrs. Archbold had snatched it from him in her wrath, and put it in her own pocket. How far her suspicions went, how much her spies had discovered, I really don't know; but somehow or other she was uneasy in her mind, and, seeing Hayes in such a state, she would not trust him during her absence, but took the key away with her.

The Robin and Garrett knew nothing of this, and were all abroad but they thought Rooke must have the key; so they proceeded to drink with him, and were just about to administer a really effective soporific in his grog, when they and all the merry party were suddenly startled by violent ringing at the bell, and thundering and halloaing at the hall door. The men jumped to their feet and balanced themselves, and looked half wild, half stupid. The women sat, and began to scream: for they had heard a word that has terrors for us all: peculiar terrors for them.

This alarm was due to a personage hitherto undervalued in the establishment.

Mr. Francis Beverley had been THINKING. So now, finding all the patients boxed up, and their attendants romping in the drawing-room, he lighted seven fires, skilfully on the whole, for practice makes perfect; but, singular oversight, he omitted one essential ingredient in the fire, and that was the grate.

To be plain, Mr. Francis made seven bonfires of bed-curtains, chairs, and other combustibles in the servant's garrets, lighted them contemporaneously, and retired to the basement, convinced he had taken the surest means to deliver his friend out of Drayton House: and with a certain want of candour that characterises the weak, proceeded to black his other bad master's shoes with singular assiduity.

There was no wind to blow the flame; but it was a clear frost; and soon fiery tongues shot out of three garret-windows into the night, and lurid gleams burnished four more, and the old house was burning merrily overhead, and ringing with hilarity on the first floor.

But the neighbours saw, pointed, wondered, comprehended, shouted, rang, knocked, and surged round the iron gate. "Fire! fire! fire!" and "Fire!" went down the road, and men on horseback galloped for engines; and the terror-stricken porter opened and the people rushed in and hammered at the hall doors, and, when Rooke ran down and opened, "Fire!" was the word that met him from a score of eager throats and glittering eyes.

"Fire! Where?" he cried.

"Where! Why, *you* are on fire. Blazing!"

He ran out and looked up at the tongues of flame and volleys of smoke. "Shut the gate," he roared. "Call the police. Fire! fire!" And he dashed back, and calling to the other keepers to unlock all the doors they had keys of, ran up to the garrets to see what could be done. He came out awe-stricken at what he saw. He descended hastily to the third floor. Now the third floor of that wing was occupied principally by servants. In fact, the only patients at that time were Dodd and Alfred. Rooke called to the men below to send Hayes up to No. 75 with his key directly: he then ran down to the next floor; of which he had keys; and opened all the doors, and said to the inmates with a ghastly attempt at cheerfulness, belied by his shaking voice, "Get up, gentlemen; there is a ball and supper going on below." He was afraid to utter the word "fire" to them. The other keepers were as rapid, each on his beat, and soon the more rational patients took the alarm and were persuaded or driven out half dressed into the yard, where they cowered together in extremity of fear; for the fire began to roar overhead like a lion, and lighted up the whole interior red and bright. All was screaming and confusion; and then came a struggle to get the incurable out from the basement story. There was no time to handcuff them. The keepers trusted to the terror of the scene to cow them, and so opened the doors and get them out anyhow. Wild, weird forms, with glaring eyes and matted hair, leaped out and ran into the hall, and laughed, and danced, and cursed in the lurid reflexion of the fires above. Hell seemed discharging demons. Men recoiled from them. And well they did; for now the skylight exploded, and the pieces fell tinkling on the marble hall fast as hail. The crowd recoiled and ran; but those awful figures continued their gambols. One picked up the burning glass and ground it in his hands that bled directly: but he felt neither burn nor cut. The keepers rushed in to withdraw them from so dangerous a place: all but one obeyed with sudden tameness: that one struggled and yelled like a demon. In the midst of which fearful contest came a sudden thundering at a door on the third floor.

"What is that?" cried Rooke.

"It is Mr. Hardie," screamed the Robin. "You have left him locked in."

"I told Hayes to let him out long ago."

"But Hayes hasn't got the key. You've got it."

"No, no. I tell you Hayes has got it."

"No, no! Murder! murder! They are dead men. Run for Mrs. Archbold, somebody. Run! Here, hammers, hammers! for God's sake come and help me break the door. Oh Rooke, Rooke!"

"As I'm a man Hayes has got the key," cried Rooke, stamping on the ground, and white with terror.

By this time Garrett had got a hammer, and he and Wales rushed wildly up the stairs to batter in the strong door if they could. They got to the third floor, but with difficulty; the smoke began to blind them and choke them, and fiery showers fell on them, and drove them back smarting and choking. Garrett sank down gasping at the stair-foot. Wales ran into the yard uttering pitiful cries, and pointing wildly upwards: but before he got there, a hand had broken through the glass of a window up in the third floor, the poor white hand of a perishing prisoner, and clutched the framework and tore at it.

At this hand a thousand white faces were now upturned amid groans of pity and terror, such as only multitudes can utter. Suddenly those anxious faces and glistening eyes turned like one, for an attempt, wild and unintelligible, but still an attempt, was about to be made to save that hand and its owner out of the very jaws of death.

Now amongst the spectators was one whose life and reason were at stake on that attempt.

Mrs. Dodd was hurrying homeward from this very neighbourhood when the fire broke out. Her son Edward was coming at nine o'clock to tea, and, better still, to sleep. He was leaving the fire brigade. It had disappointed him; he found the fire-escape men saved the lives, the firemen only the property. He had gone into the business earnestly too; he had invented a thing like a treble pouch hook, which could be fastened in a moment to the end of a rope, and thrown into the window, and would cling to the bare wall, if there was nothing better, and enable him to go up and bring life down. But he had never got a chance to try it; and, per contra, he was on the engine when they went tearing over a woman and broke her arm and collar-bone in the Blackfriars Road: and also when they went tearing over their own fire-dog, and crippled him. All this seemed out of character, and shocked Edward: and then his mother could not get over the jacket.

In a quarter of an hour he was to take off the obnoxious jacket for ever, and was now lounging at the station smoking a short pipe, when a man galloped up crying "Fire!"

"All right!" said Edward, giving a whiff. "Where?"

"Lunatic Asylum. Drayton House."

Guess how long before the horses were to, and the engine tearing at a gallop down the road, and the firemen shouting "Fire! fire!" to clear the way, and Edward's voice the loudest.

When the report of fire swept townward past Mrs. Dodd, she turned: and saw the glow.

"Oh dear," said she, "that must be somewhere near Drayton House." And full of the tender fears that fill such bosoms as hers for those they love, she could not go home till she had ascertained that it was not Drayton House. Moreover, Edward's was the nearest station; she had little hope now of seeing him to tea. She sighed, and retraced her steps, and made timid inquiries, but could gain no clear information. Presently she heard galloping behind her, and the fireman's wild sharp cry of fire. An engine drawn by two powerful brown horses came furiously, all on fire itself with red paint and polished steel gleaming in the lights: helmeted men clustered on it, and out of one of these helmets looked a

face like a fighting lion's, the eyes so dilated, the countenance in such towering excitement, the figure half rising from his seat as though galloping was too slow and he wanted to fly. It was Edward: mother and son caught sight of one another as the engine thundered by, and he gave her a solemn ardent look and pointed towards the fire: by that burning look and eloquent gesture she knew it was something more than a common fire. She trembled and could not move. But this temporary weakness was followed by an influx of wild vigour; she forgot her forty-two years, and flew to hover round the fire as the hen round water. Unfortunately she was too late to get any nearer than the road outside the gates, the crowd was so dense. And, while her pale face and anxious eyes, the eyes of a wife and a mother, were bent on that awful fire, the human tide flowed swiftly up behind her, and there she was wedged in. She was allowed her foot of ground to stand and look like the rest—no more. Mere unit in that mass of panting humanity, hers was one of the thousands of upturned faces lurid in the light of the now blazing roof. She saw with thousands the hand break the window and clutch the frame: she gasped with the crowd at that terrible and piteous sight, and her bosom panted for her fellow-creature in sore peril. But what is this? The mob inside utter a great roar of hope; the crowd outside strain every eye.

A gleaming helmet overtops the outer wall. It is a fireman mounting the great elm-tree in the madhouse yard. The crowd inside burst in a cheer. He had a rope round his loins; his face was to the tree. He mounted and mounted like a cat; higher, and higher, and higher, till he reached a branch about twelve feet above the window and as many distant from it laterally: the crowd cheered him lustily. But Mrs. Dodd, half distracted with terror, implored them not to encourage him. "It is my child!" she cried despairingly; "my poor reckless darling! Come down, Edward; for your poor mother's sake, come down."

"Dear heart," said a woman, "it is the lady's son. Poor thing!"

"Stand on my knee, ma'am," said a coal-heaver.

"Oh no, sir, no. I could not look at him for the world. I can only pray for him. Good people, pray for us!" And she covered her face, and prayed and trembled and sobbed hysterically. A few yards behind was another woman, who had arrived later, yet like her was wedged immovable. This woman was more terror-stricken than Mrs. Dodd: and well she might; for *she* knew who was behind that fatal window: the woman's name was Edith Archbold. The flames were now leaping through the roof, and surging up towards heaven in waves of fire six feet high. Edward, scorched and half blinded, managed to fasten his rope to the bough, and, calculating the distances vertical and lateral he had to deal with, took up rope accordingly, and launched himself into the air.

The crowd drew their breath so hard it sounded like a murmur. To their horror he missed the window, and went swinging back.

There was a cry of dismay. But Edward had never hoped to leap into the window; he went swinging by the rope back to the main stem of the tree, gave it a fierce spang with his feet, and by this means and a powerful gesture of his herculean loins got an inch nearer the window: back again, and then the same game; and so he went swinging to and

fro over a wider and wider space; and, by letting out an inch of cord each swing, his flying feet came above the window-ledge, then a little higher, then higher still, and now, oh sight strange and glorious—as this helmeted hero, with lips clenched and great eyes that stared unflinchingly at the surging flames, and gleamed supernaturally with inward and outward fire, swang to and fro on his frail support still making for the window—the heads of all the hoping, fearing, admiring, panting crowd went surging and waving to and fro beneath; so did not their hearts only but their agitated bodies follow the course of his body, as it rushed to and fro faster and faster through the hot air starred with snow-flakes, and hail, of fire. And those his fellow-men for whom the brave fireman made this supernatural effort, did they know their desperate condition? Were they still alive? One little hour ago Alfred sat on the bed, full of hope. Every minute he expected to hear the Robin put a key into the door. He was all ready, and his money in his pocket. Alas! his liberator came not: some screw loose again. Presently he was conscious of a great commotion in the house. Feet ran up and down. Then came a smell of burning. The elm-tree outside was illuminated. He was glad at first; he had a spite against the place. But soon he became alarmed, and hammered at the door and tried to force it. Impossible. "Fire!" rang from men's voices. Fire crackled above his head: he ran about the room like a wild creature; he sprang up at the window and dashed his hand through, but fell back. He sprang again and got his hand on some of the lighter woodwork; he drew himself up nearly to the window, and then the wood gave way and he fell to the ground, and striking the back of his head, nearly stunned himself; the flames roared fearfully now; and at this David, who had hitherto sat unconcerned, started up, and in a stentorian voice issued order upon order to furl every rag of sail and bring the ship to the wind. He thought it was a tempest. "Oh hush! hush!" cried Alfred in vain. A beam fell from the roof to the floor, precursor of the rest. On this David thought the ship was ashore, and shouted a fresh set of orders proper to the occasion, so terribly alike are the angry voices of the sister-elements. But Alfred implored him, and got him to kneel down with him, and held his hand, and prayed.

And, even while they kneeled and Alfred prayed, Death and Life met and fought for them. Under the door, tight as it was, and through the keyhole, struggled a hot stifling smoke, merciful destroyer running before fire: and the shadow of a gigantic figure began to flicker in from the outside, and to come and go upon the wall. Alfred did not know what that was, but it gave him a vague hope: he prayed aloud as men pray only for their bodies. (The crowd heard him and hushed itself breathless.)

The smoke penetrated faster, blinding and stifling; the giant shadow came and went. But now the greater part of the roof fell in with an awful report; the blazing timbers thundered down to the basement with endless clatter of red-hot tiles; the walls quivered, and the building belched skyward a thousand jets of fire like a bouquet of rockets: and then a cloud of smoke. Alfred gave up all hope, and prepared to die. Crash! as if discharged from a cannon, came bursting through the window, with the roar of an applauding multitude and a

mother's unheeded scream, a helmeted figure, rope in hand, and alighted erect and commanding on the floor amidst a shower of splinters and tinking glass. "Up men for your lives," roared this fire-warrior, clutching them hard, and dragged them both up to their feet by one prodigious gesture: all three faces came together and shone in the lurid light; and he knew his father and "the Wretch," and "the Wretch" knew him. "Oh!" "Ah!" passed like pistol shots; but not a word: even this strange meeting went for little, so awful was the moment, so great are Death and Fire. Edward clawed his rope to the bed; up to the window by it, dropped his line to fireman Jackson planted express below, and in another moment was hauling up a rope ladder: this he attached, and getting on it and holding his own rope by way of banister, cried "Now men, quick, for your lives." But poor David called that deserting the ship, and demurred, till Alfred assured him the captain had ordered it. He then submitted directly, touched his forelock to Edward, whom he took for that officer, and went down the ladder; Alfred followed.

Now the moment those two figures emerged from the burning pile, Mrs. Dodd, already half dead with terror for her son, saw and knew her husband: for all about him it was as light as day.

What terror! what joy! what gratitude! what pride! what a tempest of emotions!

But her fears were not ended; Edward, not to overweight the ladder, went dangling by his hands along the rope towards the tree. And his mother's eyes stared fearfully from him to the other, and her heart hung trembling on her husband descending cautiously, and then on his preserver, her son, who was dangling along by the hands on that frail support. The mob cheered him royally, but she screamed and hid her face again. At last both her darlings were safe, and then the lusty cheers made her thrill with pride and joy, till all of a sudden they seemed to die away, and the terrible fire to go out; and the sore-tried wife and mother drooped her head and swooned away, wedged in and kept from falling by the crowd.

Inside, the mob parted and made two rushes, one at the rescued men, one at the gallant fireman. Alfred and David were overpowered with curiosity and sympathy. They had to shake a hundred honest hands; and others still pressing on, hurried them nearly off their feet.

"Gently, good friends; don't part us," said Alfred.

"He is the keeper," said one of the crowd.

"Yes, I'm his keeper: and I want to get him quietly away. This excitement will do him harm else; good friends, help me out by that door."

"All right," was the cry, and they rushed with him to the back door. Rooke, who was about twenty yards off, saw and suspected this movement. He fought his way and struggled after Alfred in silence. Presently, to his surprise, Alfred unlocked the door and whipped out with David, leaving the door open. Rooke shouted and halloaed: "Stop him! he is escaping," and struggled madly to the door: now another crowd had been waiting in the meadows; seeing the door open they rushed in and the doorway was jammed directly. In the confusion Alfred drew David along the side of the wall; told him to stay quiet, bolted behind an outhouse, and then ran across country for the bare life.

To his horror David followed him, and with a madman's agility soon caught him.

He snorted like a spirited horse, and shouted cheerily, "Go ahead, messmate; I smell blue water."

"Come on then," cried Alfred, half mad himself with excitement, and the pair ran furiously, and dashed through hedges and ditches, torn, bleeding, splashed, triumphant; behind them the burning madhouse, above them the spangled sky, the fresh free air of liberty blowing in their nostrils, and rushing past their ears.

Alfred's chest expanded, he laughed for joy, he sang for joy, he leaped as he went; nor did he care where he went. David took the command, and kept snuffing the air, and shaping his course for blue water. And so they rushed along the livelong night.

Free.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

A REPORT came round that the asylum was open in the rear. A rush was made thither from the front: and this thinned the crowd considerably; so then Mrs. Dodd was got out by the help of some humane persons, and carried into the nearest house, more dead than alive. There she found Mrs. Archbold in a pitiable state. That lady had been looking on the fire, with the key in her pocket, by taking which she was likely to be a murderess: her terror and remorse were distracting, and the revulsion had thrown her into violent hysterics. Mrs. Dodd plucked up a little strength, and characteristically enough tottered to her assistance, and called for the best remedies, and then took her hand and pressed it, and whispered soothingly that both were now safe, meaning David and Edward. Mrs. Archbold thought she meant Alfred and David: this new shock was as good for her as cold water: she became quieter, and presently gulped out, "You saw them? you knew them (ump) all that way off?"

"Knew them?" said Mrs. Dodd; "why one was my husband, and the other my son." Mrs. Archbold gave a sigh of relief. "Yes, madam," continued Mrs. Dodd, "the young fireman, who went and saved my husband, was my own son, my Edward; my hero; oh, I am a happy wife, a proud mother;" she could say no more for tears of joy, and while she wept deliciously, Mrs. Archbold cried too, and so invigorated and refreshed her cunning, and presently she perked up and told Mrs. Dodd boldly that Edward had been seeking her, and was gone home: she had better follow him, or he would be anxious. "But my poor husband!" objected Mrs. Dodd.

"He is safe," said the other; "I saw him (ump) with an attendant."

"Ah," said Mrs. Dodd, with meaning, "that other my son rescued was an attendant, was he?"

"Yes." (Ump.)

She then promised to take David under her especial care, and Mrs. Dodd consented, though reluctantly, to go home."

To her surprise Edward had not yet arrived, and Julia was sitting

up, very anxious; and flew at her with a gurgle, and kissed her eagerly and then, drawing back her head, searched the maternal eyes for what was the matter. "Ah, you may well look," said Mrs. Dodd. "O my child! what a night this has been;" and she sank into a chair, and held up her arms; Julia settled down in them directly, and in that position Mrs. Dodd told all the night's work, told it under a running accompaniment of sighs and kisses, and ejaculations, and "dear mammas, and "poor mammas," and bursts of sympathy, astonishment, pity, and wonder. Thus embellished and interrupted, the strange tale was hardly ended, when a manly step came up the stairs, and both ladies pinched each other, and were still as mice, and in walked a fireman with a wet livery, and a face smirched with smoke. Julia flew at him with a gurgle of the first degree, and threw her arms round his neck, and kissed both his blackened cheeks again and again, crying "Oh my own my precious, my sweet, brave, darling, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, you are a hero, a Christian hero, that saves life, not takes it——" Mrs. Dodd checked her impetuous career by asking piteously if his mother was not to have him. On this, Julia drew him along by the hand, and sank with him at Mrs. Dodd's knees, and she held him at arms' length and gazed at him, and then drew him close and enfolded him, and thanked God for him; and then they both embraced him at once, and interwove him Heaven knows how, and poured the wealth of their womanly hearts out on him in a torrent and nearly made him snivel. But presently something in his face struck Mrs. Dodd, accustomed to read her children. "Is there anything the matter, love?" she inquired anxiously. He looked down and said, "I am dead sleepy, mamma, for one thing."

"Of course he is, poor child," said Julia, doing the sub-maternal: "wait till I see everything is comfortable," and she flew off, turned suddenly at the door with "Oh, you darling!" and up to his bedroom and put more coals on his fire, and took a swift housewifely look all round.

Mrs. Dodd seized the opportunity. "Edward, there is something amiss."

"And no mistake," said he drily. "But I thought if I told you before her you might scold me."

"Scold you, love? Never. Hush! I'll come to your room by-and-by."

Soon after this they all bade each other good night; and presently Mrs. Dodd came and tapped softly at her son's door, and found him with his vest and coat off, and his helmet standing on the table reflecting a red coal; he was seated by the fire in a brown study, smoking. He apologised, and offered to throw the weed away. "No, no," said she, suppressing a cough, "not if it does you good."

"Well, mother, when you are in a fix, smoke is a soother, you know and I'm in a regular fix."

"A fix," sighed Mrs. Dodd resignedly: and waited patiently, all ears.

"Mamma," said the fire-warrior, becoming speculative under the dreamy influence of the weed, "I wonder whether such a muddle ever was before. When a man is fighting with fire, what with the heat and what with the excitement, his pulse is at a hundred and sixty, and his brain all in a whirl, and he scarce knows what he is doing till after it is

done. But I've been thinking of it all since. (Puff.) There was my poor little mamma in the mob; I double myself up for my spring, and I go at the window, and through it; now on this side of it I hear my mother cry, 'Edward! come down;' on the other side I fall on two men perishing in an oven; one is my own father, and the other is, who do you think? 'The Wretch.'"

Mrs. Dodd held up her hands in mute amazement.

"I had promised to break every bone in his skin at our first meeting; and I kept my promise by saving his skin and bones, and life and all." (Puff.)

Mrs. Dodd groaned aloud. "I thought it was he," she said faintly. "That tall figure, that haughty grace! But Mrs. Archbold told me positively it was an attendant."

"Then she told you a cracker. It was not an attendant, but a madman, and that madman was Alfred Hardie, upon my soul! Our Julia's missing bridegroom."

He smoked on in profound silence waiting for her to speak. But she lay back in her chair mute and all relaxed, as if the news had knocked her down.

"Come, now," said Edward at last; "what is to be done? May I tell Julia? that is the question."

"Not for the world," said Mrs. Dodd, shocked into energy. "Would you blight her young life for ever, as mine is blighted?" She then assured him that, if Alfred's sad state came to Julia's ears, all her love for him would revive, and she would break with Mr. Hurd, and indeed never marry all her life. "I see no end to her misery," continued Mrs. Dodd, with a deep sigh; "for she is full of courage; she would not shrink from a madhouse (why she visits lazar-houses every day); she would be always going to see her Alfred, and so nurse her pity and her unhappy love. No, no; let *me* be a widow with a living husband, if it is God's will: I have had my happy days. But my child she shall not be so withered in the flower of her days for any man that ever breathed; she shall not, I say." The mother could utter no more for emotion.

"Well," said Edward, "you know best. I generally make a mess of it when I disobey you. But concealments are bad things too. We used to go with our bosoms open. Ah!" (Puff.)

"Edward," said Mrs. Dodd, after some consideration, "the best thing is to marry her to Mr. Hurd at once. He has spoken to me for her, and I sounded her."

"Has he? Well, and what did she say."

"She said she would rather not marry at all, but live and die with me. Then I pressed her a little, you know. Then she did say she could never marry any but a clergyman, now she had lost her poor Alfred. And then I told her I thought Mr. Hurd could make her happy, and she would make me happy if she could esteem him; and marry him."

"Well, mamma, and what then?"

"Why then my poor child gave me a look that haunts me still—a look of unutterable love, and reproach, and resignation, and despair, and burst out crying so piteously I could say no more. Oh! oh! oh! oh!"

"Don't you cry, mammy dear," said Edward. "Ah, I remember when a tear was a wonder in our house." And the fire-warrior sucked at his cigar, to stop a sigh.

"And n—now n—ot a d—day without them," sighed Mrs. Dodd. "But *you* have cost me none, my precious boy."

"I'm waiting my time. (Puff.) Mamma, take my advice; don't you fidget so. Let things alone. Why hurry her into marrying Mr. Hurd or anybody? Look here; I'll keep dark to please you, if you'll keep quiet to please me."

At breakfast time came a messenger with a line from Mrs. Archbold, to say that David had escaped from Drayton House, in company with another dangerous maniac.

Mrs. Dodd received the blow with a kind of desperate resignation. She rose quietly from the table without a word, and went to put on her bonnet, leaving her breakfast and the note; for she did not at once see all that was implied in the communication. She took Edward with her to Drayton House. The firemen had saved one half of that building: the rest was a black shell. Mrs. Archbold came to them, looking haggard, and told them two keepers were already scouring the country, and an advertisement sent to all the journals.

"Oh, madam!" said Mrs. Dodd, "if the other should hurt him, or lead him somewhere to his death?"

Mrs. Archbold said she might dismiss this fear; the patient in question had but one illusion, and, though terribly dangerous when thwarted in that, was most intelligent in a general way, and much attached to Mr. Dodd; they were always together.

A strange expression shot into Mrs. Dodd's eye: she pinched Edward's arm to keep him quiet, and said with feigned indifference:

"Then it was the one who was in such danger with my husband last night?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Archbold, off her guard. It had not occurred to her that this handsome, fashionably-dressed young gentleman, was the fireman of last night. She saw her mistake, though, the moment he said bluntly, "Why you told my mother it was an attendant."

"Did I, madam?" asked Mrs. Archbold, mighty innocently: "I suppose I thought so. Well, I was mistaken, unfortunately."

Mrs. Dodd was silent a moment, then, somewhat hastily, bade Mrs. Archbold good-bye. She told the cabman to drive to an old acquaintance of ours, Mr. Green. He had set up detective on his own account. He was not at his office, but expected. She sat patiently down till he came in. They put their heads together, and Green dashed down to the asylum with a myrmidon, while Mrs. Dodd went into the City to obtain leave of absence from Cross and Co. This was politely declined at first, but on Mrs. Dodd showing symptoms of leaving them altogether, it was conceded. She returned home with Edward, and there was Mr. Green; he had actually traced the fugitives by broken fences, and occasional footsteps in the side-clay of ditches, so far as to leave no doubt they had got upon the great south-eastern road. Then Mrs. Dodd had a female inspiration. The Dover road! ah! my husband will make for the sea."

"I shouldn't wonder, being a sailor," said Green; "it is a pleasure to

work with a lady like you, that puts in a good hint. Know anything about the other one, ma'am?"

Mrs. Dodd almost started at this off-hand question. But it was a natural one for Green to ask.

She said gravely, "I do. To my cost."

Green's eye sparkled, and he took out his note-book. "Now where is *he* like to make for?"

Mrs. Dodd seemed to wince at the question, and then turned her eyes inward to divine. The result was she gave a downright shudder, and said evasively, "Being with David, I hope and pray he will go towards the coast."

"No, no," said Green, "it won't do to count on that altogether. How do we know which of the two will lead the other? You must please to put Mr. Dodd out of the question, ma'am, for a moment. Now we'll say No. 2 had escaped alone: where would he be like to run to?"

Mrs. Dodd thus pressed, turned her eyes more and more inward, and said at last in a very low voice, and with a sort of concentrated horror,

"He will come to my house."

Mr. Green booked this eagerly. The lady's emotion was nothing to him; the hint was invaluable, the combination interesting. "Well, ma'am," said he, "I'll plant a good man in sight of your door: and I'll take the Dover road directly with my drag. My teeth weren't strong enough for the last nut you gave me to crack: let us try this one. Tom Green isn't often beat twice running."

"I will go with you, Mr. Green."

"Honoured and proud, ma'am. But a lady like you in my dog-cart along o' me and my mate!"

Mrs. Dodd waived this objection almost contemptuously; she was all wife now.

It was agreed that Green should drive round for her in an hour. He departed for the present, and Edward proposed to go in the dog-cart too, but she told him no; she wanted him at home to guard his sister against "the Wretch." Then seeing him look puzzled, "Consider, Edward," said she, "he is not like your poor father: he has not forgotten. That advertisement, Aileen Aroon, it was from him, you know. And then why does he attach himself so to poor papa? Do you not see it is because he is Julia's father? 'The Wretch' loves her still."

Edward from puzzled looked very grave. "What a head you have got, mamma!" he said. "I should never have seen all this: yet it's plain enough now, as you put it."

"Yes it is plain. Our darling is betrothed to a maniac; that maniac loves her, and much I fear she loves him. Some new calamity is impending. Oh, my son, I feel it already heavy on my heart. What is it to be? Is your father to be led to destruction, or will that furious wretch burst in upon your sister, and kill her, or perhaps kill Mr. Hurd, if he catches them together. What may not happen now? The very air seems to me swarming with calamities."

"O, I'll take care of all that," said Edward. And he comforted her a little by promising faithfully not to let Julia go out of his sight till her return.

She put on a plain travelling-dress. The dog-cart came. She slipped fifty sovereigns into Mr. Green's hands for expenses, and off they went at a slapping pace. The horse was a great bony hunter of rare speed and endurance, and his long stride and powerful action raised poor Mrs. Dodd's hopes, and the rushing air did her good. Green, to her surprise, made few inquiries for some miles on the Dover road; but he explained to her that the parties they were after had probably walked all night. "They don't tire, that sort," said Mr. Green.

At Dartford they got a doubtful intimation, on the strength of which he rattled on to Rochester. There he pulled up, deposited Mrs. Dodd at the principal inn till morning, and scoured the town for intelligence.

He inquired of all the policemen; described his men, and shrewdly added out of his intelligence, "Both splashed and dirty."

No, the Bobbies had not seen them.

Then he walked out to the side of the town nearest London, and examined all the dealers in food. At last he found a baker who, early that morning, had sold a quartern loaf to two tall men without hats, "and splashed fearful;" he added, "I thought they had broken prison; but 'twas no business of mine: they paid for the bread right enough."

On hearing they had entered Rochester hatless, the shrewd Mr. Green made direct to the very nearest slop-shop, and his sagacity was rewarded; the shopkeeper was a chatterbox, and told him yes, two gents out on a frolic had bought a couple of hats of him, and a whole set of sailor's clothes. "I think they were respectable, too; but nothing else would satisfy him. So the young one he humoured him, and bought them. I took his old ones in exchange."

At that Green offered a sovereign for the old clothes blindfold. The trader instantly asked two pounds, and took thirty shillings.

Green now set the police to scour the town for a gentleman and a common sailor in company, offered a handsome reward, and went to bed in a small inn, with David's clothes by the kitchen fire. Early in the morning he went to Mrs. Dodd's hotel with David's clothes nicely dried, and told her his tale. She knew the clothes directly, kissed them, and cried over them: then gave him her hand with a world of dignity and grace: "What an able man! Sir, you inspire me with great confidence."

"And you me with zeal, ma'am," said the delighted Green. "Why I'd go through fire and water for a lady like you, that pays well, and doesn't grudge a fellow a bit of praise. Now you must eat a bit, ma'am, if it's ever so little, and then we'll take the road; for the police think the parties have left the town, and by their night's work they must be good travellers."

The dog-cart took the road, and the ex-hunter stepped out thirteen miles an hour.

Now at this moment Alfred and David were bowling along ahead with a perfect sense of security. All that first night, the grandest of his life, Alfred walked on air, and drank the glorious exhilarating breath of Freedom. But, when the sun dawned on them, his intoxicating joy began to be dashed with apprehension; hatless and bemired, might they not be suspected and detained by some officious authority?

But the slop-shop set that all right. He took a double-bedded room in The Bear, locked the door, put the key under his pillow, and slept till eleven. At noon they were on the road again, and as they swung lustily along in the frosty but kindly air, Alfred's chest expanded, his spirits rose, and he felt a man all over. Exhilarated by freedom, youth, and motion, and a little inflated by reviving vanity, his heart, buoyant as his foot, now began to nurse aspiring projects: he would indict his own father, and the doctors, and immolate them on the altar of justice and publicly wipe off the stigma they had cast on him, and meantime he would cure David and restore him to his family.

He loved this harmless companion of his cell, his danger, and his flight; loved him for Julia's sake, loved him for his own. Youth and vanity whispered, "I know more about madness than the doctors; I have seen it closer." It struck him David's longing for blue water was one of those unerring instincts that sometimes guide the sick to their cure. And then as the law permits the forcible recapture of a patient—without a fresh order or certificates—within fourteen days of his escape from an asylum, he did not think it prudent to show himself in London till that time should have elapsed: so, all things considered, why not hide a few days with David in some insignificant seaport, and revel in liberty and blue water with him all day long, and so by associations touch the spring of memory, and begin the cure? As for David, he seemed driven seaward by some unseen spur; he fidgeted at all delay; even dinner fretted him; he panted so for his natural element. Alfred humoured him, and an hour after sunset they reached the town of Canterbury. Here Alfred took the same precautions as before, and slept till nine o'clock.

When he awoke, he found David walking to and fro impatiently. "All right, messmate," said Alfred, "we shall soon be in blue water." He made all haste, and they were on the road again by ten, walking at a gallant pace.

But the dog-cart was already rattling along about thirty miles behind them. Green inquired at all the turnpikes and vehicles; the scent was cold at first, but warmer by degrees, and hot at Canterbury. Green last baited his gallant horse, and came foaming on, and just as the pair entered the town of Folkestone, their pursuers came up to the cross-roads, not five miles behind them.

Alfred went to a good inn in Folkestone and ordered a steak, then strolled with David by the beach, and gloried in the water with him "After dinner we will take a boat, and have a sail," said he. "See, there's a nice boat, riding at anchor there."

David snuffed the breeze and his eye sparkled, and he said, "Wind due east, messmate." And this remark, slight as it was, was practical, and gave Alfred great delight: strengthened his growing conviction that not for nothing had this charge been thrown on him. He should be the one to cure his own father; for Julia's father was his: he had no other now. "All right," said he gaily, "we'll soon be on blue water: but first we'll have our dinner, old boy, for I am starving." David said nothing, and went rather doggedly back to the inn with him.

The steak was on the table. Alfred told the waiter to uncover and David to fall to, while he just ran up-stairs to wash his hands. He

came down in less than two minutes; but David was gone, and the waiter standing there erect and apathetic like a wooden sentinel.

"Why where is he?" said Alfred.

"Gent's gone out," was the reply.

"And you stood there and let him? you born idiot. Which way is he gone?"

"I don't know," said the waiter angrily, "I ain't a p'liceman. None but respectable gents comes here, as don't want watching." Alfred darted out and scoured the town; he asked everybody if they had seen a tall gentleman dressed like a common sailor: nobody could tell him: there were so many sailors about the port; that which in an inland town would have betrayed the truant concealed him here. A cold perspiration began to gather on Alfred's brow, as he ran wildly all over the place.

He could not find him, nor any trace of him. At last it struck him that he had originally proposed to go to Dover, and had spoken of that town to David, though he had now glanced aside, making for the smaller ports on the south coast: he hired a horse directly, and galloped furiously to Dover. He rode down to the pier, gave his horse to a boy to hold, and ran about inquiring for David. He could not find him: but at last he found a policeman, who told him he thought there was another party on the same lay as himself: "No," said the man, correcting himself, "it was two they were after, a gentleman and a sailor. Perhaps you are his mate."

Alfred's blood ran cold. "Pursued! and so hotly! No, no," he stammered; "I suspect I am on the same business." Then he said cunningly (for asylums teach the frankest natures cunning), "Come and have a glass of grog and tell me all about it." Bobby consented, and under its influence described Mrs. Dodd and her companions to him.

But not everybody can describe minutely. In the bare outlines, which were all this artist could furnish him, Alfred recognised at once whom do you think? Mrs. Archbold, Dr. Wolf, and his arch enemy Rooke, the keeper. Doubtless his own mind, seizing on so vague a description, adapted it rather hastily to what seemed probable. Mrs. Dodd never occurred to him, nor that David was the sole, or even the main, object of the pursuit. He was thoroughly puzzled what to do. However, as his pursuers had clearly scoured Dover, and would have found David if there, he made use of their labours and galloped back towards Folkestone. But he took the precaution to inquire at the first turnpike, and there he learned a lady and two men had passed through about an hour before in a dog-cart, it was a wonder he had missed them. Alfred gnashed his teeth; "Curse you," he muttered. "Well, do my work in Folkestone, I'll find him yet, and baffle you." He turned his horse's head westward and rode after David. Convinced that his lost friend would not go inland, he took care to keep near the cliffs, and had ever an eye on the beach when the road came near enough.

About eight miles west of Folkestone he saw a dog-cart going down a hill before him: but there was only a single person in it. However, he increased his pace and got close behind it as it mounted the succeeding hill, which was a high one. Walking leisurely behind it his quick eye caught sight of a lady's veil wrapped round the iron of the seat.

That made him instantly suspect this might be the dog-cart after all. But, if so, how came a stranger in it? He despised a single foe, and resolved to pump this one and learn where the others were.

While he was thinking how he should begin the dog-cart stopped at the top of the hill, and the driver looked seaward at some object that appeared to interest him.

It was a glorious scene. Viewed from so great a height the sea expanded like ocean, and its light-blue waters sparkled and laughed innumerable in the breeze. "A beautiful sight, sir," said the escaped prisoner, "you may well stop to look at it." The man touched his hat and chuckled. "I don't think you know what I am looking at, sir," he said politely.

"I thought it was the lovely sea view; so bright, so broad, so *free*."

"No, sir; not but what I can enjoy that a bit, too: but what I'm looking at is an 'unt. Do you see that little boat? Sailing right down the coast about eight miles off. Well, sir, what do you think there is in that boat? But you'll never guess. A madman."

"Ah!"

"Curious, sir, isn't it: a respectable gentleman too he is, and sails well; only stark staring mad. There was two of 'em in company: but it seems they can't keep together long. *Our* one steals a fisherman's boat, and there he goes down channel. And now look here, sir; see this steam-tug smoking along right in front of us: she's after him, and see there's my governor aboard standing by the wheel with a Bobby and a lady: and if ever there was a lady she's one;" here he lowered his voice. "She's that mad gentleman's wife, sir, as I am a living sinner."

They both looked down on the strange chase in silence. "Will they catch her?" asked Alfred at last, under his breath.

"How can we be off it? steam against sails. And if he runs ashore, I shall be there to nab him." Alfred looked, and looked: the water came into his eyes. "It's the best thing that can befal him now," he murmured. He gave the man half-a-crown, and then turned his horse's head and walked him down the hill towards Folkestone. On his arrival there he paid for his horse, and his untasted dinner, and took the first train to London, a little dispirited; and a good deal mortified; for he hated to be beat: but David was in good hands, that was one comfort; and he had glorious work on hand, love and justice. He went to an out of the way inn in the suburbs, and, when he had bought a carpet-bag and some linen and other necessaries, he had but one sovereign left.

His heart urged him vehemently to go at once and find his Julia: but alas! he did not even know where she lived; and he dared not at present make public inquiries: that would draw attention to himself, and be his destruction; for Wolf stood well with the police, and nearly always recaptured his truant patients by their aid before the fourteen days had elapsed. He determined to go first to a solicitor: and launch him against his enemies, while compelled to shirk them in his own person. Curious position! Now amongst his father's creditors was Mr. Compton, a solicitor, known for an eccentric, but honourable man, and for success in litigation. Mr. Compton used to do his own business in Barkington, and employ an agent in London: but Alfred remembered to have heard just before his incarceration that he had reversed

the parts, and now lived in London. Alfred found him out by the Directory, and called at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He had to wait some time in the outer office listening to a fluent earnest client preaching within: but presently a sharp voice broke in upon the drone and, after a few sentences, Mr. Compton ushered out a client with these remarkable words: "And as for your invention, it has been invented four times before you invented it, and never was worth inventing at all. And you have borrowed two hundred pounds of me in ninety loans, each of which cost me an hour's invaluable time: I hold ninety acknowledgments in your handwriting; and I'll put them all in force for my protection;" with this he turned to his head clerk; "Mr. Colls, take out a writ against this client; what is your christian name, sir? I forget."

"Simon," said the gaping client, off his guard.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Compton with sudden politeness: then resuming hostilities,—"a writ in the Common Pleas against Simon Macfarlane: keep it in your drawer, Colls, and if ever the said Macfarlane does me the honour to call on me again serve him with it on the spot; and, if not, not; good morning, sir." And with this he bolted into his own room and slammed its door. The clerks opened the outer door to Mr. Macfarlane with significant grins, and he went out bewildered sorely, yea even like one that walketh abroad in his sleep. "Now, sir," said Mr. Colls cheerfully to Alfred. But the new client naturally hesitated now: he put on his most fascinating smile, and said: "Well, Mr. Colls, what do you advise? Is this a moment to beard the lion in his den?"

At Alfred's smile and address Colls fell in love with him directly, and assured him sotto voce, and with friendly familiarity, that now was his time. Why, he'll be as sweet as honey now he has got rid of a *client*." With this he took Alfred's name, and ushered him into a room piled with japanned tin boxes, where Mr. Compton sat, looking all complacency, at a large desk table, on which briefs, and drafts, and letters lay in profusion and seeming confusion. He rose, and with a benignant courtesy invited Alfred to sit down and explain his business.

The reader is aware our Oxonian could make a close and luminous statement. He began at the beginning, but soon disposed of preliminaries and came to his capture at Silverton. Then Mr. Compton quietly rang the bell, and with a slight apology to Alfred requested Colls to search for the draft of Mrs. Holloway's will. Alfred continued. Mr. Compton listened keenly, noted the salient points on a sheet of brief-paper, and demanded the exact dates of every important event related.

The story finished, the attorney turned to Colls, and said mighty coolly, "You may go. The will is in my pocket: but I made sure he was a madman. They generally are, these ill-used clients." (Exit Colls.) "Got a copy of the settlement, sir, under which you take this ten thousand pounds?"

"No, sir."

"Any lawyer seen it?"

"Oh yes; Mr. Crauford, down at Barkington."

"Good. Friend of mine. I'll write to him. Names and addresses of your trustees?"

Alfred gave them.

"You have brought the order on which you were confined, and the two certificates?"

"Not I," said Alfred. "I have begged and prayed for a sight of them, and never could get one. That is one of the galling iniquities of the system; I call it 'THE DOUBLE SHUFFLE.' Just bring your mind to bear on this, sir: The prisoner whose wits and liberty have been signed away behind his back is not allowed to see the order and certificate on which he is confined—until *after* his release: that release he is to obtain by combating the statements in the order and certificates. So to get out he must first see and contradict the lies that put him in; but to see the lies that put him in, he must first get out. So runs the circle of Iniquity. Now, is that the injustice of Earth, or the injustice of Hell?"

Mr. Compton asked a moment to consider: "Well, I think it is of the earth, earthy. There's a mixture of idiocy in it the Devil might fairly repudiate. Young gentleman, the English Statutes of Lunacy are famous monuments of legislatorial incapacity: and indeed, as a general rule, if you want justice and wisdom, don't you go to Acts of Parliament, but to the Common Law of England."

Alfred did not appreciate this observation: he made no reply to it, but inquired, with some heat, "what he could do to punish the whole gang; his father, the certifying doctors, and the madhouse keepers?"

"Humph! You might indict them all for a conspiracy," said Mr. Compton; "but you would be defeated. As a rule, avoid criminal proceedings where you have a civil remedy. A jury will give a verdict and damages where they would not convict on the same evidence. Yours is just one of those cases where Temper says, 'indict!' but Prudence says, 'sue!' and Law, through John Compton, its oracle in this square, says, sue the defendant and no other. Now, who is the true defendant here, or party liable in law?"

"The keeper of the asylum, for one."

"No. If I remember right, all proceedings against him are expressly barred by a provision in the last statute. Let us see."

He took down the statutes of the realm, and showed Alfred the clause which raises the proprietor of a madhouse above the civic level of Prince Royal. "Curse the law," said Alfred bitterly.

"No, don't curse the Law. Curse the Act if you like; but we can get on without the Law, neither of us. Try again."

"The certifying doctor, sir?"

"Humph!" said Mr. Compton, knitting his brows: "a jury might give you a verdict. But it would probably be set aside by the full court, or else by a court of error. For, unless you could prove informality, barefaced negligence, or mala fides, what does it come to? A professional man, bound to give medical opinions to all comers, is consulted about you, and says he thinks you are insane: you turn out sane. Well, then he was mistaken: but not more than he is in most of his professional opinions. We lawyers know what guesswork Medicine is: we see it in the witness-box. I hate suing opinions: it is like firing bullets at snipes in a wind. Try again."

Alfred groaned. "Why there is nobody left but the rogue who signed the order."

"And, if you were a lawyer, that alone would tell you he is the

defendant. Where a legal wrong has been committed by A. B. and C., and there is no remedy against A. or B., there must either be one against C., or none at all: but this Law abhors as Nature does a vacuum. Besides this defendant has *done* the wrong complained of. In his person you sue an act, not an opinion. But of course you are not cool enough to see all this just at first."

"Cool, sir," said Alfred, despairingly; "I am frozen with your remorseless law. What, of all these villains, may I only attack one, and can't I imprison even him, as he has me? Such narrow law encourages men to violence, who burn under wrongs like mine."

Mr. Compton looked keenly at his agitated, mortified client, but made no concession. He gave him a minute to digest the law's first bitter pill: and then said, "If I am to act for you, you had better write a line to the Commissioners of Lunacy requesting them to hand me copies of the order and certificates." Alfred wrote it.

"And now," said Mr. Compton, thoughtfully, "I don't think they will venture to recapture you during the fourteen days. But still they might: and we attorneys are wary animals. So please give me at once full authority to act under advice of counsel for your protection."

Alfred wrote as requested, and Mr. Compton put the paper in his drawer, remarking, "With this I can proceed by law or equity, even should you get into the asylum again." He then dismissed Alfred somewhat abruptly, but with an invitation to call again after three clear days. Like most ardent suitors after their first interview with passionless law, he went away sadly chilled, and so home to his cheerless lodging, to count the hours till he could see Julia, and learn his fate from her lips.

This very morning a hasty note came to Edward from Folkestone, worded thus:

"Oh, Edward: my worst misgivings! The two have parted. Poor papa has taken a man's boat and is in sight. We shall follow directly in a steam-boat. But the other! You know my fears; you must be father and mother to that poor child till I come home.

"Your sad mother,

"LUCY DODD."

Julia held out her hand for the note. Edward put it in his pocket.

"What is that for?" said the young lady.

"Why surely I may put my own property in my pocket."

"Oh, certainly. I only want to look at it first."

"Excuse me."

"Are you in earnest, Edward? Not let me see dear mamma's letter!" and the vivid face looked piteously surprised.

"Oh, I'll tell you the contents. Papa had got to Folkestone and taken a boat, and gone to sea: then mamma took a steam-boat and after him: so she will soon catch him, and is not that a comfort?"

"Oh, yes," cried Julia, and was for some time too interested and excited to think of anything else. But presently she returned to the charge. "Anything else, dear?"

"Hurrah? Well, not of equal importance."

"Oh, if it is of no importance, there can be no reason for not telling me. What was it?"

Edward coloured but said nothing. He thought however: and thus ran his thoughts: "She's my intellectual superior; and I've got to deceive her; and a nice mess I shall make of it."

"It *is* of importance," said Julia, eyeing him. "You have told a story: and you don't love your sister." This fulminated, she drew herself up proudly and was silent. A minute afterwards, stealing a look at her, he saw her eyes suddenly fill with tears, apropos of nothing tangible.

"Now this is nice," said he to himself.

At noon she put on her bonnet to visit her district. He put on his hat directly, and accompanied her. Great was her innocent pleasure at that: it was the first time he had done her the honour. She took him to her poor people, and showed him off with innocent pride.

"Hannah, this is my brother." Then in a whisper, "Isn't he beautiful?" Presently she saw him looking pale; unheard of phenomenon! "There now, you are ill," said she. "Come home directly, and be nursed."

"No, no," said he. "I only want a little fresh air. What horrid places! what horrid sights and smells! I say, you must have no end of pluck to face them."

"No, no, no. Dearest, I pray for strength: that is how I manage. And oh, Edward, you used to think the poor were not to be pitied. But now you see."

"Yes, I see, and smell and all. You are a brave, good girl. Got any salts about you?"

"Yes, of course. There. But fancy a young lion smelling salts."

"A young duffer, you mean; that has passed for game through the thing not being looked into close."

"Oh, you can be close enough, where I want you to be open."

No answer.

The next day he accompanied her again, but remained at the stair-foot while she went in to her patients; and, when she came down, asked her, Could no good Christian be found to knock that poor woman on the head who lived in a plate.

"No good Heathen, you mean," said Julia.

"Why yes," said he; "the savages manage these things better."

He also accompanied her shopping, and smoked phlegmatically outside the shops; nor could she exhaust his patience. Then the quick girl put this and that together. When they were at home again and her bonnet off, she looked him in the face and said sweetly, "I have got a watch-dog." He smiled, and said nothing. "Why don't you answer?" cried Julia impetuously.

"Because least said is soonest mended. Besides, I'm down upon you: you decoy me into a friendly conversation, and then you say biting things directly."

"If I bite you, you sting me. Such want of confidence! Oh how cruel! how cruel! Why can you not trust me? Am I a child? No one is young, who has suffered what I have suffered. Secrets disunite

a family: and we were so united. And then you are so stupid; *you* keep a secret? Yes, like a dog in a chain; you can't hide it one bit. You have undertaken a task you are not fit for, sir; to hide a secret you must be able to tell fibs: and you can't: not for want of badness, but cleverness to tell them smoothly; you know it, you know it; and so out of your abominable slyness you won't say a word. There, it is no use my trying to provoke him. I wish you were not so good tempered; so apathetic I mean, of course." Then, with one of her old rapid transitions, she began to caress him and fawn on him: she seated him in an arm-chair and herself on a footstool, and suddenly curling round his neck, murmured, "Dear, dear brother, have pity on a poor girl, and tell her is there any news that I have a right to hear, only mamma has given you your orders not to tell me; tell me, love!" This last in an exquisite whisper.

"Let me alone, you little fascinating demon," said he, angrily. "Ask mamma. I won't tell you a word."

"Thank you!" she cried, bounding to her feet; "you *have* told me. He is alive. He loves me still. He was bewitched, seduced, deluded. He has come to himself. Mamma has seen him. He wants to come and beg my pardon. But you are all afraid I shall forgive him. But I will not, for at the first word I'll stop his mouth, and say, 'If you were happy away from me, I suppose you would not have come back.'" And instantly she burst out singing, with inspired eloquence and defiance,

"Castles are sacked in war,
Chieftains are scattered far,
Truth is a fixed star—
Aileen aroon."

But, unable to sustain it, the poor Impetuosity drooped as quickly as she had mounted, and out went her arm on the table and her forehead sank on her arm, and the tears began to run silently down the sweet face, so brave for a moment.

"W—will y—you allow me to light a cigar?" said Edward. "I'm wretched and miserable; you Tempest in petticoats, you!"

She made him a sign of assent with the hand that was dangling languidly, but she did not speak; nor did she appeal to him any more. Alienation was commencing. But what was worse than speaking her mind, she was for ever at the window now, looking up and down the street; and walking with her he felt her arm often tremble, and sometimes jerk. The secret was agitating her nerves, and destroying her tranquillity as much, or perhaps more, than if she had known all.

Mrs. Dodd wrote from Portsmouth: whereof anon.

Mr. Peterson called, and soon after him Mr. Hurd. Edward was glad to see them, especially the latter, whose visits seemed always to do Julia good.

Moreover, as Peterson and Hurd were rivals, it afforded Edward an innocent amusement to see their ill-concealed aversion to one another, and the admirable address and delicacy with which his sister conducted herself between them.

However this pastime was cut short by Sarah coming in and saying, "There's a young man wants to see you, sir."

Julia looked up and changed colour.

"I think he is a fireman," said Sarah. She knew very well he was a fireman, and also one of her followers. Edward went out and found one of his late brethren, who told him a young gentleman had just been inquiring for him at the station.

"What was he like?"

"Why I was a good ways off, but I saw he was a tall one.'

"Six feet?"

"Full that."

"Give you his name?"

"No: I didn't speak to him: it was Andrew. Andrew says he asked if there was a fireman called Dodd: so Andrew said you had left; then the swell asked where you lived, and Andrew couldn't tell him any more than it was in Pembroke Street. So I told him, says I, 'Why couldn't you call me? It is number sixty-six,' says I. 'Oh, he is coming back,' says Andrew. However, I thought I'd come and tell you." (And so get a word with Sarah, you sly dog.)

Edward thanked him, and put on his hat directly, for he could not disguise from himself that this visitor might be Alfred Hardie. Indeed, what more likely?

Messrs. Hurd and Peterson always tried to stay one another out whenever they met at 66, Pembroke Street. However, to make sure of not leaving Julia alone, Edward went in and asked them both to luncheon, at which time he said he should be back.

As he walked rapidly to the station he grew more and more convinced that it was Alfred Hardie. And his reflections ran like this. "What a headpiece mamma has! But it did not strike her he would come to me first. Yet how plain that looks now: for of course I'm the duffer's only clue to Julia. These madmen are no fools though. And how quiet he was that night! And he made papa go down the ladder first: that was the old Alfred Hardie; he was always generous: vain, overbearing, saucy, but noble with it all. I liked him: he was a man that showed you his worst, and let you find his best out by degrees. He hated to be beat: but that's no crime. He was a beautiful oar, and handled his mawleys uncommon; he sparred with all the prizefighters that came to Oxford, and took punishment better than you would think; and a wonderful quick hitter; Alec Reed owned that. Poor Taff Hardie! And when I think that God has overthrown his powerful mind, and left me mine, such as it is! But the worst is my having gone on calling him 'the Wretch' all this time: and nothing too bad for him. I ought to be ashamed of myself. It grieves me very much. 'When found make a note on;' never judge a fellow behind his back again."

Arrived at the station, he inquired whether his friend had called again, and was answered in the negative. He waited a few minutes, and then, with the superintendent's permission, wrote a note to Alfred, inviting him to dine at Simpson's at six, and left it with the firemen. This done, he was about to return home, when another thought struck him. He got a messenger, and sent off a single line to Dr. Wolf, to tell him Alfred Hardie would be at Simpson's at seven o'clock.

But, when the messenger was gone, he regretted what he had done. He had done it for Alfred's good; but still it was treason. He felt

unhappy, and wended his way homeward disconsolately, realising more and more that he had not brains for the difficulties imposed upon him.

On entering Pembroke Street he heard a buzz. He looked up, and saw a considerable crowd collected in a semicircle. "Why that is near our house," he said, and quickened his steps.

When he got near he saw that all the people's eyes were bent on No. 66.

He dashed into the crowd. "What on earth is the matter?" he cried.

"The matter? Plenty's the matter, young man," cried one.

"Murder's the matter," said another.

At that he turned pale as death. An intelligent man saw his violent agitation, and asked him hurriedly if he belonged to the house.

"Yes. For mercy's sake what is it?"

"Make way there!" shouted the man. "He belongs. Sir, a madman has broke loose and got into your house. And I'm sorry to say he has just killed two men."

"With a pistol," cried several voices, speaking together.

## CHAPTER XLV.

ALFRED HARDIE spent three days writhing in his little lodging. His situation had been sadder, but never more irritating. By right possessor of thousands, yet in fact reduced to one suit, two shirts, and half-a-crown: rich in intellect, yet hunted as a madman: affianced to the loveliest girl in England, yet afraid to go near her for fear of being torn from her again, and for ever. All this could last but one week more; but a week's positive torture was no trifle to contemplate, with a rival at his Julia's ear all the time. Suppose she should have been faithful all these months, but in this last week should be worn out and give herself to another: such things had been known. He went to Lincoln's Inn with this irritating fear tearing him like a vulture. Mr. Compton received him cheerfully, and told him he had begun operations in Hardie versus Hardie: had written to Thomas Hardie two days ago, and inquired his London solicitor, and whether that gentleman would accept service of the writ in Hardie versus Hardie.

"To Thomas Hardie? Why, what has he to do with it?" asked Alfred.

"He is the defendant in the suit." Then seeing amazement and incredulity on Alfred's face, he explained that the Commissioners of Lunacy had treated him with great courtesy; had at once furnished him with copies, not only of the order and certificates, but of other valuable documents. "And there," said he, "lies the order; signed by Thomas Hardie, of Clare Court, Yorkshire."

"Curse his impudence," cried Alfred in a fury: "why, sir, he is next door to an idiot himself."

"What does that matter? Ah, now, if I had gone in a passion and indicted him, there would be a defence directly; 'no malice, defendant being non compos.' Whereas, by gently, quietly suing him, even if he

was a lunatic we would make him or his estate pay a round sum for falsely imprisoning a sane Briton. By-the-by, here is counsel's opinion on your case," and he handed him a short opinion of a distinguished Queen's Counsel, the concluding words of which were these:

3. If the certificates and order are in legal form, and were made and given bonâ fide, no action lies for the capture or detention of Mr. Hardie.

"Why it is dead against me," said Alfred. "There goes the one rotten reed you had left me."

"Singularly dead," said the attorney, coolly: "he does not even say 'I am of opinion.' He is in great practice, and hard-worked: in his hurry he has taken up the Lunacy Acts, and has forgotten that the rights of sane Englishmen are not the creatures of these little trumpery statutes; no, thank you; our rights are centuries older, and prevail wherever, by good luck, the statutes of the realm are silent; now they are all silent about incarcerating sane men. Besides, he gives no cases. What is an opinion without a precedent? a lawyer's guess. I thought so little of his opinion that I sent the case to a clever junior, who has got time to think before he writes." Colls entered soon after with the said junior's opinion. Mr. Compton opened it, and saying, "Now let us see what *he* says," read it to Alfred. It ran thus:

"There was clearly a right of action under the common law: and it has been exercised. *Anderdon* v. *Brothers; Paternoster* v. *Wynn*, &c. Such a right can only be annulled by the express terms of a statute: now the 8 and 9 Victoria, cap. 100, sect. 99, so annuls it as against the madhouse proprietor only. That, therefore, is the statutory exception, and tends to confirm the common right. If the facts are as represented (on which, of course, I can form no opinion), Mr. Hardie can safely sue the person who signed the order for his alleged false imprisonment.

"I agree with you that the usual course by praying the Court of Chancery for a Commission de Lunatico Inquirendo, is timorous, and rests on prejudice. Plt., if successful, is saddled with his own costs, and sometimes with Deft.'s, and obtains no compensation. It seems clear that a jury sitting at Nisi Prius can deal as well with the main fact as can a jury sitting by the order of the Chancellor; and I need not say the costs will go with their verdict, to say nothing of the damages, which may be heavy. On the other hand, an indictment is hazardous; and I think you can lose nothing by beginning with the suit. By having a shorthand writer at the trial, you may collect materials for an indictment, and also feel the pulse of the court; you can then confer upon the evidence with some counsel better versed in criminal law than myself. *My* advice is to sue Thomas Hardie; and declare in Tort.

(Signed) "BARROW.

"N.B.—I have been thus particular, because Hardie v. Hardie (if carried to a verdict) will probably be a leading case."

"Who shall decide when counsel disagree?" inquired Alfred, satirically.

"That depends on where they do it. If in court, the judge. If here, the attorney."

"You appear sanguine, Mr. Compton," said Alfred: "perhaps you would not mind advancing me a little money. I've only half-a-crown."

"It is all ready for you in this drawer," said Compton, cheerfully "See, thirty sovereigns. Then you need not go to a bank."

"What, you knew I should borrow?"

"Don't all my clients begin by bleeding *me*? it is the rule of this office."

"Then why don't you give up business?"

"Because I bleed the opposite attorney's client a pound or two more than my own bleeds me."

He then made Alfred sign a promissory note for the thirty pounds: advised him to keep snug for one week more, and promised to write to him in two days, and send Thomas Hardie's answer. Alfred left his address and went from Mr. Compton a lighter man. Convinced of his courage and prudence, he shifted one care off his own shoulders: and thought of love alone.

But, strange as it may appear, two cares are sometimes better for a man than one. Alfred, having now no worry to divert him from his deeper anxiety, was all love and jealousy; and quite overbalanced: the desire of his heart grew so strong it overpowered alike his patience, and his prudence. He jumped into a cab, and drove to all the firemen's stations on the Surrey side of the river, inquiring for Edward. At last he hit upon the right one, and learned that Julia lived in Pembroke Street; number unknown. He drove home to his lodgings: bought some ready-made clothes, and dressed like a gentleman; then told the cabman to drive to Pembroke Street. He knew he was acting imprudently; but he could not help it. And besides, Mr. Compton had now written to his uncle, and begun the attack: that would surely intimidate his enemies, and turn their thoughts to defence, not to fresh offence. However, catching sight of a gunsmith's shop on the way, he suddenly resolved to arm himself on the bare chance of an attack. He stopped the cab: went in and bought a double-barrelled pistol, with powder-flask, bullets, wads, and caps, complete. This he loaded in the cab, and felt quite prudent after it. The prudence of youth!

He paid off the cab in Pembroke Street, and set about the task of discovering Julia. He inquired at several houses, but was unsuccessful. Then he walked slowly all down the street, looking up at all the windows. And I think, if he had done this the day before, he might have seen her, or she him: she was so often at the window now. But just then she had company to keep her in order.

He was unlucky in another respect. Edward came out of No. 66 and went up the street, when he himself was going down it not so very many yards off. If Alfred's face had only been turned the other way he would have seen Edward, and all would have gone differently.

The stoutest hearts have their moments of weakness and deep dejection. Few things are more certain, and less realised by ordinary men, than this; from Palissy fighting with Enamel to Layard disinterring a city, this thing is so.

Unable to find Julia in the very street she inhabited, Alfred felt weak against fate. He said to himself, "If I find her, I shall perhaps wish I had never sought her."

In his hour of dejection stern reason would be heard, and asked him whether all Mrs. Archbold had said could be pure invention; and he was obliged to confess that was too unlikely. Then he felt so sick at heart he was half minded to turn and fly the street. But there was a large yard close by him, entered by a broad and lofty gateway cut through one of the houses. The yard belonged to a dealer in hay: two empty waggons were there, but no men visible, being their dinner-time. Alfred slipped in here, and sat down on the shaft of a waggon: and let his courage ooze. He sighed, and sighed, and feared to know his fate. And so he sat with his face in his hands unmanned.

Presently a strain of music broke on his ear. It seemed to come from the street. He raised his head to listen. He coloured, his eyes sparkled; he stole out on tiptoe with wondering, inquiring face into the street. Once there, he stood spell-bound, thrilling from his heart, that seemed now on fire, to his fingers' ends. For a heavenly voice was singing to the piano, just above his head; singing in earnest, making the very street ring. Already listeners were gathering, and a woman of the people said, "It's a soul singing without a body." Amazing good things are said in the streets. The voice was the voice of Julia; the song was Aileen Aroon, the hymn of constancy. So sudden and full was the bliss, which poured into the long and sore-tried listener at this sudden answer to his fears, that tears of joy trembled in his eyes. "Wretch that I was to doubt her," he said; and unable to contain his longing, unable to wait and listen even to that which had changed his griefs and doubts into rapture, he was at the door in a moment. A servant opened it; "Miss Dodd?" he said, or rather panted: "you need not announce me. I am an old acquaintance." He could not bear any one should see the meeting between him and his beloved; he went up the steep and narrow stair, guided by the hymn of constancy.

He stopped at the door, his heart was beating so violently.

Then he turned the handle softly, and stepped into the drawing-room: it was a double room: he took two steps and was in the opening, and almost at Julia's back.

Two young clergymen were bending devotedly one on each side of her; it was to them she was singing the hymn of constancy.

Alfred started back as if he had been stung; and the music stopped dead short.

For she had heard his step, and, womanlike, was looking into her companions' eyes first, to see if her ear had deceived her. What she saw there brought her slowly round with a wild look. Her hands rose towards her face, and she shrank away sideways from him as if he was a serpent, and her dilated eyes looked over her cringing shoulder at him, and she was pale and red and pale and red a dozen times in as many seconds.

He eyed her sorrowfully and sternly, taking for shame that strange mixture of emotions which possessed her. And so they met.

Strange meeting for two true lovers, who had parted last upon their wedding eve.

No doubt, if they had been alone, one or other would have spoken directly: but the situation was complicated by the presence of two

rivals, and this tied their tongues. They devoured one another with their eyes in silence; and then Julia rose slowly to her feet, and began to tremble from head to foot, as she looked at him.

"Is this intrusion agreeable to you, Miss Dodd?" said Mr. Hurd, respectfully, by way of courting her. She made no reply: but only looked wildly at Alfred still, and quivered visibly.

"Pray sir," said Alfred, turning on Mr. Hurd, "have you any right to interfere between us two?"

"None whatever," said Julia, hastily. "Mr. Hurd, I need no one: I will permit no one to say a word to him. Mr. Hardie knows he cannot enter a house where I am—without an explanation."

"What, before a couple of curates?"

"Do not be insolent to my friends, sir," said Julia, panting.

This wounded Alfred deeply. "Oh, as you please," said he. "Only if you put me on my defence before strangers, I shall, perhaps, put you to the blush before them."

"Why do you come here, sir?" said Julia, not deigning to notice his threat.

"To see my betrothed."

"Oh, indeed!" said she, bitterly; "in that case why have you postponed your visit so long?"

"I was in prison."

"In prison?"

"In the worst of all prisons; where I was put because I loved you; where I was detained because I persisted in loving you, you faithless, inconstant girl."

He choked at these words; she smiled: a faint uncertain smile. It died away, and she shook her head, and said sadly:

"Defend yourself, and then call me as many names as you like. Where was this prison?"

"It was an asylum: a madhouse."

The girl stared at him bewildered. He put his hand into his pocket, and took Peggy's letter. "Read that," he said. She held it in her hand, and looked him in the face to divine the contents. "Read it," said he, almost fiercely; "that was the decoy." She held it shaking in her hands, and stared at it. I don't know whether she read it or not.

He went on: "The same villain who defrauded your father of his money, robbed me of my wife, and my liberty: that Silverton House was a lunatic asylum, and ever since then (oh Julia, the agony of that day) I have been confined in one or other of those hells; sane amongst the mad; till Drayton House took fire, and I escaped: for what? To be put on my defence by you. What have you suffered from our separation, compared with the manifold anguish I have endured, that you dare to receive the most injured and constant of mankind like this, you who have had your liberty all this time, and have consoled yourself for my absence with a couple of curates?"

"For shame," said Julia, blushing to the forehead, yet smiling in a way her companions could not understand.

"Miss Dodd, will you put up with these insults?" said Mr. Hurd.

"Ay, and a thousand more," cried Julia, radiant, "and thank Heaven for them; they prove his sincerity. You, who have thought proper to

stay and hear *me* insult my betrothed, and put my superior on his defence, look how I receive his just rebuke: dear, cruelly used Alfred, I never doubted you in my heart, no not for a moment; forgive me for taunting you to clear yourself; you who were always the soul of truth and honour. Forgive me: I too have suffered; for I thought my Alfred was dead. Forgive me."

And with this she was sinking slowly to her knees with the most touching grace, all blushes, tears, penitence, happiness, and love; but he caught her eagerly. "Oh! God forbid," he cried: and in a moment her head was on his shoulder, and they mingled their tears together.

It was Julia who recovered herself first, and shrank from him a little, and murmured, "We are not alone."

The misgiving came rather late: and they were alone.

The other gentlemen had comprehended at last that it was indelicate to remain: they had melted quietly away; and Peterson rushed down the street; but Hurd hung disconsolate about that very entry, where Alfred had just desponded before him.

"Sit by me, my poor darling, and tell me all," said Julia.

He began; but, ere he had told her about his first day at his first asylum, she moaned and turned faint at the recital, and her lovely head sank on his shoulder. He kissed her, and tried to comfort her, and said he would not tell her any more. But she said somewhat characteristically, "I insist on your telling me all; all. It will kill me." Which did not seem to Alfred a cogent reason for continuing his narrative. He varied it by telling her that through all his misery the thought of her had sustained him. Alas, in the midst of their Elysium a rough voice was heard in the passage inquiring for Mr. Hardie. Alfred started up in dismay: for it was Rooke's voice. "I am undone," he cried. "They are coming to take me again; and, if they do, they will drug me; I am a dead man."

"Fly!" cried Julia; "fly! up-stairs: the leads."

He darted to the door, and out on the landing.

It was too late. Rooke had just turned the corner of the stairs; and saw him. He whistled and rushed after Alfred. Alfred bounded up the next flight of stairs: but, even as he went, his fighting blood got up; he remembered his pistol: he drew it, turned on the upper landing, and levelled the weapon full at Rooke's forehead. The man recoiled with a yell, and got to a respectful distance on the second landing. There he began to parley. "Come, Mr. Hardie, sir," said he, "that is past a joke: would you murder a man?"

"It's no murder to kill an assassin in defence of life or liberty and I'll kill you, Rooke, as I would kill a wasp, if you lay a finger on me."

"Do you hear that?" shouted Rooke to some one below.

"Ay, I hear," replied the voice of Hayes.

"Then loose the dog. And run in after him."

There was a terrible silence; then a scratching was heard below: and, above, the deadly click of the pistol-hammers brought to full cock.

And then there was a heavy pattering rush, and Vulcan came charging up the stairs like a lion. He was half-muzzled; but that Alfred did not

know: he stepped forward and fired at the tremendous brute somewhat unsteadily; and missed him, by an inch; the bullet glanced off the stairs and entered the wall within a yard of Rooke's head: ere Alfred could fire again, the huge brute leaped on him, and knocked him down like a child, and made a grab at his throat; Alfred, with admirable presence of mind, seized a banister, and, drawing himself up, put the pistol to Vulcan's ear, and fired the other barrel just as Rooke rushed up the stairs to secure his prisoner; the dog bounded into the air and fell over dead with shattered skull, leaving Alfred bespattered with blood and brains, and half blinded: but he struggled up, and tore the banister out in doing so, just as a heavy body fell forward at his feet: it was Rooke stumbling over Vulcan's carcase so unexpectedly thrown in his path: Alfred cleared his eyes with his hand, and as Rooke struggled up, lifted the banister high above his head, and, with his long sinewy arm and elastic body, discharged a blow frightful to look at, for youth, strength, skill, and hate all swelled, and rose, and struck together in that one furious gesture. If the wood had held, the skull must have gone. As it was, the banister broke over the man's head (and one half went spinning up to the ceiling); the man's head cracked under the banister like a glass bottle; and Rooke lay flat and mute, with the blood running from his nose and ears. Alfred hurled the remnant of the banister down at Hayes and the others, and darted into a room (it was Julia's bedroom), and was heard to open the window, and then drag furniture to the door, and barricade it. This done, he went to load his pistol, which he thought he had slipped into his pocket after felling Rooke. He found to his dismay it was not there. The fact was, it had slipped past his pocket and fallen down.

During the fight, shriek upon shriek issued from the drawing-room. But now all was still. On the stairs lay Vulcan dead, Rooke senseless: below, Julia in a dead faint. And all in little more than a minute.

Dr. Wolf arrived with the police and two more keepers, new ones in the place of Wales and Garrett discharged; and urged them to break into the bedroom and capture the maniac: but first he was cautious enough to set two of them to watch the back of the house. "There," he said, "where that load of hay is going in: that is the way to it. Now stand you in the yard and watch."

This last mandate was readily complied with; for there was not much to be feared on the stones below from a maniac self-immured on the second story. But to break open that bedroom door was quite another thing. The stairs were like a shambles already, a chilling sight to the eyes of mercenary valour.

Rooke was but just sensible: the others hung back. But presently the pistol was found sticking in a pool of gore. This put a new face on the matter; and Dr. Wolf himself showed the qualities of a commander. He sent down word to his sentinels in the yard to be prepared for any attempt on Alfred's part, however desperate: and he sent a verbal message to a stately gentleman who was sitting anxious in lodgings over the way, after bribing high and low, giving out money like water to secure the recapture, and so escape what he called his unnatural son's vengeance; for he knew him to be by nature bold and vindictive like himself. After these preliminaries, Doctor Wolf headed his remaining forces,

to wit, two keepers, and two policemen, and thundered at the bedroom door, and summoned Alfred to surrender.

Now among the spectators who watched and listened with bated breath, was one to whom this scene had an interest of its own. Mr. Hurd, disconcerted by Alfred's sudden reappearance, and the lovers' reconciliation, had hung about the entry very miserable: for he was sincerely attached to Julia. But, while he was in this stupor, came the posse to recapture Alfred, and he heard them say so. Then the shots were fired within, then Wolf and his men got in, and Mr. Hurd, who was now at the door, got in with them to protect Julia, and see this dangerous and inconvenient character disposed of. He was looking demurely on at a safish distance, when his late triumphant rival was summoned to surrender.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf coaxed.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf told him he had police as well as keepers, and resistance would be idle.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf ordered his men to break in the door.

After some little delay, one of the keepers applied a chisel, while a policeman held his truncheon ready to defend the operator. The lock gave way. But the door could not open for furniture.

After some further delay they took it off its hinges, and the room stood revealed.

To their surprise no rush was made at them.

The maniac was not even in sight.

"He is down upon his luck," whispered one of the new keepers: "we shall find him crouched somewhere." They looked under the bed. He was not there. They opened a cupboard: three or four dresses hung from wooden pegs; they searched the gowns most minutely: but found no maniac hid in their ample folds. Presently some soot was observed lying in the grate: and it was inferred he had gone up the chimney.

On inspection the opening appeared almost too narrow. Then Dr. Wolf questioned his sentinels in the yard. "Have you been there all the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Seen nothing?"

"No, sir. And our eyes have never been off the window and the leads."

Here was a mystery: and not a clue to its solution. The window was open: but five-and-twenty feet above the paved yard: had he leaped down he must have been dashed to pieces.

Many tongues began to go at once: in the midst of which Edward burst in, and found the two dead men of contemporary history consisted of a dead dog, and a stunned man, who, having a head like a bullet, was now come to himself and vowing vengeance. He found Julia very pale, supported and consoled by Mr. Hurd. He was congratulating her on her escape from a dangerous maniac.

She rose and tottered away from him to her brother and clung to him. He said what he could to encourage her, then deposited her in an arm-

chair and went up-stairs; he soon satisfied himself Alfred was not in the house. On this he requested Dr. Wolf and his men to leave the premises. The doctor demurred. Edward insisted, and challenged him to show a magistrate's warrant for entering a private house. The doctor was obliged to own he had none. Edward then told the policemen they were engaged in an illegal act; the police had no authority to take part in these captures. Now the police knew that very well: but, being handsomely bribed, they had presumed, and not for the first time, upon that ignorance of law which is deemed an essential part of a private citizen's accomplishments in modern days. In a word, by temper and firmness, and a smattering of law gathered from the omniscient 'Tiser, Edward cleared his castle of the lawless crew. But they paraded the street, and watched the yard till dusk, when its proprietor ran rusty and turned them out.

Julia sat between Edward and Mr. Hurd, with her head thrown back and her eyes closed: and received in silence their congratulations on her escape. She was thinking of his. When they had quite done, she opened her eyes and said, "Send for Dr. Sampson. Nobody else knows anything. Oh pray, pray, pray send for Dr. Sampson."

Mr. Hurd said he would go for Dr. Sampson.

She thanked him warmly.

Then she crept away to her bedroom, and locked herself in, and sat on the hearth-rug, and thought, and thought, and recalled every word and tone of her Alfred; comparing things old and new.

Dr. Sampson was a few miles out of town, visiting a patient. It was nine o'clock in the evening when he got Julia's note; but he came on to Pembroke Street at once. Dr. Wolf and his men had retired; leaving a sentinel in the street, on the bare chance of Alfred returning. Dr. Sampson found brother and sister sitting sadly, but lovingly together. Julia rose upon his entrance. "Oh, Doctor Sampson! Now *is* he—what they say he is?"

"How can I tell, till I see 'm?" objected the doctor.

"But you know they call people mad who are nothing of the kind: for you said so."

Sampson readily assented to this. "Why it was but last year a surjin came to me with one Jackson, a tailor, and said, 'Just sign a certificate for this man: his wife's mad.' 'Let me see her,' sid I. 'What for,' sis he; 'when her own husband applies.' 'Excuse me,' sis I, 'I'm not a bat, I'm Saampson.' I went to see her; she was nairvous and excited; 'Oh, I know what you come about,' said she. 'But you are mistaken.' I questioned her kindly, and she told me her husband was a great trile t' her nairves. I refused to sign: on that disn't the tailor drown himself in the canal nixt day? He was the madman; and she knew it all the time, but wouldn't tell us; and that's a woman all over."

"Well then," said Julia hopefully.

"Ay but," said Sampson, "these cases are exceptions, after all: and the chances are nine to one he's mad. Daun't ye remember that was one of the solutions offered ye, when he levanted on his wedding-day?" He added satirically, "And couldn't all that logic keep in a little reason?"

This cynical speech struck Julia to the heart: she could not bear it and retired to her own room.

Then Dr. Sampson saw his mistake, and said to Edward, with some concern, "Mairey on us, she is not in love with him still, is she? I thought that young parson was the man now."

Edward shook his head: but declined to go much into a topic so delicate as his sister's affections: and just then an alarming letter was delivered from Mrs. Dodd. She wrote to the effect that David, favoured by the wind, had run into Portsmouth harbour before their eyes, and had disappeared, hidden, it was feared, by one of those low publicans, who provide bad ships with sailors, receiving a commission. On this an earnest conversation between Sampson and Edward.

It was interrupted in its turn.

Julia burst suddenly into the room, pale and violently excited, clasping her hands and crying, "He is *there*. His voice is like a child's. Oh, help me! He is hurt. He is dying."

## CHAPTER XLVI.

Julia, as I have said, went to her own room, wounded unintentionally by a chance speech: she sat down sick at heart; and presently opened her window and looked out upon the starry night, and wondered where Alfred was now; that Alfred for whom nobody else had a human heart, it seemed. "Alfred! my poor Alfred!" she sighed, and half-expected to hear him reply. Then she said to herself, "They all called you false but me; yet I was right: and now they all call you mad; but not I: I believe nothing against you. You are my own Alfred still. Where have the wretches driven you to?" At this her feelings carried her away, and she cried aloud on him despairingly, and leaned upon the window-sill, and the tears ran fast for him.

Presently out of the silence of the night seemed to struggle a faint but clear voice:

"Julia!"

She started, and a muffled scream came from her. Then she listened, all trembling. Again the voice sighed, faintly but clear, "Julia!"

"Alfred?" said she, quavering.

"Yes. Pray be cautious; give no alarm. The house is watched; bring Edward."

She flew down stairs, and electrified Edward and Sampson with the news. "Oh, promise me not to betray him!" she cried.

"Hut!" said the doctor, starting to his feet, "what should we betray him for? I'll cure him for you. I can cure any lunatic that has lucid intervals. Where is he?"

"Follow me," gasped Julia. "Stay. I'll get rid of the servants first. I'll not play the fool, and betray him to his enemies." She sent Sarah eastward, and Jane westward, and then led the way through the kitchen door into the yard.

They all searched about, and found nothing. Then Julia begged them to be silent. She whispered, "Alfred!" And instantly a faint voice issued from the top of a waggon laden with hay and covered with a tarpaulin. "Julia!"

They all stood staring.

"Who are those with you?" asked Alfred uneasily.

"Only friends, dear! Edward and Dr. Sampson."

"Ned, old fellow," groaned Alfred, "you pulled me out of the fire; won't you help me out of this? I think my leg is broken."

At this Julia wrung her hands, and Edward ran into the house for his rope, and threw it over the waggon. He told Julia and Sampson to hold on by one end, and seizing the other, was up on the waggon in a moment. He felt about till he came to a protuberance; and that was Alfred under the tarpaulin, in which he had cut breathing-holes with his penknife. Edward sent Julia in for a carving-knife, and soon made an enormous slit: through this a well-known figure emerged into the moonlight, and seemed wonderfully tall to have been so hidden. His hands being uninjured, he easily descended the rope, and stood on one leg holding it. Then Sampson and Edward put each an arm under his, and helped him into the house.

After the body the mind. That is the rule throughout creation. They examined, not his reason, but his leg. Julia stood by with clasped hands, and a face beaming with pity and anxiety, that repaid his pain. Sampson announced there were no bones broken, but a bad sprain, and the limb very red and swollen. "Now," inquired he briskly of the company, "what is the practice in sprains? Why, leeches and cold water."

Edward offered at once to run and get them.

"Are ye mad?" was the reply. "Daun't I tell ye that is the *practice*? And isn't the practice sure to be th' opposite of the remedy? So get water as hot as he can bear it, and no leeches."

Julia remonstrated angrily. "Is this a case for jesting?"

"Deevil a jest in it," replied the doctor. "Well then, if ye must know, th' opera-dancers apply hot water to sprains: now what is their interest? t' expedite the cure: and the faculty apply cold water: and what is their interest? to procrastinate the cure, and make a long job of it. So just hold your tongues, and ring for hot water."

Julia did not ring; she beckoned Edward, and they flew out and soon brought a foot-pan of hot water. Edward then removed Alfred's shoes and stockings, and Julia bared her lovely arms, and blushed like a rose.

Alfred divined her intention. "Dear Julia," he said, "I won't let you: that is too high an honour. Sarah can do that."

But Julia's blood was up. "Sarah?" said she contemptuously; "she is too heavy handed: and—hold your tongue; I don't take my orders from you;" then more humbly to the doctor, "I am a district visitor: I nurse all manner of strangers, and he says I must leave his poor suffering leg to the servants."

"Unnatural young monster," said the doctor. "G'im a good nip."

Julia followed this advice by handling Alfred's swollen ankle with a tenderness so exquisite, and pressing it with the full sponge so softly, that her divine touch soothed him as much or more than the water. After nursing him into the skies a minute or two, she looked up blushing in his face, and said coaxingly, "Are you mad, dear Alfred? Don't be afraid to tell us the truth! The madder you are, the more you need me to take care of you, you know."

Alfred smiled at this sapient discourse, and said he was not the least

mad, and hoped to take care of *her* as soon as his ankle was well enough. This closed that sweet mouth of hers exceeding tight, and her face was seen no more for a while, but hid by bending earnestly over her work; only as her creamy poll turned pink, the colour of that hidden face was not hard to divine.

Then Edward asked Alfred how in the world he had escaped, and got into that waggon. The thing was incredible. "Mirawculous," said Dr. Sampson in assent.

"No," said Alfred, "it looks stranger to you than it is. The moment I found my pistol was gone I determined to run. I looked down and saw a spout with a great ornamental mouth, almost big enough to sit on; and, while I was looking greedily at it, three horses came into the yard drawing a load of hay. The waggoner was busy clearing the pavement with his wheel, and the waggon almost stopped a moment right under me. There was a lot of loose hay on the top. I let myself down, and hung by the spout a moment, and then leaped on to the loose hay. Unfortunately there were the hard trusses beneath it, and so I got my sprain. Oh, I say, didn't it hurt? However, I crept under the hay and hid myself, and saw Wolf's men come into the yard. By-and-by a few drops of rain fell, and some fellows chuckd down a tarpaulin from the loft, and nearly smothered me: so I cut a few air-holes with my penknife. And there I lay, Heaven knows how long: it seemed two days. At last I saw an angel at a window; I called her by the name she bears on earth: to my joy she answered, and here I am, as happy as a prince among you all, and devilish hungry."

"What a muff I was not to think of that," said Edward, and made for the larder.

"Dear doctor," said Julia, lifting a Madonna-like face with swimming eyes, "I see no change in him: he is very brave, and daring, and saucy. But so he always was. To be sure he says extravagant things, and stares one out of countenance with his eyes: well and so he always did—ever since *I* knew him."

"Mayn't I even *look* my gratitude?" whined Alfred.

"Yes, but you need not stare it."

"It's your own fault, Miss Julee," said Sampson. "With you fomenting his sprain the creature's fomenting his own insensate passion. Break every bone in a puppy's body, and it's a puppy still; and it doesn't do to spoil puppies; as ye're spoiling this one. Nlist me, ye vagabin. Take your eyes off the lady; and look *me* in the face—if ye can; and tell me how you came to leave us all in the lurch on your wedding morn."

Julia fired up. "It was not his fault, poor thing: he was decoyed away after that miserable money. Ah, you may laugh at me for hating money; but have I not good reason to hate it?"

"Whist, whist, y' impetuous cracter; and let him tell his own tale."

Alfred thus invited, delivered one of his calm, luminous statements; which had hitherto been listened to so coldly by one official after another. But the effect was mighty different, falling now on folk not paid to pity. As for Dr. Sampson, he bounced up very early in the narrative, and went striding up and down the room: he was pale with indignation: and his voice trembled with emotion, and every now and then he broke

in on the well-governed narrative with oaths and curses, and observations of this kind: "Why dinnt ye kill um? I'd have killed um. I'd just have taken the first knife and killed um. Man, our Liberty is our Life. Dith to whoever attacks it!"

And so Edward, coming in with Alfred's dinner on a tray, found the soi-disant maniac delivering his wrongs with the lofty serenity of an ancient philosopher discussing the wrongs of another, Julia crying furtively into the tub, and the good physician trampling and raving about the room, like what the stoical narrator was accused of being. Edward stopped and looked at them all over the tray. "Well," said he, "if there's a madman in the room, it is not Hardie. Ahem."

"Madman? ye young ijjit," roared the doctor, "he's no madder than I am."

"Heaven forbid," said Alfred drily.

"No madder than *you* are, ye young Pump." "That's an ungenerous skit on Edward's profession," objected the maniac.

"Be quite now, chattering," said the excited doctor; "I tell ye ye niver were mad, and niver will be. It's just the most heartless imposture, the most rascally fraud I've ever caught the Mad Ox out in. I'll expose it. Gimme pninkpapr. Man, they'll take y' again if we don't mind. But I'll stop that: these ineequities can only be done in the dark. I'll shed the light of day on 'em. Eat your dinner, and hold your tongue a minute—if ye can." The doctor had always a high sense of *Alfred's* volubility.

He went to work, and soon produced a letter headed, "PRIVATE MADHOUSES." In this he related pithily Alfred's incarceration, and the present attempt to recapture him, with the particulars of his escape. "That will interest th' enemy," said he drily. He vouched for Alfred's sanity at both dates, and pledged himself to swear to it in a court of law. He then inquired what it availed to have sent one tyrant to Phalaris and another to Versailles in defence of our Liberty, since after all that Liberty lies grovelling at the mercy of Dr. Pill-box, and Mr. Sawbones, and a single designing relative? Then he drew a strong picture of this free-born British citizen skulking and hiding at this moment from a gang of rogues and conspirators, who, in France and other civilized countries that brag less of liberty than we do, would be themselves flying as criminals from the officers of justice; and he wound up with a warm appeal to the press to cast its shield over the victim of bad laws and foul practices. "In England," said he, "Justice is the daughter of Publicity. Throughout the world deeds of villany are done every day in kid gloves: but, with us, at all events, they have to be done on the sly: here lies our true moral eminence as a nation. Utter then your 'fiat lux;' cast the full light of publicity on this dark villany; and behold it will wither, and your oppressed and injured fellow-citizen be safe from that very hour."

He signed it and read it out to them, or rather roared it. But he had written it so well he could not make it bad by delivery. Indeed, he was a masterly writer of English you must know. Julia was delighted: but Alfred shook his head. "The editor will not put it in."

"Th' editor! D'ye think I'm so green as to trust t' any one editor? D'ye think I've lived all these years and not learned what poor cowardly

things men are? Moral courage! where can you find it? Except in the dickshinary? Few to the world their honest thoughts *avow*; the groveller policy robs justice *now*,

> And none but Sampson dares to lift a hond
> Against the curst corruption of the lond.

Now, lad, I'm off to my printer with this. They are working night and day just now: there will be two hundred copies printed in half an hour."

"And me, doctor," said Julia. "Am poor I to have no hand in it? How cruel of you? Oh pray, pray, pray let me help a little."

"Put on your bonnet, then, directly," said he: "in war never lose a minute."

"But I am so afraid they may be lying in wait for him outside."

"Then we'll give them a good hiding: there are three of us; all good men and stanch," said the indomitable doctor.

"No, no," said the pugnacious Alfred. "Julia does not like fighting: I heard her screaming all the time I was defending myself on the stairs: let us be prudent: let us throw dust in their eyes. Put me on a bonnet and cloak."

"And a nice little woman you'll make, ye fathom."

"O, I can stoop—to conquer."

Julia welcomed this plan almost with glee, and she and Edward very soon made a handsome brazen-looking trollop six feet high. Then it had to stoop, and Edward and Julia helped it out to the carriage, under the very noses of a policeman and a keeper, who were watching for Alfred: seeing which—oh frailty of woman!—the district visitor addressed it aloud as her aunt, and begged it to take care: which she afterwards observed was acting a falsehood, and "where was her Christianity?"

Alfred was actually not recognised: the carriage bowled away to the great printing-house; it was on that side the water. The foreman entered into the thing with spirit, and divided the copy, small as it was, among two or three compositors: so a rough proof was ready in an incredibly short time; the doctor corrected it: and soon they began to work off the copies. The foreman found them Mitchell's newspaper list, and envelopes by the hundred, and while the copies were pouring in, all hands were folding and addressing them to the London and provincial editors. The office lent the stamps. The doctor drove Alfred to his own lodgings, and forbade him to reappear in Pembroke Street until the letter should come out in the London journals.

That night the letters were all posted, and at daybreak were flying north, south, east, and west. In the afternoon the letter came out in four London evening papers, and the next morning the metropolis and the whole kingdom were ringing with them, and the full blaze of publicity burst upon this dark deed.

Ay, stout Sampson, well you knew mankind, and well you knew the nation you lived in. Richard Hardie, in the very act of setting detectives to find Alfred's lurking-place, ran his nose against this letter in the Globe. He collapsed at the sight of it; and wrote directly to Dr. Wolf enclosing it, and saying that it would be unadvisable to make

any fresh attempt. His letter was crossed by one from Dr. Wolf, containing Sampson's thunderbolt extracted from the Sun, and saying that no earthly consideration should induce him to meddle with Alfred *now*. Richard Hardie flung himself into the train, and went down to his brother at Clare Court.

He was ill at ease. He felt like some great general, who has launched many attacks against the foe, very successful at first, then less successful, then repulsed with difficulty, then repulsed with ease, till at last the foe stands before him impregnable. Then he feels that ere long that iron enemy will attack him in turn, and that he, exhausted by his own onslaughts, must defend himself how he can. Yet there was a pause; he passed a whole quiet peaceful day with his brother, assuring him that the affair would go no further on either side; but in his secret soul he felt this quiet day was but the ominous pause between two great battles; one of the father against the son, the other of the son against the father.

And he was right: the very next day the late defender attacked, and in earnest. But for certain reasons I prefer to let another relate it:

*Hardie* v. *Hardie.*

"Dear Sir,—If you had been in my office when I received your favour of yesterday relating deft.'s ruffian-like assault, you would have seen the most ridiculous sight in nature—videlicet, an attorney in a passion. I threw professional courtesy to the winds, and sent Colls off to Clare Court to serve the writ personally. Next day, he found the deft. walking in his garden with Mr. Richard Hardie. Having learned from the servant which was his man, he stepped up and served copy of the writ in the usual way. Deft. turned pale, and his knees knocked together, and Colls thinks he mistook himself for a felon, and was going to ask for mercy, but Mr. Richard stopped him, and said his attorneys were Messrs. Heathfield, in Chancery Lane; and was this the way Mr. Compton did business? serving a writ personally on a gentleman in weak health. So Colls, who can sneer in his quiet way, told him 'No,' but the invalid had declined to answer my letter, and the invalid had made a violent attack upon our client's person, avoiding his attorney, 'so, as his proceedings are summary, we meet him in kind,' says little Colls. 'Oho,' says Mr. Richard, 'you are a wit, are you? Come and have some luncheon.' This was to get him away from the weaker brother, I take it. He gave Colls an excellent luncheon, and some admirable conversation on policy and finance: and, when he was going, says this agreeable host. 'Well, Mr. ——, you have had your bellyful of chicken and Madeira; and your client shall have his bellyful of law.' And this Colls considers emphatic but coarse.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"JOHN COMPTON."

"P.S.—Colls elicted that no further attempt will be made to capture you. It seems some injudicious friend of yours has been writing to the newspapers. Pray stop that."

On receiving this letter, Alfred bought another double pistol, loaded it, hired a body-guard of two prizefighters, and with these at his heels,

repaired to 66, Pembroke Street. No enemy was near: the press had swept the street alike of keepers and police with one Briarian gesture. He found Julia and Edward in great anxiety about their father. The immediate cause was a letter from Mrs. Dodd, which Edward gave him to read; but not till he had first congratulated him heartily on the ægis of the press being thrown over him. "The 'Tiser has a leader on it," said he.

Mrs. Dodd's letter ran thus:

"My dear dear Children,—I am coming home to you heartbroken, without your poor father. I saw an East Indian ship go to sea, and some instinct whispered, suppose he should be on board that ship! But, foolishly, I did not utter my thoughts: because they call these instincts women's fancies. But now even Mr. Green thinks he is gone to sea; for the town has been ransacked, and no trace of him can we find. I met my cousin, Captain Bazalgette, here, and he is promoted to the Vulture frigate, and sails to-day. I have told him all our misfortunes, and he has promised to overhaul that merchant ship if he comes up with her: but I *can see by the way his eye shuns mine* he has no real hopes. His ship is the swifter, but he may pass her in the night. And then he is bound for New Zealand, not India. I told Reginald my poor husband's expression of face is altered by his affliction, and that he takes himself for a common sailor, and has his medal still round his neck. Our cousin is very kind, and will do all he can. God can protect my darling at sea, as he has ashore: and in his power alone have I any trust. Any further stay here is vain: my heart, too, yearns for my other treasures, and dreads lest whilst I am here, and because I am here, some evil should befal you too. Expect me soon after this letter, and let us try and comfort one another under this the heaviest of all our many troubles.

"With sad heart, I am,

"Both my darlings' loving mother and friend,

"LUCY DODD."

In the discussion of this letter Alfred betrayed a slight defect of character. He pooh-poohed the calamity: said David had now a chance, and a good one, of being cured: whereas confinement was one of the common causes of insanity even in sane persons. And he stoutly maintained that David's going to sea was a happy inspiration. Edward coloured, but deigned no reply. Julia was less patient, and though she was too loving and too womanly to tell Alfred to his face he was deceiving himself and arguing thus indirectly to justify himself in taking her father out of the asylum at all, yet she saw it, and it imparted a certain coldness into her replies. Alfred noticed this, and became less confident and louder, and prodigiously logical.

He was still flowing on with high imperious voice, which I suppose overpowered the sound of Mrs. Dodd's foot, when she entered suddenly, pale and weary, in her travelling-dress.

Alfred stopped, and they all started to their feet.

At sight of Alfred she stood dumbfoundered a single moment; then uttered a faint shriek; and looked at him with unutterable terror.

He stood disconcerted.

Julia ran, and throwing her arms round Mrs. Dodd's neck, entreated her not to be afraid of him: he was not mad; Dr. Sampson said so. Edward confirmed her words; and then Julia poured out the story of his wrongs with great gushes of natural eloquence that might have melted a rock, and, as anti-climax is part of a true woman, ended innocently by begging her mother not to look so unkindly at him; and his ankle so sprained, and him in such pain. For the first time in her life Mrs. Dodd was deaf to her daughter's natural eloquence; it was remarkable how little her countenance changed while Julia appealed; she stood looking askant with horror at Alfred all through that gentle eloquent appeal. But nevertheless her conduct showed she had heard every word: as soon as ever her daughter's voice stopped, she seemed to dilate bodily, and moved towards Alfred pale and lowering. Yes, for once this gentle quiet lady looked terrible. She confronted Alfred. "Is this true, sir," said she, in a low stern voice. "Are you not insane? Have you *never* been bereft of your reason?"

"No, Mrs. Dodd, I have not."

"Then what have you done with my husband, sir?"

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

It was a thunderbolt. Alfred hung his head, and said humbly, "I did but go up-stairs for one moment to wash my hands for dinner; and he was gone."

Mrs. Dodd went on in her low stern voice, almost as if he had not answered her at all: "By what right did you assume the charge of him? Did I authorize you to take him from the place where he was safe, and under my eye?"

Alfred replied sullenly: "He was not very safe, for he was almost burnt to death. The fire liberated him, not I. After the fire I ran away from him: he followed me; and then what could I do? I made the best of it; and gave up my own desires to try and cure him. He longed for the sea: I tried to indulge him: I hoped to bring him back to you sane: but fate was against me. I am the most unfortunate of men."

"Mr. Hardie," said Mrs. Dodd, "what you have done was the act of a madman; and, if I believed you to be anything *but* a madman, the sight of you would be intolerable to me; for you have made me a widow, and my children orphans."

With this she gave a great shudder, and retired in tears.

Alfred rose, pale and defiant. "That is *her* notion of justice," said he bitterly; "pray is it yours, you two?"

"Well, since you ask my opinion," said Edward, "I think it was rather presumptuous of you to undertake the care of my father: and, having undertaken it, you ought not to have left him a moment out of your sight."

"Oh, that is your opinion, is it? And you, dear Julia?"

Julia made no reply, but hid her face in her hands and sighed deeply.

"I see," said Alfred sorrowfully. Even you are against me at heart. You judge by the event, not the motive. There is no justice in this world for me. I'm sick of life. I have no right to keep the mistress of the house out of her own room: there, I'll go: my heart is broken. No it is not, and never shall be, by anything that breathes. Thank Heaven I have got one friend left in this bitter world: and I'll make her the judge whether I have deserved this last injustice. *I'll go to my sister.*"

He jumped up and hobbled slowly across the room, while Julia and Edward sat chilled to the bone by those five little words, so simple, so natural, yet so incredible, and to the hearers so awful. They started, they shuddered, they sat petrified, staring at him, while he hobbled across the room to go to his sister.

As he opened the door to go out he heard stout Edward groan and Julia utter a low wail. He stood confounded a moment. Then he hobbled down a stair or two. But, ere he had gone far, there was a hasty whispering in the drawing-room, and Edward came after him in great agitation, and begged him to return; Julia *must* speak with him. He turned; and his face brightened. Edward saw that, and turned his own face away and stammered out, "Forget what I said to you. I am your friend, and always must be for *her* sake. No, no, I cannot go into that room with you; I'll go and comfort mamma. Hardie, old fellow, we are very unhappy, all of us. We are too unhappy to quarrel."

These kind words soothed Alfred's sore heart. He brightened up and entered the drawing-room. He found Julia standing in the middle of it, the colour of ashes. Alfred was alarmed. "You are unwell, dearest," he cried; "you will faint. What have I done with my ungoverned temper?" He moved towards her with a face full of concern.

"No, Alfred," said she solemnly, "I am not the least ill. It is sorrow, deep sorrow for one I love better than all the world. Sit down beside me, my poor Alfred; and—God help me to speak to him!"

Alfred began to feel dire misgivings.

"Yes," said she, "I love you too well to let any hand but mine wound you." And here she took his sinewy hand with her soft palm. "I want to soften it in the telling: and ah, how can I? Oh, why can I not throw myself body and soul between you and all trouble, all sorrow?"

"My Julia," said Alfred gravely, "something has happened to Jane."

"Yes, Alfred. She met with a terrible accident."

"Ah!"

"She was struck by an unfortunate man; he was not in his right mind."

"Struck? My sister struck. What, was there no man by?"

"No. Edward nearly killed him afterwards."

"God bless him."

"Alfred, be patient. It was too late."

"What, is she hurt seriously? Is she disfigured?"

"No, Alfred," said Julia, solemnly; "she is not disfigured: oh far from that."

"Julia, you alarm me. This comes of shutting her brother up. May

Heaven's eternal curse light on those who did it. My poor little sister! How you weep, Julia. My heart is lead."

"I weep for you, darling, not for her."

"Ah, that is how they talk when those we love are——One word! I shall never see my poor little Jenny again; shall I?"

"Yes, Alfred: if you will but follow her steps and believe in Him, who soothed her last hour, and made her face shine with joy like an angel's while we all wept around; oh dear, oh dear, oh dear, he *said* he had but one true friend in the world. Alas! it is so; you have but me now, who pity you and love you more than heart can utter; my own, my beloved, my bereaved."

What could soften such a shock as this? It fell, and his anguish was frightful, all the more so that he ascribed the calamity to his imprisonment, and mingled curses and threats of vengeance with his bursts of grief. He spurned the consolations of religion: he said heaven was as unjust as earth, as cruel as hell.

She cried out and stopped his mouth with her hand: she almost forced him to kneel beside her, and prayed aloud for him: and when at last his agony found vent in tears, she put her innocent arms round his neck and wept with him.

Every now and then the poor fellow would almost shriek with remorse. "Oh, if I had only been kinder to her! if I had but been kinder to her!"

"You were kind to her," said July, softly but firmly.

"No, no; I was always sneering at her. And why? I knew her religion was sincere: but my little mind fixed on a few phrases she had picked up from others, and I——" He could say no more, but groaned with anguish. And let his remorse be a caution to us all. Bereaved we all must be, who live on and on: but *this*, bereavement's bitterest drop, we may avoid.

"Alfred," said Julia, "do not torment yourself. We girls care little about a few sarcasms; it is the cold heart that wounds us. You loved Jane, and she knew it well, and joyed in it. You were kinder to her than you think, and so her dying thoughts were for you. It was for you she asked, and made your father send for you, and poor I hoped you would come. And, dearest, her last act was to write a few words to you, and trust them to her who she knew loved you better than heart can utter. Since it was her wish, let us try and read them together, the last words of a saint (I have never seen them), and, if they do not prove words of love, then I will let you think you were not a good brother to her you and I, and poor, poor Edward, have lost."

He made a sad sign of assent; and Julia rose and got the enclosure. But, as Jane's last-written words reappeared on the scene in a somewhat remarkable way, I will only say here, that both these poor young things tried in vain to read them, and both in turn burst out sobbing, so that they could not: so they held the paper, and tried to see the words out of their streaming eyes. And these two mourners had the room to themselves till midnight; for even Mrs. Dodd's hostility respected Alfred then, and as for Julia, she was one of those who rise with the occasion: she was half wife, half angel from Heaven to her bereaved lover through all those bitter hours.

## CHAPTER

No life was ever yet a play: I mean, an unbroken sequence of dramatic incidents. Calms will come; unfortunately for the readers, happily for the read. And I remember seeing it objected to novelists, by a young gentleman just putting his foot for the first time into "Criticism," that the writers aforesaid suppress the small intermediate matters which in real life come by the score between each brilliant event: and so present the ordinary and the extraordinary parts of life in false proportions. Now, if this remark had been offered by way of contrast between events themselves and all mortal attempts to reproduce them upon paper or the stage, it would have been philosophical; but it was a strange error to denounce the practice as distinctive of fiction: for it happens to be the one trait the novelist and dramatist have in common with the evangelist. The gospels skip fifteen years of the most interesting life Creation has witnessed; they relate Christ's birth in full, but hurry from his boyhood to the more stirring events of his thirtieth and subsequent years. And all the inspired histories do much the same thing. The truth is, that epics, dramas, novels, histories, chronicles, reports of trials at law, in a word, all narratives true or fictitious, except those which, true or fictitious, nobody reads, abridge the uninteresting facts as Nature never did, and dwell as Nature never did on the interesting ones.

Can nothing, however, be done to restore, in the reader's judgment, that just balance of "the sensational" and the "soporific," which all writers, that have readers, disturb? Nothing, I think, without his own assistance. But surely something with it. And, therefore, I throw myself on the intelligence of my readers; and ask them to realize, that henceforth pages are no strict measure of time, and that to a year big with strange events, on which I have therefore dilated in this story, succeeded a year in which few brilliant things happened to the personages of this tale: in short, a year to be skimmed by chronicler or novelist, and yet (mind you) a year of three hundred and sixty-five days six hours, or thereabouts, and one in which the quiet, unobtrusive troubles of our friends' hearts, especially the female hearts, their doubts, divisions, distresses, did not remit, far from it. Now this year I propose to divide into topics, and go by logical, rather than natural, sequence of events.

### The Lovers.

Alfred came every day to see Julia, and Mrs. Dodd invariably left the room at his knock.

At last Julia proposed to Alfred not to come to the house for the present; but to accompany her on her rounds as district visitor. To see and soothe the bitter calamities of the poor had done her own heart good in its worst distress, and she desired to apply the same medicine to her beloved, who needed it: that was one thing: and then another was, that she found her own anger rising when her mother left the room at that beloved knock: and to be angry with her poor widowed mother

was a sin. "She is as unfortunate as I am happy," thought Julia; "I have got *mine* back."

Alfred assented to this arrangement with rather an ill grace. He misunderstood Julia, and thought she was sacrificing him to what he called her mother's injustice. This indeed was the interpretation any male would have been pretty sure to put on it. His soreness, however, did not go very far; because she was so kind and good to him when they were together. He used to escort her back to the door of 66: and look imploringly; but she never asked him in. He thought her hard for this. He did not see the tears that flowed for that mute look of his the moment the door was closed; tears she innocently restrained for fear the sight of them should make *him* as unhappy as his imploring look made her. Mauvais calcul! She should have cried right out. When we men are unhappy, we like our sweethearts to be unhappier; that consoles *us*.

But when this had gone on nearly a month, and no change, Alfred lost patience: so he lingered one day at the door to make a request. He asked Julia to marry him: and so put an end to this state of things.

"Marry you, child?" cried Julia, blushing like a rose with surprise and pleasure. "Oh, for shame!"

After the first thrill, she appealed to his candour whether that would not be miserably selfish of her to leave her poor mother in her present distressed condition. "Ah, Alfred, *so* pale, *so* spiritless, and inconsolable! My poor, poor mother!"

"You will have to decide between us two one day."

"Heaven forbid!" said Julia, turning pale at the very idea. But he repeated doggedly that it must come to that, sooner or later. Then he reminded her of their solemn engagement, and put it to her whether it was a moral proceeding in her to go back from her plighted troth? What had he done to justify her in drawing back from her word? "I admit," said he, "that I have *suffered* plenty of wrong for your sake: but what have I done wrong?"

Undeterred by the fear of immorality, the monotonous girl had but one reply to his multiform reasons: "This is no time for me to abandon my mother."

"Ah, it is her you love: you don't care for me," snapped Alfred.

"Don't I, dear Alfred?" murmured Julia.

"Forgive me! I'm a ruffian, a wretch."

"You are my Alfred. But oh, have a little patience, dear."

"A little patience? I have the patience of Job. But even his went at last."

[I ought to have said they were in the passage now. The encroaching youth had gained an entrance by agitating her so at the door that she had to ask him in to hide her own blushes from the public.] She now gently reminded him how much happier they were than they had been for months. "Dear me," said she, "I am almost happy: happier than I ought to be; could be quite so, but that I see you discontented."

"Ah, you have so many about you that you love: I have only you."

"And that is true, my poor Alfred."

This softened him a little; and then she interwove her fingers together, and so put both palms softly on his shoulder (you never saw a male do that, and never will), and implored him to be patient, to be generous. "Oh," said she, "if you knew the distress it gives me to refuse to you anything on earth, you would be generous, and not press me when my heart says 'Yes' but my lips *must* say 'No.'"

This melted him altogether, and he said he would not torment her any more.

But he went away discontented with himself for having yielded: my lord did not call it "yielding," but "being defeated." And as he was not only very deep in love, but by nature combative, he took a lodging nearly opposite No. 66, and made hot love to her, as hot as if the attachment was just forming. Her mother could not go out but he was at the door directly: she could not go out but he was at her heels. This pleased her at first and thrilled her with the sense of sweet and hot pursuit: but by-and-by, situated as she was between him and her mother, it worried her a little at times, and made her nervous. She spoke a little sharply to him now and then. And that was new. It came from the nerves not the heart. At last she advised him to go back to Oxford. "I shall be the ruin of your mind if we go on like this," said she sadly.

"What, leave the field to my rivals? No, thank you."

"What rivals, sir?" asked Julia, drawing up.

"Your mother, your brother, your curates that would come buzzing the moment I left; your sick people, who bask on your smiles and your sweet voice till I envy them: Sarah, whom you permit to brush your lovely hair, the piano you play on, the air you deign to breathe and brighten, everybody and everything that is near you; they are all my rivals; and shall I resign you to them, and leave myself desolate? I'm not such a fool."

She smiled, and could not help feeling it was sweet to be pestered. So she said with matronly dignity, and the old Julian consistency, "You are a foolish, impetuous boy. You are the plague of my life: and—the sun of my existence." That passed off charmingly. But presently his evil genius prompted Alfred to endeavour to soften Mrs. Dodd by letter, and induce her to consent to his marriage with her daughter.

He received her answer at breakfast-time. It was wonderfully polite and cold; Mrs. Dodd feigned unmixed surprise at the proposal, and said that insanity being unfortunately in her own family, and the suspicion of insanity resting on himself, such a union was not to be thought of; and therefore, notwithstanding her respect for his many good qualities, she must decline with thanks the honour he offered her. She inserted a poisoned sting by way of postscript. "When you succeed in publicly removing the impression your own relations share with me, and when my husband owes his restoration to you, instead of his destruction, of course you will receive a very different answer to your proposal—should you then think it consistent with your dignity to renew it."

As hostile testators used to leave the disinherited one shilling, not out of a shilling's worth of kindly feeling, but that he might not be able to say his name was omitted through inadvertency, so Mrs. Dodd inserted

this postscript merely to clench the nail and tantalise her enemy. It was a masterpiece of feminine spite.

She would have been wonderstruck could she have seen how Alfred received her missive.

To be sure he sat in a cold stupor of dejection for a good half hour; but at the end of that time he lifted up his head, and said quietly, "So be it. I'll get the trial over, and my sanity established, as soon as possible: and then I'll hire a yacht and hunt her husband till I find him."

Having settled this little plan he looked out for Julia, whose sympathy he felt in need of after such a stern blow.

She came out much later than usual that day, for to tell the truth, her mother had detained her to show her Alfred's letter, and her answer.

"Ah mamma," said poor Julia, "you don't love me as you did once. Poor Alfred!"

Mrs. Dodd sighed at this reproach, but said she did not deserve it. No mother in her senses would consent to such a match.

Julia bowed her head submissively and went to her duties. But when Alfred came to her open-mouthed to complain of her mother's cruelty, she stopped him at once, and asked him how he could go and write that foolish, unreasonable letter. Why had he not consulted her first? "You have subjected yourself to a rebuff," said she angrily, "and one from which I should have saved you. Is it nothing that mamma out of pity to me connives at our meeting and spending hours together? Do you think she does no violence to her own wishes here? and is she to meet with no return?"

"What, are you against me too?" said poor Alfred.

"No it is you who are our enemy with your unreasonable impatience."

"I am not so cold-blooded as you are, certainly."

"Humility and penitence would become you better than to retort on me; I love you both, and pray God on my knees to show me how to do my duty to both."

"That is it; you are not single-hearted like me. You want to please all the world, and reconcile the irreconcilable. It won't do: you will have to choose between your mother and me at last."

"Then of course I should choose my mother."

"Why?"

"Because she claims my duty as well as my love; because she is bowed down with sorrow, and needs her daughter just now more than you do; besides, you are my other self, and we must deny ourselves."

"We have no more right to be unjust to ourselves than to anybody else; injustice is injustice."

"Alfred, you are a high-minded Heathen, and talk Morality. Morality is a snare. What I pray to be is a Christian, as your dear sister was, and to deny myself; and you make it oh so difficult."

"So I suppose it will end in turning out your heathen and then taking your curate. Your mother would consent to that directly."

"Alfred," said Julia with dignity, "these words are harsh, and—forgive me for saying so—they are coarse. Such words would separate

us two, without my mother, if I were to hear many of them; for they take the bloom off affection, and that mutual reverence, without which no gentleman and lady could be blessed in holy wedlock."

Alfred was staggered and mortified too: they walked on in silence now.

"Alfred," said Julia at last, "do not think me behind you in affection, but wiser, for once, and our best friend. I do think we had better see less of one another for a time, my poor Alfred."

"And why for a time? why not for ever?"

"If your heart draws no distinction, why not indeed?"

"So be it then: for I will be no woman's slave. There's my hand, Julia: let us part friends."

"Thank you for that, dear Alfred: may you find some one who can love you more—than—I do."

The words choked her. But he was stronger, because he was in a passion. He reproached her bitterly. "If I had been as weak and inconstant as you are, I might have been out of Drayton House long before I did escape. But I was faithful to my one love. I have some right to sing Aileen Aroon, you have none. You are an angel of beauty and goodness; you will go to Heaven, and I shall go to the devil now for want of you; but then you have no constancy nor true fidelity: so that has parted us, and now nothing is left me but to try and hate you."

He turned furiously on his heel.

"God bless you, go where you will," faltered Julia.

He replied with a fierce ejaculation of despair, and dashed away.

Thus temper and misunderstanding triumphed, after so many strange and bitter trials had failed.

But alas! it is often so.

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

Both the parted lovers were wretched. Julia never complained, but drooped, and read the Psalms, and Edward detected her in tears over them. He questioned her, and obtained a lame account; she being far more bent on screening Alfred than on telling the truth.

Edward called on the other; and found him disconsolate, and reading a Heathen philosopher for comfort, and finding none. Edward questioned him, and he was reserved and even sulky. Sir Imperturbable persisted quietly, and he exploded, and out came his wrongs. Edward replied that he was a pretty fellow: wanted it all his own way. "Suppose my mother, with her present feelings, was to take a leaf out o your book, and use all her power; where would you be then? Come old fellow, I know what love is, and one of us *shall* have the girl he loves, unless any harm should come to my poor father owing to your blunder—oh, that would put it out of the question, I feel—but let us hope better. I pulled you out of the fire, and somehow I seem to lik you better than ever after that; let me pull you out of this mess too."

"Pull away," cried the impetuous youth. "I'll trust you with my

life: ay, with more than my life, with my love; for you are the man for me: reason is always uppermost with you:

> Give me the man that is not passion's slave
> And I will wear him in my heart's core, ay——"

"Oh bother that. If you are in earnest, don't mouth, but put on your hat and come over."

He assented; but in the middle of putting on his coat, made this little observation: "Now I see how wise the ancients were: yes, friendship is better than love; calmer, more constant, free from the heats and chills of that impetuous passion; its pure bosom is ruffled by none of love's jealousies and irritabilities. Solem e mundo tollunt qui tollunt amicitiam."

"Oh bother quoting; come and shake hands with Julia." They went over; Mrs. Dodd was in the City. Edward ushered in Alfred, saying, "Here is the other Impetuosity;" and sagely retired for a few minutes: when he came back they were sitting hand in hand, he gazing on her, she inspecting the carpet. "That is all right," said Edward, drily: "now the next thing is, you must go back to Oxford directly, and read for your first class."

The proposal fell like a blight upon the reconciled lovers. But Edward gave potent reasons. The delays of law were endless: Alfred's defendant had already obtained one postponement of the trial on frivolous grounds. Now the Oxford examination and Doncaster races come on at a fixed date, by a Law of Nature, and admit of no "postponement swindle." "You mark my words, you will get your class before you will get your trial, and it won't hurt you to go into court a first-class man: will it? And then you won't quarrel by letter, you two; I know. Come, will you do what I tell you: or is friendship but a name? eh, Mr. Bombast?" He ended with great though quiet force: "Come, you two, which is better, to part like the scissors, or part like the thread?"

Similes are no arguments; that is why they convince people so: Alfred capitulated to the scissors and thread; and only asked with abnormal humility to be allowed to taste the joys of reconciliation for two days: the third found him at Oxford; he called on the head of his college to explain what had prevented his return to Exeter in the October term twelve months ago, and asked for rooms. Instead of siding with a man of his own college so cruelly injured, the dignitary was alarmed by the bare accusation, and said he must consider: insanity was a terrible thing.

"So is false accusation, and so is false imprisonment," said Hardie bitterly.

"Unquestionably. But I have at present no means of deciding how far those words apply." In short, he could give no answer; must consult the other officers, and would convey the result by letter.

Alfred's pride was deeply mortified, not less by a certain cold repugnant manner than by the words. And there came over his heart a sickening feeling that he was now in the eyes of men an intellectual

He went to another college directly, and applied to the vice-president; the vice-president sent him with a letter to the dean; the dean looked

frightened, and told him hesitatingly the college was full; he might put his name down, and perhaps get in next year. Alfred retired, and learned from the porter that the college was not full. He sighed deeply, and the sickening feeling grew on him; an ineradicable stigma seemed upon him, and Mrs. Dodd was no worse than the rest of the world then; every mother in England would approve her resolution. He wandered about the scenes of his intellectual triumphs: he stood in the great square of the schools, a place ugly to unprejudiced eyes, but withal somewhat grand and inspiring, especially to scholars who have fought their keen and bloodless battles there. He looked at the windows and gilt inscription of the Schola Metaphysices, in which he had met the scholars of his day and defeated them for the Ireland. He wandered into the theatre, and eyed the rostrum, whence he had not mumbled, but recited, his Latin prize poem with more than one thunder of academic applause: thunder compared with which Drury Lane's is a mere cracker. These places were unchanged; but he, sad scholar, wandered among them as if he was a ghost, and all these were stony phantoms of an intellectual past, never, never, to return.

He telegraphed Sampson and Edward to furnish him with certificates that he had never been insane, but the victim of a foul conspiracy; and, when he received them, he went with them to St. Margaret's Hall; for he had bethought him that the new principal was a first-rate man, and had openly vowed he would raise that "refuge for the oft-times-ploughed" to a place of learning.

Hardie called, sent in his card, and was admitted to the principal's study. He was about to explain who he was, when the doctor interrupted him, and told him politely he knew him by reputation. "Tell me rather," said he, shrewdly, "to what I owe this application from an undergraduate so distinguished as Mr. Hardie?"

Then Alfred began to quake, and, instead of replying, put a hand suddenly before his face, and lost courage for one moment.

"Come, Mr. Hardie," said the principal, "don't be disconcerted: a fault regretted is half atoned; and I am not disposed to be hard on the errors of youth; I mean where there is merit to balance them."

"Sir," said Alfred sadly, "it is not a fault I have to acknowledge, but a misfortune."

"Tell me all about it," said Dr. Alder, guardedly.

He told it, omitting nothing essential that could touch the heart or excite the ironical humour of an academician.

"Well, 'truth is more wonderful than fiction,'" said the doctor. And I conclude the readers of this tale are all of the doctor's opinion; so sweet to the mind is cant.

Alfred offered his certificates.

Now Dr. Alder had been asking himself in what phrases he should decline this young genius, who was sane now, but of course had been mad, only had forgotten the circumstance. But the temptation to get an Ireland scholar into his Hall suddenly overpowered him. The probability that he might get a first-class in a lucid interval was too enticing; nothing venture nothing have. He determined to venture a good deal.

"Mr. Hardie," said he, "this house shall always be open to good

morals and good scholarship while I preside over it, and it shall be open to them all the more when they come to me dignified, and made sacred, by 'unmerited calamity.'"

Now this fine speech, like Minerva herself, came from the head: Alfred was overcome by it to tears. At that the doctor's heart was touched, and even began to fancy it had originated that noble speech.

It was no use doing things by halves; so Dr. Alder gave Alfred a delightful set of rooms; and made the Hall pleasant to him. He was rewarded by a growing conviction that he had made an excellent acquisition. This opinion, however, was anything but universal: and Alfred, finding the men of his own college suspected his sanity, and passed jokes behind his back, cut them all dead, and confined himself to his little Hall. There they petted him, and crowed about him, and betted on him for the schools as freely as if he was a colt the Hall was going to enter for the Derby.

He read hard, and judiciously, but without his old confidence: he became anxious and doubtful; he had seen so many first-rate men just miss a first-class. The brilliant creature analysed all his Aristotelian treatises, and wrote the synopses clear with marginal references on great pasteboard cards three feet by two, and so kept the whole subject before his eye, till he obtained a singular mastery. Same system with the historians: nor did he disdain the use of coloured inks. Then the brilliant creature drew lists of all the hard words he encountered in his reading, especially in the common books, and read these lists till mastered. The stake was singularly heavy in his case, so he guarded every crevice.

And at this period he was not so unhappy as he expected. The laborious days went swiftly, and twice a week at least came a letter from Julia. Oh how his grave academic room with oaken panels did brighten, when her letter lay on the table. It was opened, and seemed written with sunbeams. No quarrels on paper! Absence made the heart grow fonder. And Edward came to see him, and over their wine let out a feminine trait in Julia. "When Hurd calls she walks out of the room, just as my poor mother does when you come. That is spite: since you are sent away nobody else is to profit by it. Where is her Christianity, eh? and echo answers—Got a cigar, old fellow?" And, after puffing in silence awhile, he said resignedly, "I am an unnatural monster."

"Oh, are you?" said the other, serenely, for he was also under the benign influence.

"Yes," said Edward, "I am your ally, and a mere spy in the camp of those two ladies. I watch all their moves for your sake."

Alfred forgave him. And thus his whole life was changed, and for nearly twelve months (for Dr. Alder let him reside in the Hall through the vacation) he pursued the quiet tenor of a student's life, interrupted at times by law; but that is another topic.

## WIFE AND NO WIFE.

Mrs. Dodd was visibly shaken by that calamity which made her shrink with horror from the sight of Alfred Hardie. In the winter she was so unwell that she gave up her duties with Messrs. Cross and Co.

Her connexion with them had been creditable to both parties. I believe I forgot to say why they trusted her so; well, I must tell it elsewhere. David off her hands, she was independent, and had lost the motive and the heart for severe work. She told the partners she could no longer do them justice, and left them, to their regret. They then advised her to set up as a milliner, and offered her credit for goods at cash prices up to two thousand pounds: she thanked them like a sorrowful queen, and went her way.

In the spring she recovered some spirit and health: but at midsummer a great and subtle misfortune betel her. Her mind was bent on David night and day, and used to struggle to evade the laws of space that bind its grosser companion, and find her lost husband on the sea. She often dreamt of him, but vaguely. But one fatal night she had a dream as clear as daylight, and sharp as white pebbles in the sun. She was on a large ship with guns; she saw men bring a dead sailor up the side; she saw all their faces, and the dead man's too. It was David. His face was white. A clear voice said he was to be buried in the deep next morning. She saw the deck at her feet, the breeches of the guns, so clear, so defined, that, when she awoke, and found herself in the dark, she thought reality was the illusion. She told the dream to Julia and Edward. They tried to encourage her, in vain. "I saw him," she said, "I saw him; it was a vision, not a dream: my David is dead. Well, then, I shall not be long behind him."

Dr. Sampson ridiculed her dream to her face. But to her children he told another story. "I am anxious about her," he said, "most anxious. There is no mortal ill the distempered brain may not cause. Is it not devilish we can hear nothing of him? She will fret herself into the grave, as sure as fate, if something does not turn up."

Her children could not console her: they tried, but something hung round their own hearts, and chilled every effort. In a word, they shared her fears. How came she to see him on board a ship with guns? In her waking hours she always said he was on a merchant ship. Was it not one of those visions, which come to mortals and give them sometimes a peep into Space, and, far more rarely, a glance into Time?

One day in the autumn, Alfred, being in town on law business, met what seemed the ghost of Mrs. Dodd in the streets. She saw him not; her eye was on that ghastly face she had seen in her dreams. It flashed through his mind that she would not live long to part him and Julia. But he discouraged the ungenerous thought; almost forgave her repugnance to himself, and felt it would be worse than useless to ask Julia to leave her mother, who was leaving her visibly.

But her horror of him was anything but softened; and she used to tell Dr. Sampson she thought the sight of that man would kill her now. Edward himself began to hope Alfred would turn his affections elsewhere. The house in Pembroke Street was truly the house of mourning now; all their calamities were light compared with this.

### The District Visitor.

While Julia was writing letters to keep up Alfred's heart, she was very sad herself. Moreover he had left her for Oxford but a very few days, when she received an anonymous letter: her first. It was written

in a female hand, and couched in friendly and sympathetic terms. The writer thought it only fair to warn her that Mr. Alfred Hardie was passionately fond of a lady in the asylum, and had offered her marriage. If Miss Dodd wished to be deceived, let her burn this letter and think no more of it: if not, let her insert this advertisement in the Times: "The whole Truth.—L. D.," and her correspondent would communicate particulars by word or writing.

What a barbed and poisoned arrow is to the body, was this letter to Julia's mind. She sat cold as a stone with this poison in her hand. Then came an impetuous impulse to send it down to Alfred, and request him to transfer the other half of his heart to his lady of the asylum. Then she paused; and remembered how much unjust suspicion had been levelled at him already. What right had she to insult him? She would try and keep the letter to herself. As to acting upon it, her good sense speedily suggested it came from the rival in question, real or supposed. "She wants to make use of me," said Julia; "it is plain Alfred does not care much for her; or why does she come to me?" She put the letter in her desk, and it rankled in her heart. Hæret lateri lethalis arundo. She trembled at herself: she felt a savage passion had been touched in her. She prayed day and night against jealousy.

But I must now, to justify my heading, skip some months, and relate a remarkable incident that befel her in the said character. On the first of August in this year, a good Christian woman, one of her patients, asked her to call on Mr. Barkington, that lodged above. "He is a decent body, miss, and between you and me, I think his complaint is, he don't get quite enough to eat."

"Barkington!" said Julia, and put her hand to her bosom. She went and tapped at his door.

"Come in," said a shrillish voice.

She entered, and found a weazened old man seated, mending his own coat.

He rose, and she told him she was a district visitor. He said he had heard of her; they called her the beautiful lady in that court. This was news to her, and made her blush. She asked leave to read a chapter to him; he listened as to some gentle memory of childhood. She prescribed him a glass of port wine, and dispensed it on the instant. Thus physicked, her patient became communicative, and chattered on about his native place—but did not name it—and talked about the people there. Now our district visitor was, if the truth must be told, a compounder. She would permit her pupils to talk about earthly affairs, on condition they would listen to heavenly ones before she went. So she let this old man run on, and he told her he had been a banker's clerk all his life, and saved a thousand pounds, and come up to London to make his fortune on the Stock Exchange; and there he was sometimes a bull, and sometimes a bear, and whichever he was, certain foxes called brokers and jobbers got the profit and he the loss. "It's all the same as a gambling-table," said he. "The jobbers and brokers have got the same odds the bank has at Rouge et Noir, and the little capitalist like me is doomed beforehand." Then he told her that there was a crossing-sweeper near the Exchange who came from his native place, and had started as a speculator, and come down to that, only he

called it rising, and used to speak with a shudder of when he dabbled in the funds, and often told him to look sharp, and get a crossing. And lo! one day when he was cleaned out, and desperate, and hovering with the other ghosts of little capitalists about the tomb of their money, he saw his countryman fall flat, and the broom fly out of his hand. Instantly he made a rush, and so did a wooden-legged sailor; but he got first to the broom, and began to sweep while others picked up his countryman, who proved dead as a herring; and he succeeded to his broom, and it made money by the Exchange, though he never could: still, one day he picked up a pocket-book in that neighbourhood, with a lump of money, which he straightway advertised in—no newspapers. And now, Julia thought it time to interpose the eighth commandment, the golden rule, and such branches of learning.

He became a favourite of hers: he had so much to say: she even thought she had seen his face before: but she could not tell where. She gave him good books and tracts; and read to him, and ploughed his heart with her sweet voice, and sowed the good seed in the furrows —seed which, like wheat or other grain, often seems to fall flat and die, but comes out green after many days.

One Saturday she invited him to dine with the servants next day. He came during church time, and went away in the afternoon while she was with her mother. But she asked Sarah, who proved eager to talk about him. "He was a rum customer; kep asking questions all dinner-time. 'Well,' says I, 'you're good company, you are; be you a lawyer; for you examines us; but you don't tell us nothing:' ye see, Miss, Jane she is that simple, she was telling him everything, and about Mr. Alfred's lawsuit with his father and all."

Julia said that was indiscreet; but after all what did it matter?

"Who knows, Miss?" Sarah replied: "least said is soonest mended. If you please, Miss, who is he? Where does he bide? Where does he come from? Does he know Hardies?"

"I should think not. Why?"

"Because I'm much mistaken if he doesn't." Then putting on a stolid look, she asked, "Does he know your papa?"

"Oh no, Sarah. How should he?"

"There now," said Sarah: "Miss, you are all in the dark about this old man: I'll tell you something; I took him out of the way of Jane's temper when she began a dishing up, and I had him into the parlour a minute; and in course there he sees the picture of your poor papa hung up. Miss, if you'll believe me, the moment he claps eyes on that there picture, he halloes out, and out goes his two hands like this here. 'It's him!' says he; 'it's him!' and stares at the picture like a stuck pig. Forgot I was close behind him, I do believe. 'She's *his* daughter,' says he, in a whisper, a curious whisper; seemed to come out of his stomach. 'What's the matter now?' says I, just so. He gave a great start, as if my speaking had wakened him from a dream, and, says he, 'Nothing,' as quiet as a lamb. 'Nothing isn't much,' says I, just so. 'It usedn't to be anything at all when I was your age,' says he, sneerin. But I paid him in good coin; says I 'Old man, where you comes from do the folks use to start and hallo out and cry 'It's him! she's his daughter!' and fling their two arms abroad like a windmill in March, and all for—

nothing?' So at that he changed as white as my smock, and fell all of a tremble. However, at dinner he perks up, and drew that poor simple Jane out a good one. But he didn't look towards me much, which I set opposite to watch my lord."

"Sarah," said Julia, "this is really curious, mysterious; you are a good, watchful, faithful girl; and, to tell the truth, I sometimes fancy I have seen Mr. Barkington's face; however, I will solve this little mystery to-morrow; for I will ask him: thank you, Sarah."

On Monday she called on Mr. Barkington to solve the mystery. But, instead of solving, her visit thickened it; for Mr. Barkington was gone bag and baggage. When Edward was told of this business, he thought it remarkable, and regretted he had not seen the old man.

So do I; for it is my belief Edward would have recognised him.

## David Dodd.

The history of a man is the history of his mind. And that is why you have heard so little of late about the simplest, noblest and most unfortunate of all my personages. Insanity is as various as eccentricity; I have spared the kind-hearted reader some of David's vagaries; however, when we parted with him, he had settled into that strange phase of lunacy, in which the distant past seems nearly obliterated, and memory exists, but revolves in a narrow round of things present: this was accompanied with a positive illusion, to wit, a fixed idea that he was an able seaman: and, as usual, what mental power he retained came out strongest in support of this idea. All this was marked by a bodily agility somewhat more than natural in a man of his age. Owing to the wind astern, he was enabled to run into Portsmouth before the steam-tug came up with him: and he did run into port, not because he feared pursuit, but because he was desperately hungry; and he had no suicidal tendencies whatever.

He made for a public-house, and called for some bread and cheese and beer; they were supplied, and then lo! he had no money to pay for them. "I'll owe you till I come back from sea, my bo," said he, coolly. On this the landlord collared him, and David shook him off into the road, much as a terrier throws a rat from him; then there was a row, and a naval officer, who was cruising about for hands, came up and heard it. There was nothing at all unseamanlike in David's conduct, and the gentleman took a favourable view of it, and paid the small demand; but not with unleavened motives; he was the second lieutenant of H. M. frigate Vulture; she had a bad name, thanks to her last captain, and was short of hands: he took David aside and asked him would he like to ship on board the Vulture.

David said yes, and suggested the foretop. "Oh yes," growled the lieutenant, "you all want to be there." He then gauged this Jacky Tar's intellects; asked him inter alia how to send a frigate's foretop gallant-yard down upon deck: and to show how seamanship sticks in the brain when once it gets there, David actually told him. "You are rather old," said the lieutenant, "but you are a seaman:" and so took him on board the Vulture at Spithead, before Green began to search the town in earnest. Nobody acts his part better than some demented

persons do: and David made a very tolerable sailor, notwithstanding his forty-five years: and the sea did him good within certain limits. Between him and the past lay some intellectual or cerebral barrier as impenetrable as the great wall of China: but on the hither side of that wall his faculties improved. Of course the crew soon found out the gap in his poor brain, and called him Soft Billy, and played on him at first. But by degrees he won their affection; he was so wonderfully sweet-tempered: and besides, his mind being in an abnormal state, he loathed grog, and gave his allowance to his messmates. One day he showed an unexpected trait; they were lying becalmed in southern latitudes, and, time hanging heavy, each wiled it how he might: one fiddled, another wrote to his Polly, another fished for sharks, another whistled for a wind, scores fell into the form of meditation without the reality, and one got a piece of yarn and amused himself killing flies on the bulwark. Now this shocked poor Billy: he put out his long arm and intercepted a stroke. "What is the row?" said the operator.

"You mustn't," said Billy, solemnly, looking into his face with great dreamy eyes.

"You be ——," said the other, and lent him a tap on the cheek with the yarn. Billy did not seem to mind this; his skin had little sensibility, owing to his disorder.

Jack recommenced on his flies, and the bystanders laughed. They always laughed now at everything Billy said, as Society used to laugh when the late Theodore Hook asked for the mustard at dinner; and would have laughed if he had said, "You see me sad, I have just lost my poor father."

David stood looking on at the slaughter with a helpless puzzled air.

At last he seemed to have an idea, he caught Jack up by the throat and knee, lifted him with gigantic strength above his head, and was just going to hurl him shrieking into the sea, when a dozen strong hands interfered, and saved the man. Then they were going to bind Billy hand and foot; but he was discovered to be perfectly calm; so they remonstrated instead, and presently Billy's commander-in-chief, a ship-boy called Georgie White, shoved in and asked him in a shrill haughty voice how he dared do that. "My dear," said Billy, with great humility and placidity, "he was killing God's creatures, no allowance:* so, ye see, to save their lives, I was *obliged*."

At this piece of reasoning, and the simplicity and gentle conviction with which it was delivered, there was a roar. It subsided, and a doubt arose whether Billy was altogether in the wrong.

"Well," said one, "I daresay life is sweet to them little creatures, if they could speak their minds."

"I've known a ship founder in a fair breeze all along of killing 'em," said one old salt.

Finally, several sided with Billy, and intimated that "it served the lubber right for not listening to *reason*." And, indeed, methinks it was lovely and touching that so divine a ray of goodness and superior reason should have shot from his heart or from Heaven across that poor benighted brain.

* Nautical phrase, meaning without stint or limit, or niggardly admeasurement; as there is of grog.

But it must be owned his mode of showing his humanity was somewhat excessive and abnormal, and smacked of lunacy. After this, however, the affection of his messmates was not so contemptuous.

Now the captain of the Vulture was Billy's cousin by marriage, Reginald Bazalgette. Twenty years ago, when the captain was a boy, they were great friends: of late Bazalgette had seen less of him; still it seems strange he did not recognise him in his own ship. But one or two causes co-operated to prevent that. In the first place the mind when turned in one direction is not so sharp in another; and Captain Bazalgette had been told to look for David in a merchant ship bound for the East Indies. In the next place insanity alters the expression of the face wonderfully, and the captain of a frigate runs his eye over four hundred sailors at muster, or a hundred at work, not to examine their features, but their dress and bearing at the one, and their handiness at the other. The worst piece of luck was that Mrs. Dodd did not know David called himself William Thompson. So there stood "William Thompson" large as life on the ship's books, and nobody the wiser. Captain Bazalgette had a warm regard and affection for Mrs. Dodd, and did all he could. Indeed, he took great liberties: he stopped and overhauled several merchant ships for the truant; and, by-the-by, on one occasion William Thompson was one of the boat's crew that rowed a midshipman from the Vulture alongside a merchant ship to search for David Dodd: he heard the name and circumstance mentioned in the boat, but the very name was new to him. He remembered it, but only from that hour; and told his loving tyrant, Georgie White, they had been overhauling a merchant ship and looking for one David Dodd.

It was about Midsummer the Vulture anchored off one of the South Sea islands, and sent a boat ashore for fruit. Billy and his dearly beloved little tyrant, Georgie White, were among the crew. Off goes Georgie to bathe, and Billy sits down on the beach with a loving eye upon him. The water was calm: but the boy with the heedlessness of youth stayed in it nearly an hour: he was seized with cramp and screamed to his comrades. They ran, but they were half a mile from the boat. Billy dashed into the water and came up with Georgie just as he was sinking for the last time; the boy gripped him; but by his great strength he disentangled himself and got Georgie on his shoulders, and swam for the shore. Meantime the sailors got into the boat, and rowed hastily towards them.

Now Billy was undermost and his head under water at times, and Georgie, some thought, had helped strangle him by gripping his neck with both arms. Any way, by the boy's account, just as they were getting into shallow water, Billy gave a great shriek and turned over on his back; and Georgie paddled with his hands, but Billy soon after this sunk like a dead body while the boat was yet fifty yards off. And Georgie screamed and pointed to the place, and the boat came up and took Georgie in, and the water was so clear that the sailors saw Billy lie motionless at the bottom, and hooked him with a boat-hook and drew him up; but his face came up alongside a deadly white, with staring eyes, and they shuddered and feared it was too late.

They took him into a house and stripped him, and rubbed him, and

wrapped him in blankets, and put him by the hot fire. But all would not do.

Then, having dried his clothes, they dressed the body again and laid him in the boat, and cast the Union Jack over him, and rowed slowly and unwillingly back to the ship, Georgie sobbing and screaming over the body, and not a dry eye in the boat.

The body was carried up the side, and uncovered, just as Mrs. Dodd saw in her dream. The surgeon was sent for and examined the body: and then the grim routine of a man-of-war dealt swiftly with the poor skipper. He was carried below to be prepared for a sailor's grave. Then the surgeon walked aft and reported formally to the officer of the watch the death by drowning of William Thompson. The officer of the watch went instantly to the captain in his cabin and reported the death. The captain gave the stereotyped order to bury him at noon next day; and the body was stripped that night and sewed up in his hammock with a portion of his clothes and bedding to conceal the outline of the corpse, and two cannon balls at his feet; and so the poor skipper was laid out for a watery grave, and covered by the Union Jack.

I don't know whether any of my amorous young readers are much affected by the catastrophe I have just related. If not, I will just remind them that even Edward Dodd was prepared to oppose the marriage of Julia and Alfred, if any serious ill should befall his father at sea, owing to Alfred's imprudent interference in rescuing him from Drayton House.

## CHAPTER L.

### LAW.

MINUTE study of my fellow-creatures has revealed to me that there are many intelligent persons who think that a suit at law commences in court. This is not so. Many suits are fought and decided by the special pleaders, and so never come into court; and, as a stiff encounter of this kind actually took place in Hardie v. Hardie, a word of prefatory explanation may be proper. Suitors come into court only to try an issue: an issue is a mutual lie direct: and towards this both parties are driven upon paper by the laws of pleading, which may be thus summed: 1. Every statement of the adversary must either be contradicted flat, or confessed and avoided: "avoided" means neutralised by fresh matter. 2. Nothing must be advanced by plaintiff which does not disclose a ground of action at law. 3. Nothing advanced by defendant, which, if true, would not be a defence to the action. These rules exclude in a vast degree the pitiable defects and vices that mark all the unprofessional arguments one ever hears; for on a breach of any one of the said rules the other party can demur: the demurrer is argued before the judges in Banco, and, if successfully, the faulty plaint or faulty plea is dismissed, and often of course the cause won or lost thereby, and the country saved the trouble, and the suitors the expense of trying an issue.

So the writ being served by Plt.'s attorney, and an appearance put in

by Deft.'s, the paper battle began by Alfred Hardie, through his attorney, serving on Deft.'s attorney "THE DECLARATION." This was drawn by his junior counsel, Garrow, and ran thus, after specifying the court and the date:

Middlesex, to wit. Alfred Hardie by John Compton his attorney sues Thomas Hardie For that the Deft. assaulted Plt. gave him into custody to a certain person and caused him to be imprisoned for a long space of time in a certain place to wit a Lunatic Asylum whereby the Plt. was much inconvenienced and suffered much anguish and pain in mind and body and was unable to attend to his affairs and was injured in his credit and circumstances.

And the Plt. claims 5000*l*.

Mr. Compton conveyed a copy of this to Alfred, and said it was a sweet "declaration." "What," said Alfred, "is that all I have suffered at these miscreants' hands? Why, it is written with an icicle."

Mr. Compton explained that this was the outline; "Counsel will lay the colours on in court as thick as you like."

The defendant replied to the above declaration by three pleas.

By statute 8 & 9 Vic., c. 100, s. 105. 1. The Deft. by Joseph Heathfield his attorney says he *is* not guilty.

2. And for a further Plea the Deft. says that before and at the time of the alleged imprisonment Plt. was a person of unsound mind and incompetent to take care of himself and a proper person to be taken care of and detained and it was unfit unsafe improper and dangerous that he should be at large thereupon the Deft. being the uncle of the Plt. and a proper person to cause the Plt. to be taken charge of under due care and treatment in that behalf did cause the Plt. to be so taken charge of and detained under due care and treatment, &c. &c.

The third plea was the stinger, but too long to cite *verbatim*; it went to this tune, that the plaintiff, at and before the time &c. had conducted himself like a person of unsound mind &c. and two certificates that he was insane had been given by two persons duly authorised under the statute to sign such certificates, and the defendant had believed and did bonâ fide believe these certificates to be true, &c. &c.

The first of these pleas was a mere formal plea, under the statute.

The second raised the very issue at common law the plaintiff wished to try.

The third made John Compton knit his brows with perplexity. "This is a very nasty plea," said he to Alfred: "a regular trap. If we join issue on it we must be defeated; for how can we deny the certificates were in form; and yet the plaguy thing is not loose enough to be demurred to? Colls, who drew these pleas for them?"

"Mr. Colvin, sir."

"Make a note to employ him in our next stiff pleading."

Alfred was staggered. He had thought to ride rough-shod over defendant: a common expectation of plaintiffs: but seldom realised. Lawyers fight hard. The pleas were taken to Garrow; he said there

was but one course, to demur to No. 3. So the plaintiff "joined issue on all the defendant's pleas, and as to the last plea the plaintiff said the same was bad in substance." Defendant rejoined that the same was good in substance, and thus Hardie v. Hardie divided itself into two cases, a question of law for the judges, and an issue for the mixed tribunal loosely called a jury. And I need hardly say that should the defendant win either of them he would gain the cause.

Postponing the history of the legal *question*, I shall show how Messrs. Heathfield fought off the *issue*, and cooled the ardent Alfred and sickened him of law.

In theory every Englishman has a right to be tried by his peers: but in fact there are five gentlemen in every court, each of whom has by precedent the power to refuse him a jury, by simply postponing the trial term after term, until the death of one of the parties, when the action, if a personal one, dies too: and, by a singular anomaly of judicial practice, if a slippery Deft. can't persuade A. or B., judges of the common law court, to connive at what I venture to call

THE POSTPONEMENT SWINDLE,

he can actually go to C. D. and E., one after another, with his rejected application, and the previous refusal of the other judges to delay and baffle justice goes for little or nothing; so that the postponing swindler has five to one in his favour.

Messrs. Heathfield began this game unluckily. They applied to a judge in chambers for a month to plead. Mr. Compton opposed in person, and showed that this was absurd. The judge allowed them only four days to plead. Issue being joined, Mr. Compton pushed on for trial, and the cause was set down for the November term. Towards the end of the term Messrs. Heathfield applied to one of the puisné judges for a postponement, on the ground that a principal witness could not attend. Application was supported by the attorney's affidavit to the effect that Mr. Speers was in Boulogne and had written to him to say that he had met with a railway accident, and feared he could not possibly come to England in less than a month. A respectable French doctor confirmed this by certificate. Compton opposed, but the judge would hardly hear him, and postponed the trial as a matter of course: this carried it over the sittings into next term. Alfred groaned, but bore it patiently; not so Dr. Sampson: he raged against secret tribunals: "See how men deteriorate the moment they get out of the full light of publeecity. What English judge, sitting in the light of Shorthand, would admit 'Jack swears that Gill says' for legal evidence. Speers has sworn to no facks. Heathfield has sworn to no facks but th' existence of Speers's hearsay. They are a couple o' lyres. I'll bet ye ten pounds t' a shilling Speers is as well as I'm."

Mr. Compton quietly reminded him there was a direct statement—the French doctor's certificate.

"A medical certificut!" shrieked Sampson, amazed. "Mai—dearr—sirr, a medical certificut is just an article o' commerce—like an attorney's conscience. Gimme a guinea and I'll get you sworn sick, diseased, disabled, or dead this minute, whichever you like best."

"Come, doctor, don't fly off: you said you'd bet ten pounds to a shilling Speers is not an invalid at all. I say done."

"Done."

"How will you find out?"

"How? Why set the thief-takers on um, to be sure."

He wrote off to the prefect of police at Boulogne, and in four days received an answer headed "Information in the interest of families." The prefect informed him there had been no railway accident: but that the Sieur Speers, English subject, had really hurt his leg getting out of a railway carriage six weeks ago, and had kept his room some days; but he had been cured some weeks, and going about his business, and made an excursion to Paris.

On this Compton offered Sampson the shilling. But he declined to take it. "The lie was self-evident," said he; "and here's a judge wouldn't see't, and an attorney couldn't. Been all their lives sifting evidence too. Oh the darkness of the profissional mind!"

The next term came. Mr. Compton delivered the briefs and fees, subpœnaed the witnesses, &c., and Alfred came up with a good heart to get his stigma removed by twelve honest men in the light of day: but first one case was taken out of its order and put before him, then another, till term wore near an end. Then Messrs. Heathfield applied to another judge of the court for a postponement. Mr. Richard Hardie, plaintiff's father, a most essential witness, was ill at Clare Court. Medical certificate and letter herewith.

Compton opposed. Now this judge was a keen and honourable lawyer, with a lofty hatred of all professional tricks. He heard the two attorneys, and delivered himself to this effect, only of course in better legal phrase: "I shall make no order. The defendant has been here before on a doubtful affidavit. You know, Mr. Heathfield, juries in these cases go by the plaintiff's evidence, and his conduct under cross-examination. And I think it would not be just nor humane to keep this plaintiff in suspense, and civiliter mortuum, any longer. You can take out a commission to examine Richard Hardie."

To this Mr. Compton nailed him, but the commission took time; and while it was pending, Mr. Heathfield went to another judge with another disabled witness; Peggy Black. That naive personage was nursing her deceased sister's children—in an affidavit: and they had scarlatina—surgeon's certificate to that effect. Compton opposed, and pointed out the blot. "You don't want the children in the witness-box," said he: "and we are not to be robbed of our trial because one of your witnesses prefer nursing other people's children to facing the witness-box."

The judge nodded assent. "I make no order," said he.

Mr. Heathfield went out from his presence and sent a message by telegraph to Peggy Black. "You must have Scar. yourself, and telegraph the same at once: certificate by post."

The accommodating maiden telegraphed back that she had unfortunately taken scarlatina of the children: medical certificate to follow by post. Four judges out of the five were now awake to the move. But Mr. Heathfield tinkered the hole in his late affidavit with Peggy's telegram, and slipped down to Westminster to the chief judge of the court, who had had no opportunity of watching the growth and dissemination

of disease among Deft.'s witnesses. Compton fought this time by counsel and with a powerful affidavit. But luck was against him. The judge had risen to go home: he listened standing; Compton's counsel was feeble; did not feel the wrong: how could he? lawyers fatten by delays of justice, as physicians do by tardy cure. The postponement was granted.

Alfred cursed them all, and his own folly in believing that an alleged lunatic would be allowed fair play at Westminster, or anywhere else. Compton took snuff, and Sampson appealed to the press again. He wrote a long letter exposing with fearless irony the postponement swindle as it had been worked in Hardie v. Hardie: and wound up with this fiery peroration.

"This Englishman sues not merely for damages, but to recover lost rights dearer far than money, of which he says he has been unjustly robbed; his right to walk in daylight on the soil of his native land without being seized, and tied up for life like a nigger or a dog; his footing in society; a chance to earn his bread; and a place among mankind: ay, among mankind; for a lunatic is an animal in the law's eye and society's, and an alleged lunatic is a lunatic till a jury clears him.

"I appeal to you, gentlemen, is not such a suitor sacred in all wise and good men's minds? Is he not defendant as well as plaintiff? Why his stake is enormous compared with the nominal defendant's; and, if I know right from wrong, to postpone his trial a fourth time would be to insult Divine justice, and trifle with human misery, and shock the common sense of nations."

The doctor's pen neither clipped the words nor minced the matter you see. Reading this the water came into Alfred's eyes: "Ah, staunch friend," he said, "how few are like you! To the intellectual dwarfs who conspire with my oppressors, Hardie v. Hardie is but a family squabble. Parvis omnia parva." Mr. Compton read it too; and said from the bottom of his heart, "Heaven defend us from our friends! This is enough to make the courts decline to try the case at all."

And, indeed, it did not cure the evil: for next term another malade affidavitaire was set up. Speers to wit. This gentleman deposed to having come over on purpose to attend the trial; but, having inadvertently stepped aside as far as *Wales*, he lay there stricken with a mysterious malady, and had just strength to forward medical certificate. On this the judge, in spite of remonstrance, adjourned Hardie v. Hardie to the summer term. Summer came, the evil day drew nigh: Mr. Heathfield got the venue changed from Westminster to London, which was the fifth postponement. At last the cause came on: the parties and witnesses were all in court, with two whole days before them to try it in.

Dr. Sampson rushed in furious. "There is some deviltry afloat," said he. "I was in the House of Commons last night, and there I saw the defendant's counsel earwigging the judge."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Compton, "such suspicions are ridiculous. Do you think they can talk of nothing but Hardie v. Hardie?"

"Mai—dearr sirr—my son met one of Heathfield's clerks at dinner, and he let out that the trile was not to come off. Put this and that together now."

"It will come off," said Mr. Compton, "and in five minutes at farthest."

In less than that time the learned judge came in, and before taking his seat made this extraordinary speech.

"I hear this cause will take three days to try; and we have only two days before us. It would be inconvenient to leave it unfinished; and I must proceed on circuit the day after to-morrow. It must be a remanet: no man can do more than time allows."

Plaintiff's counsel made a feeble remonstrance; then yielded. And the crier with sonorous voice called on the case of Bread v. Cheese, in which there were pounds at stake, but no principle. Oh, with what zest they all went into it; being small men escaping from a great thing to a small one. Never hopped frogs into a ditch with more alacrity. Alfred left the court and hid himself, and the scalding tears forced their way down his cheeks at this heartless proceeding: to let all the witnesses come into court at a vast expense to the parties: and raise the cup of justice to the lips of the oppressed, and then pretend he knew a trial would last more than two days, and so shirk it. "I'd have made that a reason for sitting till midnight," said poor Alfred, "not for prolonging a poor injured man's agony four mortal months." He then prayed God earnestly for this great postponer's death as the only event that could give him back an Englishman's right of being tried by his peers, and so went down to Oxford broken-hearted.

As for Sampson he was most indignant, and said a public man had no business with a private ear: and wanted to appeal to the press again: but the doughty doctor had a gentle but powerful ruler at home, as fiery horses are best ruled by a gentle hand. Mrs. Sampson requested him to write no more, but look round for an M.P. to draw these repeated defeats of justice to the notice of the House. Now there was a Mr. Bite, who had taken a prominent and honourable part in lunacy questions; headed committees and so on: this seemed the man. Dr. Sampson sent him a letter saying there was a flagrant case of a sane man falsely imprisoned, who had now been near a year applying for a jury, and juggled out of this constitutional right by arbitrary and unreasonable postponements: would Mr. Bite give him (Dr. Sampson) ten minutes and no more, when he would explain the case and leave documentary evidence behind him for Mr. Bite to test his statement. The philanthropical M.P. replied promptly in these exact words:

"Mr. Bite presents his compliments to Dr. Sampson to state that it is impossible for him to go into his case, nor to give him the time he requests to do so."

Sampson was a little indignant at the man's insolence; but far more at having been duped by his public assumption of philanthropy. "The little pragmatical impostor!" he roared. "With what a sense of relief th' animal flings off the mask of humanity when there is no easy eclat to be gained by putting 't on." He sent the philanthropical Bite's revelation of his private self to Alfred, who returned it with this single remark: "Homunculi quanti sunt!"

Dishonest suitors all try to postpone; but they do not gain unmixed good thereby. These delays give time for more evidence to come in; and this slow coming and chance evidence is singularly adverse to the

unjust suitor. Of this came a notable example in October next, and made Richard Hardie determine to precipitate the trial, and even regret he had not fought it out long ago.

He had just returned from consulting Messrs. Heathfield, and sat down to a nice little dinner in his apartments (Sackville Street), when a visitor was announced; and in came the slouching little figure of Mr. Barkington, alias Noah Skinner.

### Diamond cut Diamond.

Mr. Hardie suppressed a start, and said nothing. Skinner bowed low with a mixture of his old cringing way, and a certain sly triumphant leer, so that his body seemed to say one thing, and his face the opposite. Mr. Hardie eyed him and saw that his coat was rusty, and his hat napless: then Mr. Hardie smelt a beggar, and prepared to parry all attempts upon his purse.

"I hope I see my old master well," said Skinner, coaxingly.

"Pretty well in body, Skinner; thank you."

"I had a deal of trouble to find you, sir. But I heard of the great lawsuit between Mr. Alfred and you, and I knew Mr. Heathfield was your solicitor; so I watched at his place day after day: and at last you came. Oh, I was so pleased when I saw your noble figure; but I wouldn't speak to you in the street for fear of disgracing you; I'm such a poor little guy to be addressing a gentleman like you."

Now this sounded well on the surface, but below there was a subtle something Mr. Hardie did not like at all: but he took the cue, and said, "My poor Skinner, do you think I would turn up my nose at a faithful old servant like you? have a glass of wine with me, and tell me how you have been getting on." He went behind a screen and opened a door, and soon returned with a decanter, leaving the door open: now in the next room sat, unbeknown to Skinner, a young woman with white eyelashes, sewing buttons on Mr. Hardie's shirts. That astute gentleman gave her instructions, and important ones too, with a silent gesture; then reappeared and filled the bumper high to his faithful servant. They drank one another's healths with great cordiality, real or apparent. Mr. Hardie then asked Skinner carelessly, if he could do anything for him. Skinner said, "Well, sir, I am very poor."

"So am I, between you and me," said Mr. Hardie, confidentially; "I don't mind telling *you*; those confounded Commissioners of Lunacy wrote to Alfred's trustees, and I have been forced to replace a loan of five thousand pounds. That Board always sides with the insane. That crippled me, and drove me to the Exchange: and now what I had left is all invested in time-bargains. A month settles my fate: a little fortune, or absolute beggary."

"You'll be lucky, sir, you'll be lucky," said Skinner, cheerfully; "you have such a long head; not like poor little me; the Exchange soon burnt my wings. Not a shilling left of the thousand pounds, sir, you were so good as to give me for my faithful services. But you will give me another chance, sir, I know; I'll take better care this time." Mr. Hardie shook his head sorrowfully, and said it was impossible. Skinner eyed him askant, and remarked quietly, and half aside, "Of course I

*could* go to the other party: but I shouldn't like to do that. They would come down handsome."

"What other party?"

"La sir, what other party? why Mrs. Dodd's, or Mr. Alfred's; here's the trial coming on, you know, and of course if they could get me to go on the box and tell all I know, or half what I know, why the judge and jury would say locking Mr. Alfred up for mad was a conspiracy."

Mr. Hardie quaked internally: but he hid it grandly, and once more was a Spartan gnawed beneath his robe by this little fox: "What," said he, sternly, "after all I and mine have done for you and yours, would you be so base as to go and sell yourself to my enemies?"

"Never, sir," shouted Skinner, zealously: then in a whisper, "not if you'll make a bid for me."

"How much do you demand?"

"Only another thousand, sir."

"A thousand pounds!"

"Why, what is that to you, sir: you are rich enough to buy the eighth commandment out of the tables of ten per cent.: and then the lawsuit, Hardies versus Hardies!"

"You have spoken plainly at last," said Mr. Hardie, grimly. "This is extorting money by threats. Do you know that nothing is more criminal, nor more easy to punish? I can take you before a magistrate, and imprison you on the instant for this attempt. I will, too."

"Try it," said Skinner, coolly. "Where's your witness?"

"Behind that screen."

Peggy came forward directly with a pen in her hand. Skinner was manifestly startled and disconcerted. "I have taken all your words down, Mr. Skinner," said Peggy, softly: then to her master, "Shall I go for a policeman, sir?"

Mr. Hardie reflected. "Yes," said he, sternly "there's no other course with such a lump of treachery and ingratitude as this."

Peggy whipped on her bonnet.

"What a hurry you are in," whined Skinner. "a policeman ought to be the last argument for old friends to run to." Then, fawning spitefully, "Don't talk of indicting me, sir," said he; "it makes me shiver: why how will you look when I up and tell them all how Captain Dodd was took with apoplexy in our office, and how you nailed fourteen thousand pounds off his senseless body, and forgot to put them down in your balance-sheet, so they are not whitewashed off like the rest."

"Any witnesses to all this, Skinner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who?"

"Well; your own conscience *for one*," said Skinner.

"He is mad, Peggy," said Mr. Hardie, shrugging his shoulders. He then looked Skinner full in the face, and said, "Nobody was ever seized with apoplexy in my office. Nobody ever gave me 14,000*l*. And if this is the probable tale with which you come here to break the law and extort money, leave my house this instant: and if ever you dare to utter this absurd and malicious slander, you shall lie within four stone walls, and learn what it is for a shabby vagabond to come without a witness to his back, and libel a man of property and honour."

Skinner let him run on in this loud triumphant strain till he had quite done; then put out a brown skinny finger, and poked him lightly in the ribs, and said quite quietly, and oh, so drily, with a knowing wink, "I've—got—The Receipt."

## CHAPTER LI.

Mr. Hardie collapsed as if he had been a man inflated, and that touch had punctured him. "Ah!" said he. "Ah!" said Skinner, in a mighty different tone: insolent triumph to wit.

After a pause, Mr. Hardie made an effort and said contemptuously "The receipt (if any) was flung into the dusthole and carried away. Do you think I have forgotten that?"

"Don't you believe it, sir," was the reply. "While you turned your back and sacked the money, I said to myself, 'Oho, is that the game?' and nailed the receipt. What a couple of scoundrels we were! I wouldn't have *her* know it for all your money. Come, sir, I see it's all right; you will shell out sooner than be posted."

Here Peggy interposed; "Mr. Skinner be more considerate; my master is really poor just now."

"That is no reason why I should be insulted and indicted and trampled under foot," snarled Skinner all in one breath.

"Show me the receipt and take my last shilling, you ungrateful vindictive viper," groaned Mr. Hardie.

"Stuff and nonsense," said Skinner. "I'm not a viper; I'm a man of business. Find me five hundred pounds; and I'll show you the receipt and keep dark. But I can't afford to *give* it you for that, of course."

Skinner triumphed, and made the great man apologize, writhing all the time, and wishing he was a day labourer with Peggy to wife, and fourteen honest shillings a week for his income. Having eaten humble pie, he agreed to meet Skinner next Wednesday at midnight, alone, under a certain lamp on the North Kensington Road: the interval (four days) he required to raise money upon his scrip. Skinner bowed himself out, fawning triumphantly. Mr. Hardie stood in the middle of the room motionless, scowling darkly. Peggy looked at him, and saw some dark and sinister resolve forming in his mind: she divined it, as such women can divine. She laid her hand on his arm, and said, softly, "Richard, it's not worth *that*." He started to find his soul read through his body so clearly. He trembled.

But it was only for a moment. "His blood be on his own head," he snarled. "This is not my seeking. He shall learn what it is to drive Richard Hardie to despair."

"No, no," implored Peggy; "there are other countries beside this: why not gather all you have, and cross the water? I'll follow you to the world's end, Richard."

"Mind your own business," said he, fiercely.

She made no reply, but went softly and sat down again, and sewed the buttons on his shirts. Mr. Hardie wrote to Messrs. Heathfield to get Hardie v. Hardie tried as soon as possible.

Meantime came a mental phenomenon: gliding down Sackville Street, victorious Skinner suddenly stopped, and clenched his hands; and his face writhed as if he had received a death-wound. In that instant Remorse had struck him like lightning; and, perhaps, whence comes the lightning. The sweet face and voice that had smiled on him, and cared for his body, and cared for his soul, came to his mind and knocked at his heart and conscience. He went home miserable with an inward conflict; and it lasted him all the four days: sometimes Remorse got the better, sometimes Avarice. He came to the interview still undecided what he should do. But, meantime, he had gone to a lawyer and made his will, leaving his little all to Julia Dodd: a bad sign this; looked like compounding with his awakened conscience.

It was a dark and gusty night. Very few people were about. Skinner waited a little while, and shivered, for his avarice had postponed the purchase of a great-coat until Christmas Day. At last, when the coast seemed clear, Mr. Hardie emerged from a side street. Skinner put his hand to his bosom.

They met. Mr. Hardie said quietly, "I must ask you, just for form, to show me you have the Receipt."

"Of course, sir; but not so near, please: no snatching, if I know it."

"You are wonderfully suspicious," said Mr. Hardie, trying to smile.

Skinner looked, and saw by the lamplight he was deadly pale. "Keep your distance a moment, sir," said he, and, on Mr. Hardie's complying, took the Receipt out, and held it under the lamp.

Instantly Mr. Hardie drew a life-preserver, and sprang on him with a savage curse. And uttered a shriek of dismay; for he was met by the long shiny barrel of a horse-pistol, that Skinner drew from his bosom, and levelled full in the haggard face that came at him. Mr. Hardie recoiled, crying, "No! no! for Heaven's sake!"

"What!" cried Skinner, stepping forward and hissing, "do you think I'm such a fool as to meet a thief unarmed? Come, cash up, or I'll blow you to atoms."

"No, no, no!" said Mr. Hardie, piteously, retreating as Skinner marched on him with long extended pistol. "Skinner," he stammered, "th-this is n-not b-b-business."

"Cash up, then; that's business. Fling the five hundred pounds down, and walk away. Mind it is loaded with two bullets; I'll make a double entry on your great treacherous carcase."

"It's no use trying to deceive such a man as you," said Mr. Hardie, playing on his vanity. "I could not get the money before Saturday, and so I listened to the dictates of despair. Forgive me."

"Then come again Saturday night. Come alone, and I shall bring a man to see I'm not murdered. And look here, sir, if you don't come to the hour and do the right thing without any more of these unbusiness-like tricks, by Heaven I'll smash you before noon on Monday."

"I'll come."

"I'll blow you to Mr. Alfred and Miss Dodd."

"I'll come, I tell you."

"I'll post you for a thief on every brick in the Exchange."

"Have mercy, Skinner. Have pity on the wretched man whose bread you have eaten. I tell you I'll come."

"Well mind you do, then, cash and all," said Skinner, sulkily, but not quite proof against the reminiscences those humble words awakened.

Each walked backwards a good dozen steps, and then they took different roads, Skinner taking good care not to be tracked home. He went up the high stairs to the hole in the roof he occupied, and lighted a rushlight. He had half a mind to kindle a fire, he felt so chilly; but he had blocked up the vent, partly to keep out the cold, partly to shun the temptation of burning fuel. However, he stopped the keyhole with paper, and also the sides of the window, till he had shut the wintry air all out. Still, what with the cold and what with the reaction after so great an excitement, his feeble body began to shiver desperately. He thought at last he would light a foot-warmer he had just purchased for old iron at a broker's; *that* would only spend a halfpennyworth of charcoal. No he wouldn't; he would look at his money; that would cheer him. He unripped a certain part of his straw mattress and took out a bag of gold. He spread three hundred sovereigns on the floor and put the candle down among them. They sparkled; they were all new ones, and he rubbed them with an old toothbrush and whiting every week. "That's better than any fire," he said, "they warm the heart. For one thing they are my own: at all events I did not steal them, nor take them of a thief for a bribe to keep dark and defraud honest folk." Then remorse gripped him: he asked himself what he was going to do. "To rob an angel," was the answer. "The fourteen thousand pounds is all hers, and I could give it her in a moment. Curse him, he would have killed me for it."

Then he pottered about and took out his will. "Ah," said he, "that is all right so far. But what is a paltry three hundred when I help do her out of fourteen thousand? Villain!" Then, to ease his conscience, he took a slip of paper and wrote on it a short account of the Receipt, and how he came by it, and lo: as if an unseen power had guided his hand, he added, "Miss Dodd lives at 66, Pembroke Street, and I am going to take it to her as soon as I am well of my cold." Whether this preceded an unconscious resolve which had worked on him secretly for some time, or whether it awakened such a resolve, I hardly know: but certain it is, that having written it, he now thought seriously of doing it; and, the more seriously he entertained the thought, the more good it seemed to do him. He got "The Sinner's Friend" and another good book she had lent him, and read a bit: then, finding his feet frozen, he lighted his chafer and blew it well, and put it under his feet and read. The good words began to reach his heart more and more: so did the thought of Julia's goodness. The chafer warmed his feet and legs. "Ay," said he, "men don't want fires; warm the feet and the body warms itself." He took out "The Receipt" and held it in his hand, and eyed it greedily, and asked himself could he really part with it. He thought he could—to Julia. Still holding it tight in his left hand, he read on the good but solemn words that seemed to loosen his grasp upon that ill-gotten paper. "How good it was of her," he thought, "to come day after day and feed a poor little fellow like him, body and soul. She asked nothing back. She didn't know he could make her any return. "Bless her! bless her!" he screamed. "Oh, how cruel I have been to her, and she so kind to me. She would never let me want, if I

took her fourteen thousand pounds. Like enough give me a thousand: and help me save my poor soul, that I shall damn if I meet him again. I won't go his way again. Lead us not into temptation. I repent. Lord have mercy on me a miserable sinner." And tears bedewed those wizened cheeks, tears of penitence, sincere, at least for the time.

A sleepy languor now came over him, and the good book fell from his hand: but his resolution remained unshaken; by-and-by waking up from a sort of heavy dose, he took, as it were, a last look at the receipt, and murmured, "My head, how heavy it feels." But presently he roused himself, full of his penitent resolution, and murmured again brokenly, "I'll--take it to—Pembroke Street to—morrow: to—morrow."

## CHAPTER LII.

Mr. Hardie raised the money on his scrip, and at great inconvenience for he was holding on five hundred thousand pounds' worth of old Turkish Bonds over an unfavourable settling day, and wanted every shilling to pay his broker. If they did not rise by next settling day, he was a beggar. However, being now a desperate gamester, and throwing for his last stake, he borrowed this sum, and took it with a heavy heart to his appointment with Skinner. Skinner never came. Mr. Hardie waited till one o'clock. Two o'clock. No Skinner. Mr. Hardie went home hugging his five hundred pounds, but very uneasy. Next day he consulted Peggy. She shook her head, and said it looked very ugly. Skinner had most likely got angrier and angrier with thinking on the assault. "You will never see him again till the day of the trial: and then he will go down and bear false witness against you. Why not leave the country?"

"How can I, simpleton? My money is all locked up in time-bargains. No, I'm tied tied to the stake; I'll fight to the last: and, if I'm defeated and disgraced, I'll die, and end it."

Peggy implored him not to talk so. "I've been down to the court," said she, softly, "to see what it is like. There's a great hall; and he must pass through that to get into the little places where they try 'em. Let me be in that hall with the five hundred pounds, and I promise you he shall never appear against you. We will both go; you with the money, I with my woman's tongue."

He gave her his hand like a shaky monarch, and said she had more wit than he had.

Mr. Heathfield, who had contrived to postpone Hardie v. Hardie six times in spite of Compton, could not hurry it on now with his co-operation. It hung fire from some cause or another a good fortnight: and in this fortnight Hardie senior endured the tortures of suspense. Skinner made no sign. At last, there stood upon the paper for next day, a short case of disputed contract, and Hardie v. Hardie.

Now, this day, I must premise, was to settle the whole lawsuit: for, while trial of the issue was being postponed and postponed, the legal question had been argued and disposed of. The very Queen's counsel, unfavourable to the suit, was briefed with Garrow's views, and delivered

them in court with more skill, clearness, and effect than Garrow ever could; then sat down, and whispered over rather contemptuously to Mr. Compton, "That is your argument, I think."

"And admirably put," whispered the attorney, in reply.

"Well; now hear Saunders knock it to pieces."

Instead of that, it was Serjeant Saunders that got maltreated: first one judge had a peck at him: then another: till they left him scarce a feather to fly with; and, when Alfred's counsel rose to reply, the judges stopped him, and the chief of the court, Alfred's postponing enemy, delivered his judgment after this fashion:

"We are all of opinion that this plea is bad in law. By the common law of England no person can be imprisoned as a lunatic unless actually insane at the time. It has been held so for centuries, and down to the last case. And wisely: for it would be most dangerous to the liberty of the subject, if a man could be imprisoned without remedy unless he could prove mala fides in the breast of the party incarcerating him. As for the statute, it does not mend the matter, but rather the reverse; for it expressly protects duly authorised persons acting under the order and certificates, and this must be construed to except from the protection of the statute the person making the order."

The three puisné judges concurred and gave similar reasons. One of them said that if A. imprisoned B. for a *felon*, and B. sued him, it was no defence to say that B., in his opinion, had imitated felony. They cited Elliot v. Allen, Anderdon v. Burrows, and Lord Mansfield's judgment in a very old case, the name of which I have unfortunately forgotten.

Judgment was entered for the plaintiff; and the defendant's ingenious plea struck off the record; and Hardie v. Hardie became the leading case. But in law one party often wins the skirmish and the other the battle. The grand fight, as I have already said, was to be to-day.

But the high hopes and ardour with which the young lovers had once come into court were now worn out by the postponement swindle, and the adverse events delay had brought on them. Alfred was not there: he was being examined in the schools; and had plumply refused to leave a tribunal that named its day and kept it—for Westminster, until his counsel should have actually opened the case. He did not believe trial by jury would ever be allowed him. Julia was there, but sad and comparatively listless. One of those strange vague reports, which often herald more circumstantial accounts had come home, whispering darkly that her father was dead, and buried on an island in the South Sea. She had kept this report from her mother, contrary to Edward's wish: but she implored him to restrain his fatal openness. In one thing both these sorely tried young people agreed, that there could be no marriage with Alfred now. But here again Julia entreated her brother not to be candid; not to tell Alfred this at present. "Oh do not go and dispirit him just now," she said, "or he will do something rash. No, he must and shall get his first-class, and win his trial; and then you know any lady will be too proud to marry him; and, when he is married and happy, you can tell him I did all I could for him, and hunted up the witnesses, and was his loving friend, though I could not —be—his—wife."

She could not say this without crying but she said it for all that, and meant it too.

Besides helping Mr. Compton to get up the evidence, this true and earnest friend and lover had attended the court day after day, to watch how things were done, and, woman-like, to see what *pleased* and what *displeased* the court.

The witnesses subpœnaed on either side in Hardie v. Hardie, began to arrive at ten o'clock, and a tall, stately man paraded Westminster Hall, to see if Skinner came with them; all other anxieties had merged in this: for the counsel had assured him if nothing unexpected turned up, Thomas Hardie would have a verdict, or if not, the damages would be nominal.

At last the court crier cried, with a loud voice, "Hardie v. Hardie." Julia's eyes roved very anxiously for Alfred, and up rose Mr. Garrow, and stated to the court the substance of the declaration; "To this," he said, "three pleas have been pleaded: first, the plea of not guilty, which is a formal plea; also another plea, which has been demurred to, and struck off the record; and, lastly, that at the time of the alleged imprisonment the plaintiff was of unsound mind, and a fit person to be confined; which is the issue now to be tried."

Mr. Garrow then sat down, very tired of this preliminary work, and wondering when he should have the luck to conduct such a case as Hardie v. Hardie; and leaned forward to be ready to prompt his senior, a portly counsel, whom Mr. Compton had retained because he was great at addressing juries, and no point of law could now arise in the Case.

Colt, Q.C., rose like a tower, knowing very little of the facts, and seeming to know everything. He had a prodigious business, and was rather indolent, and often skimmed his brief at home, and then mastered it in court—if he got time. Now, it is a good general's policy to open a plaintiff's case warily, and reserve your rhetoric for the reply; and Mr. Colt always took this line when his manifold engagements compelled him, as in Hardie v. Hardie, to teach his case first and learn it afterwards. I will only add, that in the course of his opening he was on the edge of seven distinct blunders; but Garrow watched him and always shot a whisper like a bullet just in time. Colt took it, and glided away from incipient error imperceptibly, and with a tact you can have no conception of. The jury did not detect the creaking of this machinery; Serjeant Saunders did, and grinned satirically; so did poor Julia, and her cheeks burned and her eyes flashed indignant fire. And horror of horrors, Alfred did not appear.

Mr. Colt's opening may be thus condensed: The plaintiff was a young gentleman of great promise and distinction, on whom, as usual in these cases of false imprisonment, money was settled. He was a distinguished student at Eton and Oxford, and no doubt was ever expressed of his sanity till he proposed to marry, and take his money out of his trustees' hands by a marriage settlement. On this his father, who up to that time had managed his funds as principal trustee, showed him great personal hostility for some time, and looked out for a tool: that tool he soon found in his brother, the defendant, a person who, it would be proved, had actually not seen the plaintiff for a year and a half, yet, with great recklessness and inhumanity, had signed away his liberty

and his happiness behind his back. Then tools of another kind—the kind that anybody can buy, a couple of doctors—were, as usual, easily found to sign the certificates. One of these doctors had never seen him but for five minutes, and signed in manifest collusion with the other. They decoyed this poor young gentleman away on his wedding morning—on his wedding morning, gentlemen, mark that—and consigned him to the worst of all dungeons. What he suffered there he must himself relate to you: for we, who have the happiness to walk abroad in the air of reason and liberty, are little able to realise the agony of mind endured by a sane man confined among the insane. What we undertake is to prove his sanity up to the very hour of his incarceration; and also that he was quite sane at the time when a brutal attempt to recapture him by violence was made under the defendant's order, and defeated by his own remarkable intelligence and courage. Along with the facts the true reason why he was imprisoned will probably come out. But I am not bound to prove sinister motives. It is for the defendant to prove, if he can, that he had lawful motives for a lawless act; and that he exercised due precaution, and did not lend himself recklessly to the dark designs of others. If he succeed in this, that may go in mitigation of damages, though it cannot affect the verdict. *Our* principal object is the verdict, which will remove the foul aspersion cast on my injured client, and restore him to society. And to this verdict we are entitled, unless the other side can prove the plaintiff was insane. Call Alfred Hardie.

And with this he sat down.

An official called Alfred Hardie very loud; he made no reply. Julia rose from her seat with dismay painted on her countenance. Compton's, Garrow's, and Colt's heads clashed together.

Mr. Colt jumped up again, and said, "My Lud, I was not aware the gentleman they accuse of insanity is just being examined for high honours in the University of Oxford." Aside to Compton, "And if he doesn't come you may give them the verdict."

"Well," said the judge, "of course he will be here before you close your case."

On this the three heads clashed again, and Serjeant Saunders, for the defendant, popped up and said with great politeness, and affectation of sympathy, "My Lud, I can quite understand my learned friend's hesitation to produce his principal witness."

"You understand nothing about the matter," said Colt cavalierly. "Call Mr. Harrington."

Mr. Harrington was Alfred's tutor at Eton, and deposed to his sanity there: he was not cross-examined. After him they went on step by step with a fresh witness for every six months, till they brought him close to the date of his incarceration: then they put in one of Julia's witnesses, Peterson, who swore Alfred had talked to him like a sane person that very morning; and repeated what had passed. Cross-examination only elicited that he and Alfred were no longer good friends, which rather strengthened the evidence. Then Giles and Hannah, now man and wife, were called, and swore he was sane all the time he was at Silverton House. Mr. Saunders diminished the effect by eliciting that they had left on bad terms with Mr. Baker, and that Alfred had given them

money since. But this was half cured on re-examination, by being set down to gratitude on Alfred's part. And now the judge went to luncheon: and in came a telegraphic message to say Alfred was in the fast train coming up. This was good news and bad. They had hoped he would drop in before. They were approaching that period of the case, when not to call the plaintiff must produce a vile impression. The judge, out of good nature I suspect, was longer at luncheon than usual, and every minute was so much gained to Mr. Compton and Julia, who were in a miserable state of anxiety. Yet it was equalled by Richard Hardie's, who never entered the court, but paced the hall the livelong day to intercept Noah Skinner. And, when I tell you that Julia had consulted Mr. Green, and that he had instantly pronounced Mr. Barkington to be a man from Barkington who knew the truth about the fourteen thousand pounds, and that the said Green and his myrmidons were hunting Mr. Barkington like beagles, you will see that R. Hardie's was no vain terror. At last the judge returned, and Mr. Colt was obliged to put in his reserves; so called Dr. Sampson. Instantly a very dull trial became an amusing one; the scorn with which he treated the opinion of Dr. Wycherley and Mr. Speers, and medical certificates in general, was so droll coming from a doctor and so racily expressed, that the court was convulsed. Also in cross-examination by Saunders he sparred away in such gallant style with that accomplished advocate that it was mighty refreshing. The judge put in a few intelligent questions after counsel had done, and surprised all the doctors in court with these words: "I am aware sir, that you were the main instrument in putting down blood-letting in this country."

What made Sampson's evidence particularly strong was that he had seen the plaintiff the evening before his imprisonment.

At this moment three men, all of them known to the reader, entered the court; one was our old acquaintance Fullalove, another was of course Vespasian: and the third was the missing plaintiff.

A buzz announced his arrival; and expectation rose high. Mr. Colt called him with admirably feigned nonchalance: he stepped into the box, and there was a murmur of surprise and admiration at his bright countenance and manly bearing.

Of course to give his evidence would be to write "Hard Cash" over again. It is enough to say that his examination in chief lasted all that day, and an hour of the next.

Colt took him into the asylum, and made him say what he had suffered there to swell the damages. The main points his examination in chief established were his sanity during his whole life, the money settled on him, the means the doctors took to irritate him, and then sign him excited, the subserviency of his uncle to his father, the double motive his father had in getting him imprisoned; the business of the 14,000*l.*

When Colt sat down at eleven o'clock on the second day, the jury looked indignant, and the judge looked very grave, and the case very black.

Mr. Saunders electrified his attorney by saying, "My advice is, don't cross-examine him."

Heathfield implored him not to take so strange a course.

On this Saunders shrugged his shoulders, rose, and cross-examined

Alfred about the vision of one Captain Dodd he had seen, and about his suspicions of his father. "Had not Richard Hardie always been a kind and liberal father?" To this he assented. "Had he not sacrificed a large fortune to his creditors?" Plaintiff believed so. "On reflection, then, did not plaintiff think he must have been under an illusion?" No; he had gone by direct evidence.

Confining himself sagaciously to this one question, and exerting all his skill and pertinacity, Saunders succeeded in convincing the court that the Hard Cash was a myth: a pure chimera. The defendant's case looked up; for there are many intelligent madmen with a single illusion.

The re-examination was of course very short, but telling; for Alfred swore that Miss Julia Dodd had helped him to carry home the phantom of her father, and that Miss Dodd had a letter from her father to say that he was about to sail with the other phantom, the 14,000*l*.

Here Mr. Saunders interposed, and said that evidence was inadmissible. Let him call Miss Dodd.

Colt.—How do you know I'm not going to call her?

The Judge.—If you are, it is superfluous; if not, it is inadmissible.

Mr. Compton cast an inquiring glance up at a certain gallery. A beautiful girl bowed her head in reply, with a warm blush and such a flash of her eye, and Mr. Colt said, "As my learned friend was afraid to cross-examine the plaintiff on any point but this, and as I mean to respond to his challenge, and call Miss Dodd, I will not trouble the plaintiff any further.

Through the whole ordeal Alfred showed a certain flavour of Eton and Oxford that won all hearts. His replies were frank and honest, and under cross-examination he was no more to be irritated than if Saunders had been Harrow bowling at him, or the Robin sparring with him. The serjeant, who was a gentleman, indicated some little regret at the possible annoyance he was causing him. Alfred replied with a grand air of good fellowship, "Do not think so poorly of me as to suppose I feel aggrieved because you are an able advocate and do your duty to your client, sir."

The Judge.—That is very handsomely said. I am afraid you have got an awkward customer, in a case of this kind, Brother Saunders.

Serjt. S.—It is not for want of brains he is mad, my lord.

Alfred.—That is a comfort, any way. (Laughter.)

When counsel had done with him, the judge used his right, and put several shrewd and unusual questions to him: asked him to define insanity: he said he could only do it by examples: and he abridged several intelligent madmen, their words and ways; and contrasted them with the five or six sane people he had fallen in with in asylums; showing his lordship plainly that *he* could tell any insane person whatever from a sane one, and vice versâ. This was the most remarkable part of the trial, to see this shrewd old judge extracting from a real observer and logical thinker those positive indicia of sanity and insanity, which exist, but which no lawyer has ever yet been able to extract from any psychological physician in the witness-box. At last, he was relieved, and sat sucking an orange among the spectators; for they had parched his throat amongst them, I promise you.

Julia Dodd entered the box, and a sunbeam seemed to fill the court. She knew what to do: her left hand was gloved, but her white right hand bare. She kissed the book, and gave her evidence in her clear, mellow, melting voice; gave it reverently and modestly, for to her the court was a church. She said how long she had been acquainted with Alfred, and how his father was adverse, and her mother had thought it was because they did not pass for rich, and had told her they *were* rich, and with this she produced David's letter, and she also swore to having met Alfred and others carrying her father in a swoon from his father's very door. She deposed to Alfred's sanity on her wedding eve, and on the day his recapture was attempted.

Saunders, against his own judgment, was instructed to cross-examine her; and, without meaning it, he put a question which gave her deep distress. "Are you now engaged to the plaintiff?" She looked timidly round, and saw Alfred, and hesitated. The serjeant pressed her politely, but firmly.

"Must I reply to that?" she said, piteously.

"If you please."

"Then, no. Another misfortune has now separated him and me for ever."

"What is that, pray?"

"My father is said to have died at sea: and my mother thinks *he* is to blame."

The Judge, to Saunders.—What on earth has this to do with Hardie against Hardie?

Saunders.—You are warmly interested in the plaintiff's success?

Julia.—Oh yes, sir.

Colt (aside to Garrow.—The fool is putting his foot into it: there's not a jury in England that would give a verdict to part two interesting young lovers.)

Saunders.—You are attached to him?

Julia.—Ah, that I do.

This burst, intended for poor Alfred, not the court, baffled cross-examination and grammar and everything else. Saunders was wise and generous, and said no more.

Colt cast a glance of triumph, and declined to re-examine. He always let well alone. The judge, however, evinced a desire to trace the fourteen thousand pounds from Calcutta; but Julia could not help him: that mysterious sum had been announced by letter as about to sail, and then no more was heard about it till Alfred accused his father of having it. All endeavours to fill this hiatus failed. However Julia, observing that in courts material objects affect the mind most, had provided herself with all the pieces de conviction she could find, and she produced her father's empty pocket-book, and said, when he was brought home senseless, this was in his breast-pocket.

"Hand it up to me," said the judge. He examined it, and said it had been in the water.

"Captain Dodd was wrecked off the French coast," suggested Mr Saunders.

"My learned friend had better go into the witness-box, if he means to give evidence," said Mr. Colt.

"You are very much afraid of a very little truth," retorted Saunders.

The judge stopped this sham rencontre, by asking the witness whether her father had been wrecked. She said "Yes."

"And that is how the money was lost," persisted Saunders.

"Possibly," said the judge.

"I'm darned if it was," said Joshua Fullalove, composedly.

Instantly, all heads were turned in amazement at this audacious interruption to the soporific decorum of an English court. The transatlantic citizen received this battery of eyes with complete imperturbability.

"Si-lence!" roared the crier, awaking from a nap, with an instinct that something unusual had happened. But the shrewd old judge had caught the sincerity with which the words were uttered; and put on his spectacles to examine the speaker.

"Are you for the plaintiff or the defendant?"

"I don't know either of 'em from Adam, my lord. But I know Captain Dodd's pocket-book by the bullet-hole."

"Indeed! You had better call this witness, Mr. Colt."

"Your lordship must excuse me; I am quite content with my evidence," said the wary advocate.

"Well, then, I shall call him as amicus curiæ; and the defendant's counsel can cross-examine him."

Fullalove went into the box, was sworn, identified the pocket-book, and swore he had seen fourteen thousand pounds in it on two occasions. With very little prompting, he told the sea-fight, and the Indian darkie's attempt to steal the money, and pointed out Vespasian as the rival darkie who had baffled the attempt. Then he told the shipwreck to an audience now breathless—and imagine the astonished interest with which Julia and Edward listened to this stranger telling them the new strange story of their own father!—and lastly, the attempt of the two French wreckers and assassins, and how it had been baffled. And so the mythical cash was tracked to Boulogne.

The judge then put this question, "Did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with it?"

Fullalove (reverently).—I think, my lord, he said he was going to give it to his wife. (Sharply.) Well, what is it, old hoss? What are you making mugs at me for? don't you know it's clean against law to telegraph a citizen in the witness-box?

The Judge.—This won't do; this won't do.

The Crier.—Silence in the court.

"Do you hyar now what his lordship says?" said Fullalove, with ready tact. "If you know anything more, come up hyar and swear it like an enlightened citizen; do you think I'm going to swear for tew?" With this Vespasian and Fullalove proceeded to change places amidst roars of laughter at the cool off-hand way this pair arranged forensicalities; but Serjeant Saunders requested Fullalove to stay where he was. "Pray sir," said he, slowly, "who retained you for a witness in this cause?"

Fullalove looked puzzled.

"Of course somebody asked you to drop in here so very accidentally: come now, who was it?"

"I'm God Almighty's witness dropped from the clouds, I cal'late."

"Come, sir, no prevarication. How came you here just at the nick of time?"

"Counsellor, when I'm treated polite, I'm ile; but rile me and I'm thunder stuffed with pison: don't you raise my dander, and I'll tell you. I have undertaken to educate this yar darkie"—here he stretched out a long arm, and laid his hand on Vespasian's woolly pate—"and I'm bound to raise him to the Eu-ropean model. (Laughter.) "So I said to him, coming over Westminster Bridge, Now there's a store hyar where they sell a very extraordinary Fixin; and it's called Justice; they sell it tarnation dear; *but* prime. So I make tracks for the very court where I got the prime article three years ago, against a varmint that was breaking the seventh and eighth commandments over me, adulterating my patent and then stealing it. Blast him!" (A roar of laughter.) "And coming along I said this old country's got some good pints after all, old hoss. One is they'il sell you justice dear, *but* prime, in these yar courts, if you were born at Kamschatkee; and the other is, hyar darkies are free as air, disenthralled by the univarsal genius of British liberty: and then I pitched Counsellor Curran's bunkum into this darkie, and he sucked it in like mother's milk, and in we came on tiptoe, and the first thing we heard was a freeborn Briton treated wus than ever a nigger in Old Kentuck, decoyed away from his gal, shoved into a darned madhouse—the darbies clapped on him——"

"We don't want your comments on the case, sir."

"No, nor any other free and enlightened citizen's, I reckon. Wal, Vespasian and me sat like mice in a snowdrift, and hid our feelings out of good manners, being strangers, till his lordship got e-tarnally fixed about the captain's pocket-book. Vesp. says I, this hurts my feelings powerful. Says I, this hyar lord did the right thing about my patent, he summed up just: and now he is in an everlasting fix himself; one good turn deserves another, I'll get him out of this fix, any way." Here the witness was interrupted with a roar of laughter that shook the court. Even the judge leaned back and chuckled, genially, though quietly. And right sorrowful was every Briton there when Saunders closed abruptly the cross-examination of Joshua Fullalove.

His lordship then said he wished to ask Vespasian a question.

Saunders lost patience. "What, another amicus curiæ, my lud! This is unprecedented."

"Excuse my curiosity, Brother Saunders," said the judge, ironically. "I wish to trace this 14,000*l.* as far as possible. Have you any particular objection to the truth on this head of evidence?"

"No, my lud, I never urge objections when I can't enforce them."

"Then you are a wise man. (To Vespasian after he had been sworn.) Pray did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with this money?"

"Is, massa judge, massa captan told dis child he got a branker in some place in de ole country, called Barkinton. And he said dis branker bery good branker, much sartainer not to break dan the brank of England. (A howl.) De captan said he take de money to dis yer branker, and den hab no more trouble wid it. Den it off my stomach, de captan say, and dis child heerd him. Yah!"

The plaintiff's case being apparently concluded, the judge retired for a few minutes.

In the buzz that followed, a note was handed to Mr. Compton: "*Skinner!* On a hot scent. Sure to find him to-day.—N.B. He is wanted by another party. There is something curious a-foot."

Compton wrote on a slip, "For Heaven's sake bring him directly. In half an hour it will be too late."

Green hurried out and nearly ran against Mr. Richard Hardie, who was moodily pacing Westminster Hall at the climax of his own anxiety. To him all turned on Skinner. Five minutes passed, ten, fifteen, twenty: all the plaintiff's party had their eyes on the door; but Green did not return; and the judge did. Then to gain a few minutes more, Mr. Colt, instructed by Compton, rose and said with great solemnity, "We are about to call our last witness; the living have testified to my client's sanity, and now we shall read you the testimony of the dead."

Saunders.—That I object to, of course.

Colt.—Does my learned friend mean to say he objects at random?

Saunders.—Nothing of the kind. I object on the law of evidence, a matter on which my learned friend seems to be under a hallucination as complete as his client's about that 14,000*l.*

> Colt.—There's none ever feared
> That the truth should be heard
> But they whom the truth would indict.

Saunders.—A court of justice is not the place for old songs; and new law.

Colt.—Really, my learned friend is the objective case incarnate. (To Compton.—I can't keep this nonsense up for ever. Is Skinner come?) He has a Mania for objection, and with your lordship's permission I'll buy a couple of doctors and lock him up in an asylum as he leaves the court this afternoon. (Laughter.)

The Judge.—A very good plan: then you'll no longer feel the weight of his abilities. I conclude Mr. Colt you intend to call a witness who will swear to the deceased person's handwriting, and that it was written in the knowledge Death was at hand.

Colt.—Certainly, my lord. I can call Miss Julia Dodd.

Saunders.—That I need not take the trouble of objecting to.

The Judge (with some surprise).—No, Mr. Colt. That will never do. You have examined her, and re-examined her.

I needly hardly say Mr. Colt knew very well he could not call Julia Dodd. But he was fighting for seconds now, to get in Skinner. "Call Edward Dodd."

Edward was sworn, and asked if he knew the late Jane Hardie.

"I knew her well," said he.

"Is that her handwriting?"

"It is."

"Where was it written?"

"In my mother's house, at Barkington."

"Under what circumstances?"

"She was dying—of a blow given her by a maniac called Maxley."

"Maxley!" said the judge to counsel. "I remember the [illegible]

Maxley. I tried him myself at the assizes: it was for striking a young lady with a bludgeon, of which she died. Maxley was powerfully defended; and it was proved that his wife had died, and he had been driven mad for a time, by her father's bank breaking. The jury *would* bring in a verdict that was no verdict at all; as I took the liberty to tell them at the time. The judges dismissed it, and Maxley was eventually discharged."

Colt.—"No doubt that was the case, my lord." To the witness.—"Did Jane Hardie know she was dying?"

"Oh, yes, sir. She told us all so."

"To whom did she give this letter?"

"To my sister."

"Oh, to your sister? To Miss Julia Dodd?"

"Yes, sir. But not for herself. It was to give to Alfred Hardie."

"Can you read the letter? it is rather faintly written. It is written in pencil, my lord."

"I *could* read it, sir; but I hope you will excuse me. She that wrote it was very, very dear to me."

The young man's full voice faltered as he uttered these words, and he turned his lion-like eyes soft and imploring on the judge. That venerable and shrewd old man, learned in human nature as well as in law, comprehended in a moment, and said, kindly, "You misunderstand him. Witnesses do not read letters *out* in court. Let the letter be handed up to me." This was fortunate, for the court cuckoo, who intones most letters, would have read all the sense and pathos out of this, with his monotonous sing-song.

The judge read it carefully to himself with his glasses, and told the jury it seemed a genuine document; then the crier cried "Silence in the court," and his lordship turned towards the jury and read the letter slowly and solemnly:

"*Dear, dear Brother,—*

"*Your poor little Jane lies dying, suddenly but not painfully, and my last earthly thoughts are for my darling brother. Some wicked person has said you are insane. I deny this with my dying breath and my dying hand. You came to me the night before the wedding that was to be, and talked to me most calmly, rationally, and kindly; so that I could not resist your reasons, and went to your wedding, which, till then, I did not intend. Show these words to your slanderers when I am no more. But oh! Alfred, even this is of little moment compared with the world to come. By all our affection grant me one request. Battered, wounded, dying in my prime, what would be my condition but for the Saviour, whom I have loved, and with whom I hope soon to be. He smooths the bed of death for me, He lights the dark valley; I rejoice to die and be with him. Oh, turn to Him, dear brother, without one hour's delay, and then how short will be this parting. This is your dying sister's one request, who loves you dearly.*"

With the exception of Julia's sobs, not a sound was heard as the judge read it. Many eyes were wet: and the judge himself was visibly affected, and pressed his handkerchief a moment to his eyes. "These are the words of a Christian woman, gentlemen," he said. And there

was silence. A girl's hand seemed to have risen from the grave to defend her brother, and rend the veil from falsehood.

Mr. Colt, out of pure tact, subdued his voice to the key of the sentiment thus awakened, and said impressively, "Gentlemen of the jury, that is our case:" and so sat down.

## CHAPTER LIII.

SERJEANT SAUNDERS thought it prudent to let the emotion subside before opening the defendant's case: so he disarranged his papers, and then rearranged them as before: and, during this, a person employed by Richard Hardie went out and told him this last untoward piece of evidence. He winced: but all was overbalanced by this, that Skinner had not come to bear witness for the Plaintiff.

Serjeant Saunders rose with perfect dignity and confidence, and delivered a masterly address. In less than ten minutes the whole affair took another colour under that plausible tongue. The tactician began by declaring that the plaintiff was perfectly sane, and his convalescence was a matter of such joy to the defendant, that not even the cruel misinterpretation of facts and motives, to which his amiable client had been exposed, could rob him of that sacred delight. "Our case, gentlemen, is, that the plaintiff is sane, and that he owes his sanity to those prompt, wise, and benevolent measures, which *we* took eighteen months ago, at an unhappy crisis of his mind, to preserve his understanding and his property. Yes, his property, gentlemen; that property which in a paroxysm of mania, he was going to throw away, as I shall show you by an unanswerable document. He comes here to slander us and mulct us out of five thousand pounds; but I shall show you he is already ten thousand pounds the richer for that act of ours, for which he debits us five thousand pounds, instead of crediting us twice the sum. Gentlemen, I cannot, like my learned friend, call witnesses from the clouds, from the United States, and from the grave; for it has not occurred to my client, strong in the sense of his kindly and honourable intentions, to engage gentlemen from foreign parts, with woolly locks and nasal twangs, to drop in accidentally, and eke out the fatal gaps in evidence. The class of testimony we stand upon is less romantic: it does not seduce the imagination nor play upon the passions; but it is of a much higher character in sober men's eyes, especially in a court of law. I rely, not on witnesses dropped from the clouds, and the stars, and the stripes—to order; nor even on the prejudiced statements of friends and sweethearts, who always swear from the heart rather than from the head and the conscience; but on the calm testimony of indifferent men, and on written documents furnished by the plaintiff, and on contemporaneous entries in the books of the asylum, which entries formally describe the plaintiff's acts, and were put down at the time—at the time, gentlemen—with no idea of a trial at law to come, but in compliance with the very proper provisions of a wise and salutary Act. I shall also lay before you the evidence of the medical witnesses who signed the certificates, men of probity and honour, and who have made

these subtle maladies of the mind the special study of their whole life. I shall also call the family doctor, who has known the plaintiff and his ailments, bodily and mental, for many years, and communicated his suspicions to one of the first psychological physicians of the age, declining, with a modesty which we, who know less of insanity than he does, would do well to imitate—declining, I say, to pronounce a positive opinion unfavourable to the plaintiff, till he should have compared notes with this learned man, and profited by his vast experience."

In this strain he continued for a good hour, until the defendant's case seemed to be a thing of granite. His oration ended, he called a string of witnesses: every one of whom bore the learned counsel out by his evidence in chief.

But here came the grand distinction between the defendant's case and the plaintiff's. Cross-examination had hardly shaken the plaintiff's witnesses: it literally dissolved the defendant's. Osmond was called, and proved Alfred's headaches and pallor, and his own suspicions. But then Colt forced him to admit that many young people had headaches without going mad, and were pale when thwarted in love, without going mad: and that as to the 14,000*l.* and the phantom, he *knew* nothing; but had taken all that for granted on Mr. Richard Hardie's word.

Dr. Wycherley deposed to Alfred's being insane and abnormally irritable, and under a pecuniary illusion, as stated in his certificate: and to his own vast experience. But the fire of cross-examination melted all his polysyllables into guess-work and hearsay. It melted out of him that he, a stranger, had intruded on the young man's privacy, and had burst into a most delicate topic, his disagreement with his father, and so had himself created the very irritation he had set down to madness. He also had to admit that he knew nothing about the 14,000*l.* or the phantom, but had taken for granted the young man's own father, who consulted him, was not telling him a deliberate and wicked falsehood.

Colt.—In short, sir, you were retained to make the man out insane, just as my learned friend there is retained.

Wycherley.—I think, sir, it would not be consistent with the dignity of my profession to notice that comparison.

Colt.—I leave defendant's counsel to thank you for that. Come, never mind *dignity*; let us have a little *truth*. Is it consistent with your dignity to tell us whether the keepers of private asylums pay you a commission for all the patients you consign to durance vile by your certificates?

Dr. Wycherley fenced with this question, but the remorseless Colt only kept him longer under torture, and dragged out of him that he received fifteen per cent. from the asylum keepers for every patient he wrote insane; and that he had an income of eight hundred pounds a year from that source alone. This, of course, was the very thing to prejudice a jury against the defence: and Colt's art was to keep to their level.

Speers, cross-examined, failed to conceal that he was a mere tool of Wycherley's, and had signed in manifest collusion, adhering to the letter of the statute, but violating its spirit: for certainly, the Act never intended by "separate examination," that two doctors should come into

the passage, and walk into the room alternately, then reunite, and do the signing as agreed before they ever saw the patient. As to the illusion about the fourteen thousand pounds, Speers owned that the plaintiff had not uttered a word about the subject, but had peremptorily declined it. He had to confess, too, that he had taken for granted Dr. Wycherley was correctly informed about the said illusion.

"In short," said the judge, interposing, "Dr. Wycherley took the very thing for granted which it was his duty to ascertain; and you, sir, not to be behind Dr. Wycherley, took the thing for granted at second hand." And when Speers had left the box, he said to Serjeant Saunders, "If this case is to be defended seriously, you had better call Mr. Richard Hardie without further delay."

"It is my wish, my lud; but I am sorry to say he is in the country very ill; and I have no hope of seeing him here before to-morrow."

"Oh, well; so that you *do* call him. I shall not lay hearsay before the jury: hearsay gathered from Mr. Richard Hardie—whom you will call in person if the reports he has circulated have any basis whatever in truth."

Mr. Saunders said coolly, "Mr. Richard Hardie is not the defendant," and flowed on; nor would any but a lawyer have suspected what a terrible stab the judge had given him so quietly.

The surgeon of Silverton House was then sworn, and produced the case book; and there stood the entries which had been so fatal to Alfred with the visiting justices. Suicide, homicide, self-starvation. But the plaintiff got to Mr. Colt with a piece of paper, on which he had written his view of all this, and cross-examination dissolved the suicide and homicide into a spirited attempt to escape and resist a false imprisonment. As for the self-starvation, Colt elicited that Alfred had eaten at six o'clock though not at two. "And pray, sir," said he, contemptuously, to the witness, "do you never stir out of a madhouse? Do you imagine that gentlemen in their senses dine at two o'clock in the nineteenth century?"

"No. I don't say that."

"What *do* you say, then? Is forcible imprisonment of a bridegroom in a madhouse the thing to give a *gentleman* a *factitious* appetite at *your* barbarous dinner-hour?"

In a word, Colt was rough with this witness, and nearly smashed him. Saunders fought gallantly on, and put in Lawyer Crawford with his draft of the insane deed, as he called it, by which the erotic monomaniac Alfred divested himself of all his money in favour of the Dodds. There was no dissolving this deed away; and Crawford swore he had entreated the plaintiff not to insist on his drawing so unheard-of a document; but opposition or question seemed to irritate his client, so that he had complied, and the deed was to have been signed on the wedding-day.

All the lawyers present thought this looked really mad. Fancy a man signing away his property to his wife's relatives!! The court, which had already sat long beyond the usual time, broke up, leaving the defendant with this advantage. Alfred Hardie and his friends made a little knot in the hall outside, and talked excitedly over the incidents of the trial. Mr. Compton introduced Fullalove and Ves-

pasian. They all shook hands with them, and thanked them warmly for the timely and most unexpected aid. But Green and a myrmidon broke in upon their conversation. "I am down on Mr. Barkington, alias Noah Skinner. It isn't very far from here, if you will follow me." Green was as excited as a foxhound when Pug has begun to trail his brush: the more so that another client of his wanted Noah Skinner; and so the detective was doing a double stroke of business. He led the way; it was dry, and they all went in pairs after him into the back slums of Westminster: and a pretty part that is.

Now as they went along Alfred hung behind with Julia, and asked her what on earth she meant by swearing that it was all over between her and him. "Why your last letter was full of love, dearest; what could you be thinking of to say that?"

She shook her head sadly, and revealed to him with many prayers for forgiveness that she had been playing a part of late: that she had concealed her father's death from him, and the fatal barrier interposed. "I was afraid you would be disheartened, and lose your first class and perhaps your trial. But you are safe now, dear Alfred; I am sure the judge sees through them; for I have studied him for you. I know his face by heart, and all his looks and what they mean. My Alfred will be cleared of this wicked slander, and happy with some one——Ah!"

"Yes, I mean to be happy with *some one*," said Alfred. "*I* am not one of your self-sacrificing angels; thank Heaven! You shall not sacrifice us to your mother's injustice nor to the caprices of fate. We love one another; but you would immolate me for the pleasure of immolating yourself. Don't provoke me too far, or I'll carry you off by force. I swear it, by Him who made us both."

"Dearest, how wildly you talk." And with this Julia hung her head, and had a guilty thrill. She could not help thinking that eccentric little measure would relieve her of the sin of disobedience.

After making known to her his desperate resolution Alfred was silent, and they went sadly side by side; so dear, so near, yet always some infernal thing or other coming between them. They reached a passage in a miserable street. At the mouth stood two of Green's men, planted there to follow Skinner should he go out: but they reported all quiet. "Bring the old gentleman up," said Green. "I appointed him six o'clock, and it's on the stroke." He then descended the passage, and striking a light led the way up a high stair. Skinner lived on the fifth story. Green tapped at his door. "Mr. Barkington."

No reply.

"Mr. Barkington, I've brought you some money."

No reply.

"Perhaps he is not at home," said Mr. Compton.

"Oh, yes, sir, I sent a sharp boy up, and he picked the paper out of the keyhole and saw him sitting reading."

He then applied his own eye to the keyhole. "I see something black," said he, "I think he suspects."

While he hesitated, they became conscious of a pungent vapour stealing through the now open keyhole.

"Hallo!" said Green, "What is this?"

Fullalove observed coolly that Mr. Skinner's lungs must be peculiarly

made if he could breathe in that atmosphere. "If you want to see him alive, let me open the door."

"There's something amiss here," said Green, gravely.

At that Fullalove whipped out a tool no bigger than a nutcracker, forced the edge in, and sent the door flying open. The room or den was full of an acrid vapour, and close to them sat he they sought motionless.

"Keep the lady back," cried Green, and threw the vivid light of his bull's-eye on a strange, grotesque, and ghastly scene. The floor was covered with bright sovereigns that glittered in the lamp-light. On the table was an open book, and a candle quite burnt down: the grease had run into a circle.

And, as was that grease to the expired light, so was the thing that sat there in human form to the Noah Skinner they had come to seek. Dead this many a day of charcoal fumes, but preserved from decomposition by those very fumes, sat Noah Skinner, dried into bones and leather, waiting for them with his own Hard Cash, and with theirs; for, creeping awestruck round that mummified figure seated dead on his pool of sovereigns, they soon noticed in his left hand a paper: it was discoloured by the vapour, and part hid by the dead thumb; but thus much shone out clear and amazing, that it was a banker's receipt to David Dodd, Esq., for 14,010*l.*, drawn at Barkington, and signed for Richard Hardie by Noah Skinner. Julia had drawn back, and was hiding her face; but soon curiosity struggled with awe in the others: they peeped at the Receipt; they touched the weird figure. Its yellow skin sounded like a drum, and its joints creaked like a puppet's. At last Compton suggested that Edward Dodd ought to secure that valuable document. "No no," said Edward: "it is too like robbing the dead."

"Then I will," said Compton.

But he found the dead thumb and finger would not part with the receipt; then, as a trifle turns the scale, he hesitated in turn: and all but Julia stood motionless round the body that held the Receipt, the soul of the lost Cash, and still, as in life, seemed loth to part with it.

Then Fullalove came beside the arm-chair, and said with simple dignity, "I'm a man from foreign parts; I have no interest here but justice: and justice I'll dew." He took the dead arm, and the joint creaked: he applied the same lever to the bone and parchment hand he had to the door: it creaked too, but more faintly, and opened and let out this.

A stately foot came up the stair, but no one heard it. All were absorbed in the strange weird sight, and this great stroke of fate; or of Providence.

"This is yours, I reckon," said Fullalove, and handed the receipt to Edward. "No, no!" said Compton. "See: I've just found a will, bequeathing all he has in the world, with his blessing, to Miss Julia Dodd. These sovereigns are yours, then. But above all, the paper: as your legal adviser, I insist on your taking it immediately. Possession is nine points. However, it is actually yours, in virtue of this bequest."

A solemn passionless voice seemed to fall on them from the clouds,

"No; it is Mine."

My story must now return on board the Vulture. Just before noon, the bell the half hours are struck on was tolled to collect the ship's company; and soon the gangways and booms were crowded, and even the yards were manned with sailors, collected to see their shipmate committed to the deep. Next came the lieutenants and midshipmen and stood reverently on the deck: the body was brought and placed on a grating. Then all heads being uncovered below and aloft, the chaplain read the solemn service of the dead.

Many tears were shed by the rough sailors, the more so that to most of them, though not to the officers, it was now known that poor Billy had not always been before the mast, but had seen better days, and commanded vessels, and saved lives; and now he had lost his own.

The service is the same as ashore, with this exception: that the words "We commit his body to the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, &c.," are altered at sea, thus: "We commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, when the sea shall give up her dead; and the life of the world to come." At these words the body is allowed to glide off the grating into the sea. The chaplain's solemn voice drew near those very words, and the tears of pity fell faster; and Georgie White, an affectionate boy, sobbed violently, and shivered beforehand at the sullen plunge that he knew would soon come, and then he should see no more poor Billy who had given his life for his.

At this moment the captain came flying on deck, and jumping on to a gun, cried sharply, "Avast! Haul that body aboard."

The sharp voice of command cut across the solemn words and tones in the most startling way. The chaplain closed his book with a look of amazement and indignation: the sailors stared, and for the first time did not obey an order. To be sure it was one they had never heard before. Then the captain got angry, and repeated his command louder; and the body was almost jerked in board.

"Carry him to my cabin; and uncover his face."

By this time nothing could surprise Jackey Tar. Four sailors executed the order promptly.

"Bosen, pipe to duty."

While the men were dispersing to their several stations, Captain Bazalgette apologised to the chaplain, and explained to him and to the officers. But I give his explanation in my own words. Finding the

ship quiet, the purser went to the captain down below, and asked him coolly what entry he should make in the ship's books about this William Thompson, who was no more William Thompson than he was. "What do you mean?" said the captain. Then the purser told him that Thompson's messmates, in preparing him last night for interment, had found a little bag round his neck, and inside it a medal of the Humane Society, and a slip of paper written on in a lady's hand; then they had sent for him; and he had seen at once that this was a mysterious case: this lady spoke of him as her husband, and skipper of a merchant vessel.

"What is that?" roared the captain, who hitherto had listened with scarce half an ear.

"Skipper of a merchant vessel, sir, as sure as you command her Majesty's frigate Vulture: and then we found his shirt marked with the same name as the lady's."

"What was the lady's name?"

"Lucy Dodd; and David Dodd is on the shirt."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" cried the captain.

"Didn't know it till last night."

"Why it is twelve o'clock. They are burying him."

"Yes, sir."

"Lucy would never forgive me," cried the captain. And to the purser's utter amazement he clapped on his cocked hat, and flew out of the cabin on the errand I have described.

He now returned to the cabin and looked: a glance was enough: there lay the kindly face that had been his friend man and boy.

He hid his own with his hands, and moaned. He cursed his own blindness and stupidity in not recognising that face among a thousand. In this he was unjust to himself. David had never looked *himself* till now.

He sent for the surgeon, and told him the whole sad story: and asked him what could be done. His poor cousin Lucy had more than once expressed her horror of interment at sea. "It is very hot," said he; "but surely you must know some way of keeping him till we land in New Zealand: curse these flies; how they bite!"

The surgeon's eyes sparkled; he happened to be an enthusiast in the art of embalming. "Keep him to New Zealand?" said he, contemptuously, "I'll embalm him so that he shall go to England looking just as he does now—by-the-by, I never saw a drowned man keep his colour so well before—ay, and two thousand years after that, if you don't mind the expense."

"The expense! I don't care if it cost me a year's pay. I think of nothing but repairing my blunder as far as I can."

The surgeon was delighted. Standing over his subject, who lay on the captain's table, he told that officer how he should proceed. "I have all the syringes," he said; "a capital collection. I shall inject the veins with care and patience; then I shall remove the brain and the viscera, and provided I'm not stinted in arsenic and spices——"

"I give you carte blanche on the purser: make your preparations, and send for him. Don't tell me how you do it; but do it. I must write and tell poor Lucy I have got him, and am bringing him home to her—dead."

The surgeon was gone about a quarter of an hour; he then returned with two men to remove the body, and found the captain still writing his letter, very sorrowful: but now and then slapping his face or leg with a hearty curse as the flies stung him.

The surgeon beckoned the men in softly, and pointed to the body, for them to carry it out.

Now, as he pointed, his eye, following his finger, fell on something that struck that experienced eye as incredible: he uttered an exclamation of astonishment so loud that the captain looked up directly from his letter; and saw him standing with his finger pointing at the corpse, and his eyes staring astonishment. "What now?" said the captain, and rose from his seat.

"Look! look! look!"

The captain came and looked, and said he saw nothing at all.

"The fly; the fly!" cried the surgeon.

"Yes, I see one of them has been biting him; for there's a little blood trickling. Poor fellow."

"A dead man can't bleed from the small veins in his skin," said the man of art. "He is alive, captain, he is alive, as sure as we stand here, and God's above. That little insect was wiser than us; he is alive."

"Jackson, don't trifle with me, or I'll hang you at the yard-arm. God bless you, Jackson. Is it really possible? Run some of you, get a mirror; I have heard that is a test."

"Mirror be hanged. Doctor Fly knows his business."

All was now flutter and bustle: and various attempts were made to resuscitate David, but all in vain. At last the surgeon had an idea. "This man was never drowned at all," said he: "I am sure of it. This is catalepsy. He may lie this way for a week. But dead he is not. I'll try the douche." David was then by his orders stripped and carried to a place where they could turn a watercock on him from a height: and the surgeon had soon the happiness of pointing out to the captain a slight blush on David's skin in parts, caused by the falling water. All doubts ceased with this: the only fear was lest they should shake out the trembling life by rough usage. They laid him on his stomach, and with a bellows and pipe so acted on the lungs, that at last a genuine sigh issued from the patient's breast. Then they put him in a warm bed, and applied stimulants; and by slow degrees the eyelids began to wink, the eyes to look more mellow, the respiration to strengthen, the heart to beat: "Patience, now," said the surgeon, "patience, and lots of air."

Patience was rewarded. Just four hours after the first treatment, a voice, faint but calm and genial, issued from the bed on their astonished ears, "Good morning to you all."

They kept very quiet. In about five minutes more the voice broke out again, calm and sonorous.

"Where is my money? my fourteen thousand pounds."

These words set them all looking at one another: and very much puzzled the surgeon: they were delivered with such sobriety and conviction. "Captain," he whispered, "ask him if he knows you."

"David," said the captain, kindly, "do you know me?"

David looked at him earnestly, and his old kindly smile broke out, "Know ye, ye dog," said he, "why you are my cousin Reginald. And how came you into this thundering Bank? I hope you have got no money here. Ware land sharks!"

"We are not in a Bank, David; we are on board my ship."

"The deuce we are. But where's my money?"

"Oh, we'll talk about that by-and-by."

The surgeon stepped forward, and said soothingly, "You have been very ill, sir. You have had a fit."

"I believe you are right," said David, thoughtfully.

"Will you allow me to examine your eye?"

"Certainly, doctor."

The surgeon examined David's eye with his thumb and finger; and then looked into it to see how the pupil dilated and contracted.

He rubbed his hands after this examination; "More good news, captain!" then lowering his voice, "*Your friend is as sane as I am.*"

The surgeon was right. A shock had brought back the reason a shock had taken away. But how or why I know no more than the child unborn. The surgeon wrote a learned paper, and explained the whole most ingeniously. I don't believe one word of his explanation, and can't better it; so confine myself to the phenomena. Being now sane, the boundary wall of his memory was shifted. He remembered his whole life up to his demanding his cash back of Richard Hardie; and there his reawakened mind stopped dead short. Being asked if he knew William Thompson, he said, "Yes, perfectly. He was a foretopman on board the Agra, and rather a smart hand. The ship was aground and breaking up: he went out to sea on a piano: but we cut the hawser as he drifted under, and he got safe ashore. David's recovered reason rejected with contempt as an idle dream all that had happened while that reason was in defect. The last phenomena I have to record were bodily; one was noted by Mr. Georgie White in these terms. "Billy's eyes used to be like a seal's: but, now he is a great gentleman, they are like yours and mine." The other was more singular: with his recovered reason came his first grey hair, and in one fortnight it was all as white as snow.

He remained a fortnight on board the Vulture, beloved by high and low. He walked the quarter-deck in the dress of a private gentleman, but looking like an admiral. The sailors touched their hats to him with a strange mixture of veneration and jocoseness. They called him among themselves Commodore Billy. He was supplied with funds by Reginald, and put on board a merchant ship bound for England. He landed, and went straight to Barkington. There he heard his family were in London. He came back to London, and sought them; a friend told him of Green; he went to him, and of course Green saw directly who he was. But able men don't cut business short; he gravely accepted David's commission to find him Mrs. Dodd. Finding him so confident David asked him if he thought he could find Richard Hardie, or his clerk, Noah Skinner; both of whom had levanted from Barkington. Green, who was on a hot scent as to Skinner, demurely accepted both commissions; and appointed David to meet him at a certain place at six.

He came; he found Green's man, who took him up-stairs, and there was that excited group determining the ownership of his receipt.

Now to David that receipt was a thing of yesterday. "It is mine," said he. They all turned to look at this man, with sober passionless voice, and hair of snow. A keen cry from Julia's heart made every heart there quiver, and in a moment she was clinging and sobbing on her father's neck. Edward could only get his hand and press and kiss it. Instinct told them Heaven had given them their father back, mind and all.

Ere the joy and the emotion had calmed themselves, Alfred Hardie slipped out and ran like a deer to Pembroke Street.

Those who were so strangely reunited could not part for a long time, even to go down the stairs one by one.

David was the first to recover his composure: indeed, great tranquillity of spirit had ever since his cure been a remarkable characteristic of this man's nature. His passing mania seemed to have burnt out all his impetuosity, leaving him singularly sober, calm, and self-governed.

Mr. Compton took the money and the will, and promised the executrix, Skinner should be decently interred and all his debts paid out of the estate. He would look in at 66 by-and-by.

And now a happy party wended their way towards Pembroke Street.

But Alfred was beforehand with them: he went boldly up the stairs, and actually surprised Mrs. Dodd and Sampson together.

At sight of him she rose, made him a low curtsey, and beat a retreat He whipped to the door, and set his back against it. "No," said he, saucily.

She drew up majestically, and the colour mounted in her pale face. "What, sir, would you detain me by force?"

"And no mistake," said the audacious boy. "How else can I detain you? when you hate me so?" She began to peep into his sparkling eyes to see the reason of this strange conduct.

"C'way from the door, ye vagabin," said Sampson.

"No, no my friend," said Mrs. Dodd, trembling, and still peering into his sparkling eyes. "Mr. Alfred Hardie is a gentleman at all events: he would not take such a liberty with me, unless he had some excuse for it."

"You are wonderfully shrewd, mamma," said Alfred, admiringly. "The excuse is, I don't hate you as you hate me; and I am very happy."

"Why do you call me mamma to-day? Oh doctor, he calls me mamma."

"Th' audacious vagabin."

"No, no, I cannot think he would call me that unless he had some good news for us both?"

"What good news can he have, except that his trile is goin well, and you don't care for that."

"Oh, how can you say so? I care for all that concerns him: he would not come here to insult my misery with his happiness. He is noble, he is generous, with all his faults. How dare you call me mamma, sir! Call it me again, my dear child: because then I shall

*know* you are come to save my heart from breaking." And with this, the truth must be told, the stately Mrs. Dodd did fawn upon Alfred with palms outstretched and piteous eyes, and certain cajoling arts of her sex.

"Give me a kiss then, mamma," said the impudent boy, "and I *will* tell you a little bit of good news."

She bowed her stately head directly and paid the required tribute with servile humility and readiness.

"Well then," said Alfred, and was just going to tell her all, but caught sight of Sampson making the most expressive pantomime to him to be cautious. "Well," said he, "I have seen a sailor."

"Ah!"

"And he is sure Mr. Dodd is alive."

Mrs. Dodd lifted her hands to heaven but could not speak. "In fact," said Alfred, hesitating (for he was a wretched hand at a fib), "he saw him not a fortnight ago on board ship. But that is not all, mamma, the sailor says he has his reason."

Mrs. Dodd sank on her knees, and said no word to man, but many to the Giver of all good. When she arose she said to Alfred, "Bring this sailor to me. I must speak with him directly."

Alfred coloured. "I don't know where to find him just now."

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Dodd, quietly: and this excited her suspicion; and from that moment the cunning creature lay in wait for Master Alfred. She plied him with questions, and he got more and more puzzled how to sustain his story. At last, by way of bursting out of his own net, he said, "But I am sorry to say his hair has turned white. But perhaps you won't mind that."

"And he hadn't a grey hair."

"It is not grey, like the doctor's; it is white as the driven snow."

Mrs. Dodd sighed; then suddenly turning on Alfred, asked him, "Did the sailor tell you that?"

He hesitated a moment and was lost.

"You have seen him," she screamed; "he is in London: he is in the house. I feel him near me:" and she went into something very like hysterics. Alfred was alarmed, and whispered the truth. The doctor sent him off to meet them, and recommended caution; her nerves were in such a state a violent shock, even of happiness, might kill her.

Thus warned, Julia came into the room alone, and while Dr. Sampson was inculcating self-restraint for her own sake, she listened with a superior smile, and took quite a different line. "Mamma," said she, "he is in the town: but I dare not bring him here till you are composed: his reason is restored; but his nerves are not so strong as they were; now, if you agitate yourself you will agitate him, and will do him a serious mischief."

This crafty speech produced an incredible effect on Mrs. Dodd. It calmed her directly: or rather her great love gave her strength to be calm. "I will not be such a wretch," she said. "See: I am composed, quite composed. Bring me my darling, and you shall see how good I will be: there now, Julia, see how calm I am, quite calm. What, have I borne so much misery, with Heaven's help, and do you think I cannot bear this great happiness, for my dear darling's sake?"

On this they proposed she should retire to her room, and they would go for David.

"Think over the meeting, dear, dear mamma," said Julia, "and then you will behave well for his sake, who was lost to us and is found."

Husband and wife met alone in Mrs. Dodd's room. No eye, even of the children, ventured to witness a scene so strange, so sacred. We may try and imagine that meeting; but few of us can conceive it by the light of our narrow experience. Yet one or two there may be; the world is wide, and the adventures and emotions of our race are many.

One by one all were had up to that sacred room to talk to the happy pair. They found David seated calmly at his wife's feet, her soft hand laid on his white hair, lest he should leave her again: and they told him all the sorrow behind them; and he, genial and kindly as ever, told them all the happiness before them. He spoke like the master of the house, the father of the family, the friend of them all.

But with all his goodness he was sternly resolved to have his 14,000*l.* out of Richard Hardie. He had an interview with Mr. Compton that very night, and the lawyer wrote a letter to Mr. Hardie, saying nothing about the death of Skinner, but notifying that his client, Captain Dodd, had recovered from Noah Skinner the receipt No. 17 for 14,010*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, and he was instructed to sue for it unless repaid immediately. He added Captain Dodd was mercifully restored, and remembered distinctly every particular of the transaction.

They all thought in their innocence that Hardie v. Hardie was now at an end. Captain Dodd could prove Alfred's soi-disant illusion to be the simple truth. But Compton thought that this evidence had come too late. "What, may we not get up and say here *is* papa, and it is all true?" cried Julia, indignant.

"No, Miss Dodd; our case is closed. And take my advice: don't subject your father to the agitation of a trial. We can do without him."

Well then they would all go as spectators, and pray that justice might prevail.

They did go: and all sat together to hear a matter puzzled over, which had David come one day earlier he would have set at rest for ever.

Dick Absolom was put in to prove that Alfred had put two sovereigns on the stumps for him to bowl if he could; and after him the defendant, Mr. Thomas Hardie, a mild, benevolent, weak, gentleman was put into the box, and swore the boy's father had come to him with story after story of the plaintiff's madness, and the trouble it would get him into: and so he had done for the best. His simplicity was manifest, and Saunders worked it ably. When Colt got hold of him, and badgered him, he showed something more than simplicity. He stuttered, he contradicted himself, he perspired, he all but wept.

Colt.—Are you sure you had no spite against him?

Deft.—No.

Colt.—You are not sure, eh?

This candid interpretation of his words knocked the defendant stupid. He made no reply, but looked utterly flabbergasted.

Colt.—Did he not provoke you? Did he not call you an idiot.

Deft.—He might.

Colt. (satirically).—Of course he might. (Laughter.) But did he?

Deft. (plucking up a little spirit).—No. He called me SOFT TOMMY.

This revelation, and the singular appropriateness of the nickname, were so highly relished by an intelligent audience, that it was a long time before the trial could go on for roars. The plaintiff's ringing laugh was heard among the rest.

The cross-examination proceeded in this style till the defendant began to drivel at the mouth a little. At last, after a struggle, he said, with a piteous whine, that he could not help it: he hated signing his name; some mischief always came of it; but this time he had no option.

"No option?" said Colt. "What do you mean?"

And with one or two more turns of the screw, out came this astounding revelation:

"Richard said if I didn't put Taff in one, *he* would put *me* in one."

The Judge.—In one what?

Deft. (weeping).—In one madhouse, my lord.

A peal followed this announcement, and Colt sat down grinning. Saunders rose smiling. "I am much obliged to the learned counsel for making my case," said he: "I need not prolong the sufferings of the innocent. You can go down, Mr. Hardie."

The Judge.—Have you any defence to this action?

"Certainly, my lord."

"Do you call Richard Hardie?"

"No, my lord."

"Then had you not better confine yourself to the question of damages?"

The sturdy Saunders would not take the hint: he replied upon the whole case, and fought hard for a verdict. The line he took was bold; he described Richard Hardie as a man who had acquired a complete power over his weaker brother: and had not only persuaded him by statements, but even compelled him by threats, to do what he believed would be the salvation of his nephew. "Will you imitate the learned counsel's cruelty? Will you strike a child?" In short, he made a powerful appeal to their pity, while pretending to address their judgments.

Then Colt rose like a tower, and assuming the verdict as certain, asked the jury for heavy damages. He contrasted powerfully the defendant's paltry claim to pity with the anguish the plaintiff had undergone. He drew the wedding party, the insult to the bride, the despair of the kidnapped bridegroom; he lashed the whole gang of conspirators concerned in the crime, regretted that they could only make one of all these villains smart, but hinted that Richard and Thomas Hardie were in one boat, and that heavy damages inflicted on Thomas would find the darker culprit out. He rapped out Mr. Cowper's lines on liberty, and they were new to the jury, though probably not to you: he warned the jury that all our liberties depended on *them*. "In vain," said he, "have we beheaded one tyrant, and banished another, to secure those liberties, if men are to be allowed to send away their own flesh and blood into the worst of all prisons for life and not smart for it, in those lamentably

few cases in which the law finds them out and lays hold of them." But it would task my abilities to the utmost, and occupy more time than is left me, to do anything like justice to the fluent fiery eloquence of Colt, Q.C., when he got a great chance like this. Tonat, fulgurat, et rapidis eloquentiæ fluctibus cuncta proruit et proturbat. Bursts of applause, that neither crier nor judge could suppress, bore witness to the deep indignation Britons feel when their hard-earned liberties are tampered with by power or fraud, in defiance of law; and, when he sat down, the jury were ready to fly out at him with 5000*l.* in hand.

Then rose the passionless voice of "justice according to law." I wish I could give the very words. The following is the effect as *I* understood it. Lawyers, forgive my deficiencies.

"This is an important, but not a difficult case. The plaintiff sues the defendant under *the law of England* for falsely imprisoning him in a madhouse. The imprisonment is admitted, and the sufferings of the plaintiff not disputed. The question is, whether he was insane at the time of the act? Now, I must tell you, that in a case of this kind, it lies upon the defendant to prove the plaintiff's insanity, rather than on the plaintiff to prove his own sanity. Has the defendant overcome this difficulty? Illusion is the best proof of insanity: and a serious endeavour was certainly made to fasten an illusion on the plaintiff about a sum of 14,000*l.* But the proof was weak, and went partly on an assumption that all error is hallucination: this is illusory, and would, if acted on, set one half the kingdom imprisoning the other half; and after all, they did not demonstrate that the plaintiff was *in error*. They advanced no *undeniable proof* that Mr. Richard Hardie has not embezzled this 14,000*l.* I don't say it was proved on the other hand that he did embezzle that sum. Richard Hardie suing Alfred Hardie for libel on this evidence might possibly obtain a verdict: for then the burden of proof would lie on Alfred Hardie: but here it lies on those who say he is insane. The fact appears to be that the plaintiff imbibed a reasonable suspicion of his own father's integrity; it was a suspicion founded on evidence, imperfect, indeed, but of a sound character as far as it went. There had been a letter from Captain Dodd to his family, announcing his return with 14,000*l.* upon him, and, while as yet unaware of this letter, the plaintiff heard David Dodd accuse Richard Hardie of possessing improperly 14,000*l.*, the identical sum. At least, he swears to this, and as Richard Hardie was not called to contradict him, you are at liberty to suppose that Richard Hardie had some difficulty in contradicting him on oath. Here, then, true or false, was a rational suspicion; and every man has a right to a rational suspicion of his neighbour, and even to utter it within due limits: and, if he overstep those, the party slandered has his legal remedy; but, if he omits his legal remedy, and makes an attempt of doubtful legality not to confute, but to stifle, the voice of reasonable suspicion, shrewd men will suspect all the more. But then comes a distinct and respectable kind of evidence for the defendant; he urges that the plaintiff was going to sign away his property to his wife's relations. Now, this was proved, and a draft of the deed put in and sworn to. This taken singly has a very extraordinary look. Still, you must consider the plaintiff's reasonable suspicion that money belonging to the Dodds had passed irregularly to the Hardies,

and then the wonder is diminished. Young and noble minds have in every age done generous, self-denying, and delicate acts. The older we get, the less likely we are to be incarcerated for a crime of this character; but we are not to imprison youth and chivalry merely because we have outgrown them. To go from particulars to generals, the defendant, on whom the proof lies, has advanced hearsay and conjecture, and not put their originators into the box. The plaintiff, on whom the proof does not lie, has advanced abundant evidence that he was sane at the time of his incarceration: this was proved to demonstration by friends, strangers, and by himself." Here the judge analysed the testimony of several of the plaintiff's witnesses.

"As to the parties themselves, it is curious how they impersonated, so to speak, their respective lines of argument. The representative of evidence and sound reasoning, though accused of insanity, was precise, frank, rational, and dignified in the witness-box; and I think you must have noticed his good temper. The party, who relied on hearsay and conjecture, was as feeble as they are; he was almost imbecile, as you observed; and, looking at both parties, it really seems monstrous that the plaintiff should be the one confined as a lunatic, and the defendant allowed to run wild and lock up his intellectual superiors. If he means to lock them *all* up, even you and I are hardly safe. (Laughter.) The only serious question, I apprehend, is on what basis the damages ought to be assessed. The plaintiff's counsel has made a powerful appeal to your passions, and calls for vengeance. Now I must tell you you have no right to make yourselves ministers of vengeance, nor even to punish the defendant, in a suit of the kind: still less ought you to strike the defendant harder than you otherwise would—in the vague hope of punishing indirectly the true mover of the defendant and the other puppets. I must warn you against that suggestion of the learned counsel's. If the plaintiff wants vengeance, the criminal law offers it. He comes *here*, not for vengeance, but for compensation, and restoration to that society which he is every way fitted to adorn. More than this—and all our sympathies—it is not for us to give him. But then the defendant's Counsel went too far the other way; his client, he says, is next door to an idiot, and so, forsooth, his purse must be spared entirely. This is all very well if it could be done without ignoring the plaintiff, and his just claim to compensation. Why, if the defendant, instead of being weak-minded, were an idiot, or a lunatic, it would protect him from punishment as a felon, but not from damages in a suit. A sane man is not to be falsely imprisoned by a lunatic without full compensation from the lunatic or his estate: à fortiori, he is not to be so imprisoned by a mere fool without just compensation. Supposing your verdict then to be for the plaintiff, I think vindictive damages would be unfair on this feeble defendant, who has acted recklessly, but under an error, and without malice, or bad faith. On the other hand, nominal or even unsubstantial damages would be unjust to the plaintiff; and perhaps leave in some minds a doubt I think you do not yourselves entertain, as to the plaintiff's perfect sanity during the whole period of his life."

As soon as his lordship had ended, the foreman of the jury said their minds were quite made up long ago.

Si—lence in the court.

We find for the plaintiff, with damages three thousand pounds.

The verdict was received with some surprise by the judge, and all the lawyers except Mr. Colt, and by the people with acclamation; in the midst of which Mr. Colt announced that the plaintiff had just gained his first class at Oxford. "I wish him joy," said the judge.

## CHAPTER LIV.

The verdict was a thunder-clap to Richard Hardie; he had promised Thomas to bear him blameless. The Old Turks, into which he had bought at 72, were down to 71, and that implied a loss of five thousand pounds. On the top of all this came Mr. Compton's letter neatly copied by Colls: Richard Hardie was doubly and trebly ruined.

Then in his despair and hate he determined to baffle them all, ay, and sting the hearts of some of them once more.

He would give Peggy his last shilling; write a line to Alfred, another to Julia, assuring them he had no money, and they had killed him. And with that leave them both the solemn curse of a dying father, and then kill himself.

Not to be interrupted in his plan, he temporized with Mr. Compton; wrote that, if the Receipt was really signed by his agent, of course the loss must fall on him; it was a large sum, but he would sell out and do his best, in ten days from date. With this he went and bought a pistol, and at several chemists' shops a little essential oil of almonds: his plan was to take the poison, and, if it killed without pain, well and good; but if it tortured him, then he would blow his brains out at once.

He soon arranged his worldly affairs, and next day gave Peggy his 500*l.*, and told her she had better keep it for fear he should be arrested. He sent her on an errand to the other part of the town: then with his poison and the pistol before him on the table, wrote a brief but emphatic curse for his son, and Julia; and a line to Peggy to thank her for her fidelity to one so much older than herself, and to advise her to take a tobacconist's shop with his money: when he had done all this, he poured out the fragrant poison and tasted it.

Ere he could drink it, one of those quidnuncs, who are always interrupting a gentleman when he has important business on hand, came running in with all manner of small intelligence. Mr. Hardie put down the glass, and gave him short, sullen answers, in hopes he would then go away and let him proceed to business. And at last his visitor did rise and go. Mr. Hardie sat down with a sigh of relief to his fragrant beverage.

Doesn't the door open, and this bore poke in his head: "Oh, I forget to tell you: the Old Turks are going up to-day, like a shot." And with this he slammed the door again, and was off.

At this the cup began to tremble in the resolute wretch's hand. The Old Turks going up! He poured the poison back into the phial, and put it and the pistol and all the letters, carefully into his pocket, and took a cab to the City.

The report was true; there was an extraordinary movement in the Old Turks. The sultan was about to pay a portion of this loan, being at six per cent.; this had transpired, and at four o'clock the Turks were quoted at 73. Mr. Hardie returned a gainer of 5000*l.* instead of a loser. He locked up the means of death for the present.

And now an ordinary man would have sold out, and got clear of the fatal trap: but this was not an ordinary man: he would not sell a share that day. In the afternoon they rose to 74. He came home, unloaded his pistol, and made himself some brandy-and-water, and with a grim smile, flavoured it with a few drops of the poison—that was a delicious tumbler. The Turks went up, up, up, to 82. Then he sold out, and cleared 49,000*l.*, and all in about ten days.

With this revived the habits of his youth; no more cheating: nothing could excuse that but the dread of poverty. He went to his appointment with Mr. Compton; asked to see the Receipt; said "Yes; that was his form, and Skinner's handwriting; he had never personally received one farthing of the money; Skinner had clearly embezzled it: but that did not matter; of course, Captain Dodd must not lose his money. Send your bill of costs in Hardie v. Hardie to *me*, Mr. Compton," said he, "they shall not be taxed: you have lost enough by me already."

There was an air of dignity and good faith about the man that half imposed even on Compton. And when Mr. Hardie drew out the notes and said, "I should be grateful if you would forgive me the interest; but for a great piece of good fortune on the Stock Exchange, I could never have paid the whole principal," he said, warmly, "The interest should never be demanded through *him*."

He called in Colls, delivered up the Receipt, and received the 14,010*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* from Mr. Hardie.

O immortal Cash! You, like your great inventor, have then a kind of spirit as well as a body; and on this, not on your grosser part, depends your personal identity. So long as that survives, your body may be recalled to its lawful owner from Heaven knows where.

Mr. Compton rushed to Pembroke Street and put this hard, hard Cash in David Dodd's hands once more.

Love and Constancy had triumphed: and Julia and Alfred were to be married and go down to Albion Villa to prepare it for the whole party: tenants no more: Alfred had bought it. The Commissioners of Lunacy had protected his 20,000*l.* zealously from the first: and his trustees had now paid the money over.

Alfred, consulted by Mrs. Dodd, whose pet of pets he now was, as to the guests to be asked to the wedding breakfast, suggested "None but the tried friends of our adversity."

"What an excellent idea!" said Mrs. Dodd, naïvely.

Dr. Sampson being duly invited asked if he should bring his Emulsion.

This proposal puzzled all but Mrs. Dodd. She was found laughing heartily in a corner without any sound of laughter. Being detected and pointed out by Julia, she said, with a little crow, "He means his wife!

Yes, certainly, bring your Emulcent"—pretending he had used that more elegant word—"and then they will all see how well you can behave."

Accordingly he brought a lady, who was absurdly pretty to be the mother of several grown young ladies and gentlemen, and two shades more quiet and placid than Mrs. Dodd. She quietly had her chair placed by Dr. Sampson's, and, whenever he got racy, she put a hand gently on his shoulder, and by some mesmeric effect it moderated him as Neptune did the waves in the Æneid. She was such a mistress of this mesmeric art, that she carried on a perfect conversation with her other neighbour, yet modulated her lion lord with a touch of that composing hand, in a parenthetical manner, and even while looking another way.

This hand, soft as down, yet irresistible, suppressed the great art of healing, vital chronometry, the wrongs of inventors, the collusions of medicine, the Mad Ox, and all but drawing-room topics, at the very first symptom, and only just allowed the doctor to be the life and soul of the party.

Julia and Mrs. Dodd had a good cry at parting. Of course Alfred consoled them; reminded them it was only for a week, and carried off his lovely prize, who in the carriage soon dried her eyes upon his shoulder.

Then she applied to her new lord and master for information. "They *say* that you and me are one, now," said she, interrogatively.

He told her triumphantly it was so.

"At that rate you are Julius and I am Elfrida," said she.

"That is a bargain," said he, and sealed it on the sweet lips that were murmuring Heaven so near him.

In this sore-tried and now happy pair the ardour of possession lasted long, and was succeeded by the sober but full felicity of conjugal love and high esteem combined. They were so young and elastic, that past sorrows seemed but to give one zest more to the great draught of happiness they now drank day by day. They all lived together at Albion Villa, thanks to Alfred. He was by nature combative, and his warlike soul was roused at the current theory that you cannot be happy under the same roof with your wife's mother. "That is cant," said he, to Mrs. Dodd; "let us, you and I, trample on it hand in hand."

"My child," said poor Mrs. Dodd, sorrowfully, "I am a poor hand at trampling; and everybody says a mother-in-law in the house bores a young gentleman sadly."

"If a young gentleman can't live happy with *you*, mamma," said he, kissing her, "he is a little snob, that is all, and not fit to live at all. Delenda est Cantilena! That means 'Down with Cant!'"

They did live together: and behold eleven French plays, with their thirty-three English adaptations, confuted to the end of time.

Creatures so high-bred as Mrs. Dodd never fidget one. There is a repose about them; they are balm to all those they love, and blister to none. Item, no stranger could tell by Mrs. Dodd's manner whether Edward or Alfred was her own son.

Oh, you happy little villa! you were as like Paradise as any mortal dwelling can be. A day came, however, when your walls could no

longer hold all the happy inmates. Julia presented Alfred with a lovely boy: enter nurses, and the villa showed symptoms of bursting. Two months more, and Alfred and his wife and boy overflowed into the next villa. It was but twenty yards off; and there was a double reason for the migration. As often happens after a long separation, Heaven bestowed on Captain and Mrs. Dodd another infant to play about their knees at present, and help them grow younger instead of older: for tender parents begin life again with their children.

The boys were nearly of a size, though the nephew was a month or two older than his uncle, a relationship that was early impressed on their young minds, and caused those who heard their prattle many a hearty laugh.

"Mrs. Dodd," said a lady, "I couldn't tell by your manner which is yours and which is your daughter's."

"Why they are both mine," said Mrs. Dodd, piteously, and opening her eyes with gentle astonishment.

As years rolled on Dr. Sampson made many converts at home and abroad. The foreign ones acknowledged their obligations. The leading London physicians managed more skilfully; they came into his ideas, and bit by bit reversed their whole practice, and, twenty years after Sampson, began to strengthen the invalid at once, instead of first prostrating him, and so causing either long sickness or sudden death. But, with all this, they disowned their forerunner, and still called him a quack while adopting his quackery. This dishonesty led them into difficulties. To hide that their whole practice in medicine was reversed on *better information*, they went from shuffle to shuffle, till at last they reached this climax of fatuity and egotism—THE TYPE OF DISEASE IS CHANGED.

Natura mutatur, non nos mutamur.

O, mutable Nature and immutable doctors!

O, unstable Omniscience, and infallible Nescience!

The former may err; the latter never—in its own opinion.

At this rate, draining the weak of their life-blood was the right thing in Cervantes's day: and, when he observed that it killed men like sheep, and said so under the head of Sangrado, he was confounding his own age with an age to come three hundred years later, in which coming age depletion was *going* to be wrong.

Molière—in lashing the whole scholastic system of lancet, purge, and blister as one of slaughter—committed the same error: mistook his century for one to come.

And Sampson, thirty years ago, sang the same tune, and mistook his inflammatory generation for the cool generation as yet unborn. In short, it is the characteristic of a certain blunder called genius to see things too far in advance. The surest way to avoid this is not to see them at all; but go blindly by the cant of the hour. Race moutonniere, va!

Sampson was indignant at finding that these gentry, after denouncing him for years as a quack, were pilfering his system, yet still reviling him. He went in a towering passion, and lashed them by tongue and pen: told them they were his subtractors now as well as detractors,

asked them how it happened that in countries where there is no Sampson the type of disease remains unchanged, depletion is the practice, and death the result, as it was in every age?

No man, however stout, can help being deeply wounded when he sees his ideas stolen, yet their author and publisher disowned. Many men's hearts have been broken by this: but I doubt whether they were really great men.

Don't tell me Lilliput ever really kills Brobdignag. Except of course when Brobdignag takes medical advice of Lilliput.

Dr. Sampson had three shields against subtraction, detraction, and all the wrongs inventors endure; to wit, a choleric temper, a keen sense of humour, and a good wife. He storms and rages at his detracting pupils; but ends with roars of laughter at their impudence. I am told he still hopes to meet with justice some day, and to give justice a chance, he goes to bed at ten, for, says he,

> Jinny us, jinny us,
> Take care of your carcase,

and explains that no genius ever lived to ninety without being appreciated.

"If Chatterton and Keats had attended to this they would have been all right. If James Watt had died at fifty he would have been all wrong; for at fifty he was a failure: so was the painter Etty, th' English Tishin." And then he accumulates examples.

His last distich bearing on Hard Cash is worth recording. "Miss Julee," said he, "y' are goen to maerry int' a strange family—

> Where th' iijit puts the jinnyus
> In-til a madhus,"

which, like most of the droll things this man said, was true: for Soft Tommy and Alfred were the two intellectual extremes of the whole tribe of Hardies.

Mrs. Archbold, disappointed both in love and revenge, reposed her understanding, and soothed her mind, with Frank Beverley and opium. This soon made the former deep in love with her, and his intellect grew by contact with hers. But one day news came from Australia that her husband was dead. Now, perhaps I shall surprise the reader if I tell him that this Edith Archbold began her wedded life a good, confiding, loving, faithful woman. Yet so it was: the unutterable blackguard she had married, he it was who laboured to spoil her character, and succeeded at last, and drove her, unwilling at first, to other men. The news of his death was like a shower-bath; it roused her. She took counsel with herself, and hope revived in her strong head and miserable heart. She told Frank, and watched him like a hawk. He instantly fell on his knees, and implored her to marry him directly. She gave him her hand and turned away, and shed the most womanly tear that had blessed her for years. "I am not mad, you know," said poor Frank; "I am only a bit of a muff." To make a long story short, she exerted all her intelligence, and with her help Frank took measures towards superseding his Commission of Lunacy. Now, in such a case, the Lord Chancellor always examines the patient in person, What was

the consequence? Instead of the vicarious old Wolf, who had been devouring him at third and fourth hand, Frank had two interviews with the chancellor himself: a learned, grave, upright gentleman, who questioned him kindly and shrewdly; and finding him to be a young man of small intellectual grasp, but not the least idiotic or mad, superseded his commission in defiance of his greedy kinsfolk, and handed him his property. He married Edith Archbold, and she made him as happy as the day was long. For the first year or two she treated his adoration with good-natured contempt; but, as years rolled on, she became more loving, and he more knowing. They are now a happy pair, and all between her first honest love, and this her last, seems to her a dream.

So you see a female rake can be ameliorated by a loving husband, as well as a male rake by a loving wife.

It sounds absurd, and will offend my female readers and their unchristian prejudices, but that black-browed jade is like to be one of the best wives and mothers in England. But then, mind you, she had always—brains.

I do not exactly know why Horace puts together those two epithets, "just" and "tenacious of purpose." Perhaps he had observed they go together. To be honest, I am not clear whether this is so on the grand scale. But certainly the two features did meet remarkably in one of my characters—Alfred Hardie. The day the bank broke, he had said he would pay the creditors. He now set to work to do it by degrees. He got the names and addresses, lived on half his income, and paid half away to those creditors: he even asked Julia to try and find Maxley out, and do something for him. "But don't let me see him," said he, trembling, "for I could not answer for myself." Maxley was known to be cranky, but harmless, and wandering about the country. Julia wrote to Mr. Green about him:

Alfred's was an uphill game; but fortune favours the obstinate as well as the bold. One day, about four years after his marriage with Julia, being in London, he found a stately figure at the corner of a street, holding out his hand for alms, too dignified to ask it except by that mute and touching gesture.

It was his father.

Then, as truly noble natures must forgive the fallen, Alfred was touched to the heart, and thought of the days of his childhood, before temptation came. "Father," said he, "have you come to this?"

"Yes, Alfred," said Richard, composedly: "I undertook too many speculations, especially in land and houses; they seemed profitable at first too; but now I am entirely hampered: if you would but relieve me of them, and give me a guinea a week to live on, I would forgive all your disobedient conduct."

Alfred bit his lip, had a wrestle with the old Adam; and said gently, Come home with me, Sir.

He took him to Barkington, bag and baggage; and his good Christian wife received the old man with delight; she had prayed day and night for this reconciliation. Finding his son so warm, and being himself as cool, Richard Hardie entrapped Alfred into an agreement, to board and

lodge him, and pay him a guinea every Saturday at noon; in return for this Alfred was to manage Richard's property, and pocket the profits, if any. Alfred assented: the old man chuckled at his son's simplicity, and made him sign a formal agreement to that effect.

This done he used to sit brooding and miserable nearly all the week till guinea time came; and then brightened up a bit. One day Alfred sent for an accountant to look after his father's papers, and see if matters were really desperate.

The accountant was not long at work, and told Alfred the accounts were perfectly clear, and kept in the most admirable order. "The cash balance is 60,000*l.*," said he: "and many of the rents are due. It is an agent you want, not an accountant."

"What are you talking about? a balance of 60,000*l.*?" Alfred was stupified.

The accountant however soon convinced him by the figures it was so.

Alfred went with the good news to his father.

His father went into a passion. "That is one side of the account, ye fool," said he, "think of the rates, the taxes, the outgoings. You want to go from your bargain, and turn me on the world; but I have got you in black and white, tight, tight."

Then Alfred saw the truth, and wondered at his past obtuseness.

His father was a monomaniac.

He consulted Sampson, and Sampson told him to increase the old man's comforts on the sly, and pay him his guinea a week. "It's all you can do for him."

Then Alfred employed an agent, and received a large income from his father's land and houses, and another from his consols. The old gentleman had purchased westward of Hyde Park Square, and had bought with excellent judgment till his mind gave way. Alfred never spent a farthing of it on himself: but he took some for his father's creditors. "All justice is good," said he, "even wild justice." Some of these unhappy creditors he found in the workhouse; the Misses Lunley that survived were there, alas! He paid them their four thousand pounds, and restored them to society. The name of Hardie began to rise again from the dust.

Now, while Richard Hardie sat brooding and miserable, expecting utter ruin, and only brightening up on guinea day, Julia had a protégé with equally false views but more cheerful ones. It was an old man with a silver beard, and a machine with which he stamped leather into round pieces of silver, in his opinion. Nothing could have shaken that notion out of his mind. Julia confirmed it. She let it be known that she would always cash five pieces of round leather from Mr. Matthews' mint per day, and ten on Friday, when working men are poorest.

She contrived this with diabolical, no, angelical cunning, to save the old man from ridicule, and to do his soul much good. All souls were dear to her. What was the consequence? He went about with his mint, and relieved poor people, and gratified his mania at the same time. His face began to beam with benevolence and innocent self-satisfaction. On Richard Hardie's all was cordage: and deep gloom sat on his ever-knitted brow.

Of these two men which was the rich man; he who had nothing, yet

thought he possessed enough for himself and his neighbours: or he who rolled in wealth, but writhed under imaginary poverty?

One reflection more. Do not look to see Providence dash the cup of prosperity from every dishonest hand; or you will often be disappointed: yet this, if you look closer, you shall often see; such a man holds the glittering cup tight, and nectar to the brim; but into that cup a shadowy hand squeezes some subtle ingredient, which turns that nectar to wormwood.

Richard Hardie died, his end being hastened by fear of poverty coming like an armed man, and his guinea a week going. Matthews met with an accident, and, being impervious to pain, but subject to death, was laid beside his poor mistress in St. Anne's churchyard. Julia buried him, and had a headstone put to his grave; and, when this was done, she took her husband to see it. On that stone was fresh carved the true name of the deceased, James Maxley.

"I have done what you told me," said Julia, her sweet voice trembling a little. Even she did not quite know how her husband would take it, or bear it.

"I *know it*," said Alfred, softly. "I saw who your Matthews was; but I could not speak of him, even to you." He looked at the grave in silence.

Julia's arms were round his neck in a moment, and her wet cheek consoling his.

"You have done right, my good Christian wife. I wish I was like you. My poor little Jenny!"

Richard Hardie's papers were found in perfect order; and among them an old will leaving 14,000*l.* to Edward Dodd.

On this being announced to Edward, he suggested that it was a fraud; Alfred had been at him for a long time with offers of money, and failing there, and being a fine impetuous fellow, had lost his temper and forged a will, in his, Edward's, favour.

This scandalous defence broke down. The document was indisputable, and the magic sum was forced down Master Edward's throat, nilly willy. Thus rose the Hard Cash a second time from the grave.

All this enabled the tenacious Alfred to carry out a deeply-cherished design. Hardie's late bank had been made into a shop; but it belonged to Mrs. Dodd; he bought it of her, and set up the bank again, with Edward as managing partner. This just suited Edward, who sadly wanted employment. Hardie and Co. rose again, and soon wiped out the late disgraceful episode, and hooked on to the past centuries of honour and good credit. No creditor of Richard Hardie was left unpaid. Alfred went in for politics; stood for Barkington, was defeated by seventeen: took it as a matter of course; told his friends he had never succeeded in anything at first; nor been beaten in the end; stood again, and became M.P. for Barkington, whence to dislodge him I pity any one who tries.

For a long time Mrs. Dodd was nervous, and used to wake with a start at night, and put out her hand to make sure David was not lost again. But this wore off.

For years the anniversary of that fatal day, when he was brought

home on the stretcher, came back to them all as a day of gloom. But that wore off.

Sometimes the happiness of her family seemed incredible to her, remembering what they had all gone through. At first, their troubles were too terrible and recent to be discussed. But even that wore off, and they could talk of it all; and things bitter at the time became pleasant to remember.

One midsummer day they had all dined together rather early at Albion Villa, and sat on the lawn with Mrs. Dodd's boy and Julia's boy and girl playing about these ladies' knees. Now after a little silence, Mrs. Dodd, who had been thinking quietly of many things, spoke to them all, and said: "If my children and I had not been bosom-friends, we never should have survived that terrible time we have passed through, my dears. Make friends of your children, my child."

"Ah, that I will!" said Julia; and caught up the nearest brat and kissed it impetuously: for Wifehood and Maternity had not un-Julia'd her.

"It wasn't only our being friends, mamma," said Edward; "it was our sticking together so."

In looking back on the story now ended, I incline to Mrs. Dodd's conclusion. Almost my first word was that she and her children were bosom-friends; and my last is to congratulate them that it was so. Think of their various trials and temptations, and imagine what would have become of them if family love and unity had not abounded. Their little house was built on the sure foundation of true family affection: and so the winds of adversity descended, and the floods came, and burst upon that house, but could not prevail against it; it was founded on a rock.

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