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Thomas

HOWARD PINCKNEY.

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HOWARD PINCKNEY.

A **Novel.**

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "CLINTON BRADSHAW," "EAST
AND WEST," ETC., ETC.

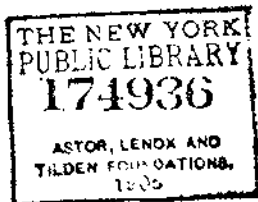
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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HOWARD PINCKNEY.

CHAPTER I.

PUNCTUAL to her promise, Nurse Agnes, or as she was commonly called, Aunt Agnes, visited Granny Gammon on the ensuing day. Agnes thought the old crone very ill; so much so that she determined to remain with her. It was the first day of the fall races; and Bobby, with the assistance of Pompey, who had laid up the odd change which his master and others had given him, had established a booth on the ground for the double purpose of seeing the sport of which he was passionately fond, notwithstanding the injury he had received in indulging in it, and at the same time of making a little money.

Peggy and Aunt Agnes were the watchers by the humble bed of Granny Gammon. The light of life in the invalid was waning fast to extinction. She seemed like one who was sinking to sleep after a long and toilsome day's work, but whom the excess of labour had made restless, for she moved at intervals, and would open her eyes languidly for a moment as she tried to change her position. The wrinkled face, the freckled forehead, the cheeks and chin covered with large moles, the thin and hueless lips,

over which its muscles had no control, all betokened bodily debility, that could not under any circumstance hold the vital spark long, and which now was about to yield it without nature having the strength to make an effort to hold it.

The old woman's mind evidently wandered at intervals throughout the day; for at times she would pick the bed-clothes as though she were picking cotton; and when Towzer, that Bobby had left behind, barked as the numerous carriages and other vehicles rattled to the races, Granny Gammon would in a querulous tone call to Bobby not to teaze the dog, or bid the animal be still and let her go to sleep. Then, again, she would rouse herself, ask after Bobby, speak reprovingly of the races, and turn and talk to Agnes upon religious topics, as if she sought ghostly consolation.

"You must not be cast down, child;" said Agnes, in a low voice to Peggy, in one of those periods when the patient appeared to sleep; "you must not be cast down, but it is not in the nature of things that your grandmother could live long; and yet," she continued, in a musing tone to herself, "I thought I should go first as I am the oldest, but all in God's appointed time. Peggy, let this be a lesson to you, that when you grow old you may look back without regret, and forward with hope. (Peggy was weeping, bitterly.) Child! it is natural that you should weep, for your grandmother is near and dear to you, but we're all in the hands of a merciful God. He knows what is best for us, and what we take for evil is meant for good."

"What shall I do, what shall I do; what will Bobby do?" said Peggy, sobbing aloud, "if Granny dies."

"Don't laugh so, child," said the old grandmother, making a restless movement with her hands, "when you know I'm ailing." Then opening her eyes and

casting them on Agnes, she continued after a pause, "Aunty, you're kind to come and see me—do you know I am like to die. Now ain't it strange that the youngest should die first, ain't it a strange ordering of Providence."

"We are all in God's hands," said Agnes, reverently looking up.

Thus passed the day. Half an hour after night Bobby returned from the races, and stealing in quietly to his Cousin Peggy's side, he asked how his Granny was.

"Awful bad, Bobby," said Peggy, "awful; what did you do at the races?"

"First rate," said Bobby; "I had such a run from fellows that spent money like water—see here (producing a handful of money tied up in the end of a pocket handkerchief). Poor Granny, you know Cousin Peggy, she was always wishing as how that we had a cow of our own? Well, there was a first rate cow and calf raffled for at the races, for fifty dollars. Jack Gordon was there knocking round and spending money like dirt, and corned at that; so he takes a chance for five dollars—he's always good luck—so he wins her. Then he come to me and made friends, you know, that is, he wanted to—he spent money, hard silver, treating the fellows at my booth all day. So I could'nt but be civil to him, inasmuch as he said as how he was in a pet when he said them aggravating things. Well, he stuck to it that I should take the cow and calf; he'd let 'em go, he said, at twenty, cash. There'd been a fellow treating round at my booth, an' I had changed a twenty for him; there, said Jack Gordon, give me that note and take the cow and calf. Well, you know, Cousin Peggy, if I don't like Jack Gordon, a bargain's a bargain, an' I'd just as lieve get one out of him as any body. Now Granny 'll have a cow, won't she?"

The bed of the invalid was in the corner of the only room that the cabin contained; a rough pair of stairs led to a loft where Bobby slept; and it was in the corner, by the stairs, that he held this conversation in a whisper with his cousin. His granny was in a lethargy, from which his entrance had not roused her. Agnes sat beside her, watching, anxiously, her countenance.

At this moment, without the inmates of the cabin having heard the least sound of approaching footsteps or voices, the door was thrown suddenly open; and a constable and several other persons roughly entered.

The constable glanced round the room, and on beholding Bobby, who was in the act of exhibiting his money to Peggy, he walked up to him, and seizing him by the shoulder, said:

"Come, young man, give me up that money: I'm sorry for you, but you're caught at last."

"In God's name, what's the matter?" asked Agnes, "have you no respect for the aged and the dying, to break in the house in this way?"

Here Gordon entered the cabin, and said, in a tone, of which he could not stifle the malignity:

"He'll not deny it: where is it?" The constable handed Gordon a bank bill; "there," said Gordon, "did you not give me that note for my cow—look at that other money, damn me, if it ain't the same kind. Peggy, how do you do? Didn't you give me that note, Cousin Bobby?"

The constable, rough as he appeared, was struck with compassion on beholding the aged and sick grandmother, as she opened her eyes, and gazed on them in bewilderment, and the unutterable astonishment and anguish depicted in Peggy's features; he therefore said to Bobby:

"See, Bob Gammon, I just say to you, that you

needn't say anything to criminate yourself unless you choose."

"Criminate myself!" said Bobby, in seeming amazement, "I don't understand: let me look at it—yes, I did give Jack Gordon that bill for his cow; at any rate a bill a good deal like, for it had just such a cross on the corner."

"Who did you get it from?" asked the constable.

"That's what I don't exactly know," said Bobby. "I never saw the man before, to my knowledge, but I could tell him if I was to see him again."

"Well," exclaimed Gordon, "you passed that note on me, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Bobby, "I think that is the note."

"Gentlemen, you hear that," said Gordon. "Mark! he don't deny it. My little lark, you're a bright one. That note I went to pass at the tavern, and they had a warrant out on me for passing counterfeit money. I just want to saddle the right horse, that's all. Look if that money ain't like this," said Gordon to the constable, who had taken from the boy the money he had been showing to his cousin when they entered.

"Yes," said the constable, "these notes are on the same bank. I'm sorry for you, young man, but you must go with me."

"Where, where?" asked Peggy, taking, imploringly, the hand of the officer.

"Before Squire Norris, Miss Peggy—I must do my duty—I'm 'fraid it's all up with him."

"All up with who?" said Granny Gammon, rousing herself, and speaking in a tone that was strangely sharp and hollow by turns. "No, I'm ailing; but I'm younger than Aunty Agnes. So I thought I'd set up with the old woman—it's going hard with her. John Gordon, what do ye want," she exclaimed, now first recognising Gordon; "did'nt I forbid you coming here?"

"Granny, I had to come here, or else go to jail. Some people wanted to cry mad dog at me, as Peggy knows. That hurt my character with a good many. I'm for saddling the right horse. Where did Bobby get all this counterfeit money from?"

The old Granny uttered a shrill scream, and raising herself up in bed, gazed at Gordon with a look from which all mental wandering had fled.

"It's you, is it, John Gordon; and you accuse my Bobby of this. You lay it at his door, and my door, and I a dying woman, and his grandmother. You know, John Gordon, in your heart—I see it in your face—you know he is as innocent as the babe unborn. No, you've beset him, and you've beset my Peggy—and you've come in my dying hour—and all in hate. You'll think of this when your time comes, John Gordon—an' it will not come to you in your bed. I'm dying, an' I tell ye so—it will not come to you in your bed. Go out of my house, an' let me die in peace, if ye don't I'll curse you with my dying breath at my own door-stone. Bobby is innocent as a lamb," he continued, addressing the constable, but in a faltering tone, and gasping for breath; "he's as innocent as a lamb," she muttered again, and sunk back upon her pillow a corpse. The excitement and exertion had exhausted the little remnant of life.

Bobby broke away from the officer, who had in fact released his grasp at the horror of the scene, and, with his Cousin Peggy, threw himself by the lifeless body of his grandmother. He spoke not a word, while Peggy's screams rent the air.

Gordon looked on conscience-smitten, and appalled, but on Aunt Agnes saying to him:

"That if Bobby was innocent he had an awful sin to answer for," he rallied and replied:—

"Did he deny passing the money on me? As for

the old woman, how did I know she was sick ; damn her—her time was come, any how !”

“ Come, said the constable,” going up to Bobby, and raising him from the bed ; “ this is hard, but I must do my duty.”

“ For God’s sake,” exclaimed Peggy, “ have a little pity on us !—on me, must I be all alone ? You heard what Granny said, they were her dying words ! indeed he is innocent.”

“ Cousin Peggy,” said Bobby, in a tone strangely calm and decided for one of his years and character under the circumstances—“ I’ll go ; Aunt Agnes will stay with you. As sure as Granny is dead, there, I’m innocent,—she spoke the truth. You stay by poor Granny,—I’ll go.” He walked up to his cousin, embraced her with a long and passionate embrace, while she sobbed as though her heart was bursting. He then stepped up to the corpse, took it’s hand in his, gazed upon the relaxed features intensely, as if to satisfy himself that the spirit had departed ; and pressing his lips to its forehead, said, calmly, “ I’m ready,” and walked firmly out, followed by all of the party, save Gordon, who lingered a minute, when Aunt Agnes told him he had better go.

“ Peggy, let me speak to you ; just one moment,” said he.

“ Peggy, come here, I tell you,” he said, again, in a commanding tone, and stamping with his foot upon the floor.

“ You’re enough to make the dead body rise and drive you out,” said Aunt Agnes in deep indignation ; “ begone, or I’ll call the constable and bid him take you.”

Doggedly Gordon left the cabin, and Agnes rose and fastened the door after him. The persons who had left with Bobby in custody, stood within a few steps of the cabin, seemingly waiting for him.

As the door closed on him, he called out, and asked with an oath, "If they were not agoing to search the house."

"Not now, Gordon," said the constable; "here's enough of proof—outside here between the logs,—this chap found a tin box full of it."

"Go ahead, then," said Gordon, "to the squire's." The whole party accordingly proceeded to the village, to the residence of Squire Norris.

CHAPTER II.

LATTERLY, the whole country had been flooded with counterfeit money. Justice had been on the alert to discover the offenders, but, as yet, unless it was fastened upon Bobby, without avail. Suspicion had been hovering round different persons, but had not been steadily fixed upon any one. It attached to Gordon as strongly as to any other; but nothing like proof of the fact had transpired against him. If he were guilty he therefore had a double motive for fixing the charge on Bobby; viz., to clear his own skirts, and to revenge himself upon the Gammons.

At the tavern in Springdale Gordon had, with much ostentation, displayed the bank note which he had received from Bobby in payment for the cow, exclaiming, "It was a beauty."

The tavern-keeper on inspection pronounced it a counterfeit; and Gordon stoutly maintained it was not. High words grew between them, till at last he told Gordon that it was his belief that he knew it was a counterfeit; and that he believed it was not the first time he had it knowingly in his possession. At this Gordon knocked the tavern-keeper down. The publican was an arrant coward, and therefore he made no attempts at retaliation, but gathered himself up, and forthwith repaired to the magistrate, who issued a warrant against Gordon, both on the charge of

passing counterfeit money, and for the assault and battery.

Gordon plead guilty to the assault and battery, and paid the fine. On the charge of passing counterfeit money, he boldly asserted his innocence. There was no proof against him, and he was discharged, when he obtained a warrant against Bobby, stating that he had received the note from him in payment for the cow, and that he believed the boy had quantities of it. Our readers know the result, so far. On arriving at the magistrate's office they found the squire seated at his desk, and eager for the examination. Gordon was sworn. He repeated the charge which he had made against Bobby at the boy's grandmothers', though more circumstantially, being under oath. When he got through, Bobby said he didn't deny it, that he gave Gordon the note in payment for the cow, and that he received it from a man whom he did not know by name, but whom he would recognise should he ever meet him. He was, however, completely stricken dumb; when another witness, whose testimony was corroborated by the constable, produced a tin box filled with counterfeit paper on the same bank with the note passed on Gordon, and made oath that he found it without the door of Granny Gammon's cabin, between the logs. The constable also testified that he had seen that very box, which he knew by a mark on the lid, in Bobby's possession at the races.

"Robert Gammon, have you anything to say?" asked the magistrate.

Bobby shook his head, but spoke not.

"You had better make a clean heart, Robert Gammon, and tell all about your accomplices."

Bobby made no answer.

"What have you to say about the box?" asked the magistrate, solicitous of obtaining some clue for the detection of others.

"It's true," said Bobby; "I had that very box at the races to-day. Jack Gordon asked me to let him look at it, and I took my money out of it, and give it to him."

"Didn't I give it back to you?" asked Gordon.

"You did," replied Bobby.

"Why didn't you say so, then, my lark—you don't want to fix counterfeiting on me, do you?"

Without noticing the remark of Gordon, Bobby said to the magistrate:

"The box was give to me by Jack Gordon in the city, at the circus, when I got into that other counterfeiting scrape. I had it ever since till to day; he told me it was a good thing to keep money in, an' I kept mine in it. As I said he gave it back to me, and, somehow, a little time afterwards, I lost it on the race-ground, or it was stolen from me."

"You'd better make a clean heart," repeated the magistrate.

"I've no more to say," replied Bobby.

"I must commit you," said Norris; "the county court's now sitting, so you'll have a quick trial. The witnesses must give security for their appearance."

A few minutes afterwards, without saying a word, Bobby entered the jail in the custody of the constable, followed by Gordon, who told the officer in a whisper that he thought he could get something out of the boy about the gang of counterfeiters, if he would let him hold a little private discourse with him. The jailer willingly consented, and Bobby and Gordon were shown into a kind of anti-room, and left together.

"Bobby," said Gordon, in a sympathising tone, advancing to the boy's side; "if you'll be my friend, I'll be yours. I can get you out of this scrape, yet."

"How?" said Bobby, throwing his eye on him for a moment, and then letting it fall on the ground.

"Bobby, we must understand each other every pace and more in the matter. I appeared hard on you like at your Granny's, and afore Norris, that I might blind them, and do for you to a greater certainty. When I was taken up you couldn't blame me for telling where I got the money, could you—now say, could you?"

"Go on," said Bobby; "say what you have to say."

"But mind," resumed Gordon; "we must understand each other," and as he spoke he sunk his voice to a whisper, "we must mind how we talk here, these damn dull walls have quick ears, I can tell you. Are you agreed?"

"Say what you want to say, at once, Jack Gordon; what are you afraid of?"

"Well! you know, Bobby, I want to serve you; the day you got in to that other fuss I rode all the way out here to tell your folks, and get Mr. Sidney to stand your friend; you know that. I was determined to stand by you. I rode in town that very night, and went to the squire's where they had you locked up, on purpose to tell you what I'd done; but you had put. This shows you how I felt to you."

Gordon paused for a moment, and snuffed with his fingers the slim tallow-candle which the jailer had left on an old oaken table near which the boy stood. Bobby said nothing, and Gordon resumed. "I am a friend of yours, I am by ——. But one good turn deserves another; you see I can quit the village and not appear; then, what the devil will be the proof against you—don't you mark it? This counterfeiting business is penitentiary for ten years. Ten years! I'd die first; ten years—little more to eat than bread and water—worked to death; shut up between four walls; no races; no pleasure of any kind; not allowed to see your nearest and dearest relatives. I'm your friend,

Bob Gammon, and I'd save you—I would on my soul ; but you must help me if I help you."

"How can I help you—say it out!" exclaimed Bobby.

"Well, you see, I'm your friend—and your Cousin Peggy, I am her friend. She's alone, now your granny's dead ; she 'll have nobody to take care of her—if you go to the penitentiary she will no doubt feel herself disgraced and quit the country—turn out, God knows what ; and perhaps you'll never see her again. You see I tell you truth, plain truth ; may I be blasted if I don't deal with you like brother with brother. Peggy once as much as promised to marry me, but those lying tales that's told round, put the devil in her against me—she don't think that I may be accused of things and be innocent as you are—you're into a worse fix than ever I was, and I should be sorry if she should believe ill against you. To come to the point, this is the thing—you send for her to-morrow and tell her what I have said—point to her what a lonely condition she is in, and that nobody can save you but me. Paint it all to her and tell—you can persuade her—to marry me."

"Jack Gordon," said Bobby, firmly, "I'd see my Cousin Peggy dead, stone dead beside my old granny, and rot in the penitentiary, before I'd do *that*."

"You would, hey?" inquired Gordon through his clenched teeth.

"I would," rejoined Bobby, turning away from him.

"Then you shall rot there," muttered Gordon, as he passed out of the room, and closed the door after him. "I can't get much out of him," said Gordon to the jailor, as that worthy proceeded to let him out of the prison. "He's a rum one—he'll die with his shoes on."

As the door closed on Gordon, he stepped out in

front of the jail from which the crowd had dispersed, and eyed the building, as if he would scrutinize its power of detaining the unfortunate lad. Then, with a lowering brow, he turned away, and walked quickly through the village.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER Aunt Agnes shut the door on Gordon, she went to the bed and composed decently the body of the deceased.

"Child," said Agnes, "your grandmother could hardly have lived over night, but the sight of that man, Gordon, on such a message, was too much for her. But be not cast down. Come to me, child; and kneel by the bed-side, and let us pray for strength to endure the ills of life and resignation to our fate, whatever it may be, for we are in the hands of a just and merciful God."

So speaking, the old woman knelt down with Peggy by her side, and prayed fervently and long, and particularly for the orphans, who were now left to their own guidance on the cold charity of the world.

After praying, she arose from her knees, and said to Peggy—

"Now, child, do you go up stairs and lie down on your cousin's bed—I'll watch by your grandmother, and in the morning you can go to the village and have everything arranged as it ought to be."

"Mercy!" said Peggy, as she observed the candle flickering in the socket; "that's all the light there is in the house."

"No matter, child; God's eye is on us in darkness as well as in light. Come, compose yourself; go to rest, child."

“Not for the world I would’nt go to bed,” said Peggy; “no, I must muster courage, and go up to Holly, and tell the folks about poor Bobby’s misfortune and granny’s death—alone, we’re all alone now, and I must do what I can by Bobby.”

“That is a proper sentiment, Peggy; so go, child. You think the wind sounds mournfully, but it’s all in your own feelings: the stars are bright,” continued the old woman, rising, and looking out of the door, “and though the clouds away off to the west seem to threaten a change, it won’t be before midnight; so mayhap you’d better go up to Mr. Fitzhurst’s, and tell them what has happened, and bring some of the servants with you to help me. Don’t forget the candles, child.”

After hesitating for a moment, by a strong mental effort Peggy gathered her cloak around her, and started on her melancholy errand. She glanced fearfully over the common as she closed the door, and made a wide circuit, to avoid passing near the clump of trees that stood about twenty yards from the house, in the direction of Holly. After she had got some ten or more steps beyond the trees, she heard footsteps, distinctly, behind her. She stopped for a moment, irresolute whether she should fly back to the cabin, or exert her utmost speed towards Holly.

“Why should I be frightened?” she said to herself; “if it is Gordon he dare not harm me; and why should it be him?” As she thus reflected, she summoned resolution to look behind, and distinctly saw the figure of a man approaching her. She determined to move forward, as if she had no suspicions; but the next moment, as the foot-fall became more distinct, she started on with the speed and fear of a frightened deer. As she ran, it was evident that the person behind was following her, for he sprang after her at his utmost speed. Uttering a scream, that

startled the silence of the night in fascinated terror, Peggy turned her head, to satisfy herself who her pursuer was, and as she did so, she ran with her whole force against a tree that stood directly in her path. It was a minute before she knew where she was, such was the stunning effects produced. When she recovered, she found Gordon standing by her side.

"Why should you run away from me, Peggy?" said Gordon, in an insinuating tone.

"Mr. Gordon, are you agoing to haunt me forever, like an evil spirit?"

"Forever, Peggy, till I gain your love."

Peggy made no answer, but attempted to move away.

"Stop; you must hear me, Peggy," said Gordon, sternly detaining her. "The word, mind you, is *must* now. If I am your enemy, mark it, you compel me; but until you do, in spite of everything, I'm your friend."

"Friend! John Gordon, leave me. I've told you again and again I've done with you. Friend! and my poor dead granny's words ringing in my ears. John Gordon, God's curse is on you. I don't scorn or hate you any more—I pity you from the bottom of my heart. Bobby and I are orphans now, alone, all alone; but our cause is in His hands who protects the fatherless. I don't need your friendship—I don't care for your enmity. Go your ways, and may God forgive you."

When Peggy first started from the cabin, the presentiment that she should meet Gordon unnerved her; but when she recovered from the effects of running against the tree, and found Gordon by her side, in an instant the solemn scene she had witnessed, and the earnest prayer for herself that Agnes had offered up by the body of her grandmother, arose to her

mind, and gave it a tone and character, such as she had never displayed before. This new impulse evidently had an effect on Gordon; for she moved on, and, without attempting to withhold her, he walked beside her. His passions, however, soon resumed their sway.

"Peggy," said Gordon; and he stepped before, and facing, prevented her advancing; "I was not born in the woods to be scared by an owl. My mind's made up. I come to you from your Cousin Bobby."

"From Bobby! where is he?" exclaimed Peggy, in an anxious tone, no longer trying to pass on.

"In jail, Peggy; ironed down."

"Merciful Father!"

"Yes; I've just left him there, ironed down in an infernal dark dungeon, where there are rats and vermin enough to make short work of him. I tried to talk the jailor into putting him into a better room, but it wouldn't do; they think Bobby's too hard a case."

"My God! John Gordon, this is your fault."

"My fault! your fault, Peggy; you drove me to desperation. I would have gone myself to jail before a hair of Bobby's head should have been touched if it hadn't been for you. He didn't deny passing the money on me. I would have screened him if I could. But what reason had I for doing it: think how he treated me, how you treated me, see how your grandmother was turned against me, as if I had been the cause of Bobby's fall at the races, of his keeping a booth there—it's that old negro Pompey's fault—or of that counterfeiting business in town. No; I would have saved him—I can save him."

"How, how? I'll bless you forever if you will."

"Suppose I quit the country, and don't appear against him, what proof have they?"

"Will you, will you!" exclaimed Peggy; "he's no

counterfeiter, I know he's not; but somehow things are so against him. Oh! will you leave the country, Mr. Gordon?"

"If you go with me, Peggy."

Peggy's head drooped upon her breast, and her hands fell to her sides as if she had been struck a violent blow.

"Hear me, Peggy; I came from Bobby himself. He got on his knees to me in his dungeon, and begged me, in a voice that would move the stones, to save him. You saw how he was overcome when he left the cabin in custody; he could'nt say one word. He'll go distracted, I am afraid. I told him there was no way of saving him, but by my flying the country; and that I wouldn't do, unless you went with me. I have money enough, Peggy, to go to the farthest end of the earth; you shall want for nothing; I'll be kind to you, I will; you think me rough, but I'll reform; I'll be all you wish me, and we'll send for your Cousin Bobby, and he shall come and live with us. He never can lift up his head here again if he comes out, so he must come to us—he will come to us. Say, Peggy; say you'll go with me; come, now, to the village; I have a horse and gig there now; in an hour we'll be in the city. We'll be married there, and Bobby will be safe. I've money enough; you heard Bobby say what I bought at his booth I paid for in silver. No, I touch no notes now-a-days, when to touch 'em is to loose one's character. Come, go with me, and Bobby will be safe; if he's ruined, sent to the penitentiary, or dies in jail, it will be all your fault."

Gordon felt plainly that his words had produced a strong impression on Peggy. She muttered to herself, unconscious of his presence, "Cheerfully I would lay down my life to save him."

"Lay down your life. There is no laying down

your life about it, come," and he took her hand to lead her towards the village.

"John Gordon," said Peggy, folding her arms, and standing firmly, "not now; I will not go with you now to village or to city. My grandmother lies dead, and Aunt Agnes is alone with her; she must be decently buried—I must be there—I *will* be there. But if you can save Bobby, if you have had nothing to do with harming him, and if you will save him—I—I will marry you."

"I to do with harming him! what puts that into your head. 'Aint I here to save him. Why not marry me now? come to the village then, and go before the squire, and I'll swear to you I'll save him."

"Now! not now," said Peggy, with immovable firmness; "not now, unless you could put breath in my poor Granny as well as save Bobby; she must be decently buried, and I must be there. Oh! Mr. Gordon, if you say you mean to be kind to me, in mercy leave me now, and let me do my errand. Aunt Agnes wonders now what keeps me, and there's poor Granny lying dead, and I'm talking about marrying! But I will (and she spoke this rather to herself than to Gordon) save Bobby, come what will of it."

"Give me your hand, then," said Gordon with an eager exultation, which he could not conceal, "and swear to me that you will marry me."

"I've said it, John Gordon; and upon those conditions I'll keep my word; now leave me."

Gordon attempted to kiss her; but Peggy pushed him aside, and hastened on her way. Gordon stood as if he wished to follow Peggy, but feared the effect upon his plans.

"I've got her," he said; "I've got the true hold on her at last. I mean to be kind to her too; be sure I

shall be kind to her; there's not a devil in hell shall have a happier time of it. She loves that Cousin Bobby, and therefore I hate him. No! he'll be coming some of his Joe Hitt pranks over me if I save him. I'll save him safe in the penitentiary. If I had got the hussey to the city—she was near consenting. Ha! I must be after her; what a fool I am; she will see her cousin in the morning, and I will be blown." As Gordon thus thought, he advanced upon Peggy's path. "No, it's too late," he resumed; "she's off. Well, I must use fair words. Early in the morning I'll contrive to see her, and take some message from Cousin Bobby; that will keep her until I fix the matter. Ha, ha! to get her consent within the sight of the cabin, and that old dead hag's curse ringing in my ears!"

With this righteous reflection Gordon turned once more towards Springdale; taking care, however, from the influence of a superstitious dread, which he could not overcome, to make a wide path to avoid passing near the cabin where the dead body of Granny Gammon lay.

CHAPTER IV.

THE morning after the interview in the library with Fanny which had been interrupted by the entrance of Bradley, in a wayward mood Pinckney arose early before the rest of the company, and proceeded to town. He rode slowly into the city, pausing on a neighbouring hill that descended to it to moralize, with a touch of sadness, upon the busy haunts of men.

Arrived at Langdale's he entered the parlour, and was somewhat surprised to see, at the far end, a magnificently dressed lady in possession of the room. She turned as he advanced. When he beheld her features he started back without the power of uttering a word, so great seemed his amazement. The lady was the first to speak. She arose, and with apparent tremulous delight, exclaimed, advancing, with both hands extended :

"O! Howard, I am delighted to see you." Pinckney drew himself up, but in an instant changed his manner, though he said, in a cold tone, and with a profound bow, as he took her hand :

"Miss Clara Atherton, this is an unexpected pleasure."

"Howard, I hope it is none the less," she replied, with a most insinuating smile, "for being unexpected."

"None the less," replied Pinckney, forcing himself

to have manner; "but when and where came you—and how came I to find you here?"

"Perhaps I have followed a recreant knight."

"I hope he is not irreclaimable," said Pinckney.

"He is a recreant, indeed, if he be; unworthy to wear fair lady's favour again. But in me, Howard, you behold the truth of your favourite's saying:

'Truth is strange, stranger than fiction.'

"I came with my uncle to this city, meaning to travel through the United States, and last night on our arrival we chanced to be introduced to Mr. Langdale—it was mere chance, and in their conversation they discovered that they were forty-second cousins, or some such a kin—and here we are partaking of Mr. Langdale's hospitality. I rejoice, indeed, that we have met him. He has just gone out; we have been talking about you. I told him that I had met you on the continent."

"What else did you tell him?" asked Pinckney, quickly, and in confusion.

"Nothing else, Howard. I found my name had not been mentioned to him, though, to say truth, I supposed I had been alluded to in conversations which I gathered had passed between you."

Pinckney thought (it certainly did not so appear) that Miss Atherton's tone and manner implied her belief in her sex's power, and particularly of her own in the premises.

"Yes," said Pinckney, "I spoke to him of the past as the historian would of the days long gone; I was a cold commentator on what can return no more."

This remark seemed fraught with the frankness of truth. And yet it was a bold speech for a man to make to a woman—and such a woman—whom he

had once loved. Her beauty was overpowering,—it struck you like a glorious thought that all at once flashes convictions on you of the truth of what you had deemed wildest romance. There was a pervading spirit of grace and beauty, in face and form, in every tone, look, attitude, and movement, that won you by its particular spell. The combination had, indeed, made a splendid woman. There was a languor and softness in her manner that made you think, at first, that there was a want of spirit in her character; but it was like the rosy cloud, that darkens as the tempest gathers, and which, when the elementary strife is fiercest, sends forth the hottest bolt. Her hair was of a wavy blackness, and her brow as fair and polished as the sculptured forms of the clime she had left. The full dark eye beneath it would account for the “mighty ills that have been done by woman.” While it kindled and melted, the mouth seemed in voluptuous repose, as if it left to the brighter feature the expression of intellectual power, and reserved itself for the emotions of a heart all tenderness; but the moment that she spoke her lips assumed a higher cast, and the delicate tracery of their muscles appeared adapted to the thought by a power beyond the histrionic art, the unbidden power of nature. She appeared all sensibility, all softness, and full of womanly trust, when winning an influence in your heart; and even when she had won it, and was exerting it, unless powerfully wrought upon, she seldom betrayed any other feelings. If artful, her’s was a fearful artfulness; it was as though the dove had retained all its apparent innocence, and obtained the serpent’s power to fascinate and destroy.

“Howard, what mean you?” she asked, in a tone of silvery softness.

“Nothing—if you meant nothing.”

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"I mean! explain yourself, Howard! How your manner has changed."

"And how you have changed! or rather, I am gifted with vision, but I have been blind; but—enough; let these changes be as though now had ever been. What kind of a voyage had you, *Miss Atherton*? I thought, when I addressed you by that name, that you would have corrected me, and instructed me to use another, and a more matronly one."

"No, Howard, I am not changed in either name or nature; and I believe you are aware of what my matronly name was to have been."

"What one of your matronly names was to have been," said Pinckney, and whatever of disagreeable feeling had heretofore possessed him appeared to pass away, for a smile of humour, tinged with a little of the consciousness that he deserved to be laughed at, passed over his face.

A slight gathering of herself up, as if she were collecting her feelings, would have betrayed to the observer that the lady was not agreeably impressed by the last remark, and the smile that accompanied it, she said:

"What a wayward creature you are, Howard. The greater sacrifices that are made to you, the more you require them. Let us understand each other, Howard. I have made a long voyage for the purpose. Your manner was so freezingly cold that I have scarcely yet recovered myself."

"Ah! is that it," said Pinckney; "so you are all unaltered. Well, I confess to some changes. I have recovered myself. But as you have made so long a voyage, do tell me what has happened since I left you the affianced bride of *The Honourable Mr. Ashley*?"

"As you thought, Howard—as your moody fits made you think, which misinterpreted everything

between us. No, Mr. Ashley was an accomplished gentleman, long descended, and nobly, and—”

“What has become of him?” interrupted Pinckney, “if you please, Miss Atherton.”

“He is dead,” she replied.

“Dead! of what disease?”

“He died in a duel with an American gentleman. They quarrelled concerning the ownership of a picture, which each, in dealing with a crafty Italian, considered he had bought.”

“No matter, Miss Atherton,” said Pinckney again, speaking in an unexcited tone; “I confess myself unsolicitous of knowing anything more of your private affairs, since I know that death prevented your being Mrs. Ashley. How long will you remain in town?” he continued, rising as he spoke, for they had both taken seats during their conversation. “I shall certainly see you again, I hope?”

“We part not thus, Howard,” said Miss Atherton, rising; “these moody humours that you fall into will destroy, some of these days, your brightest prospects—your dearest hopes. Hear me: I have made frank confessions to you; confessions which I told you, at the time that you extorted them, would sink me in your esteem; though they were such as should have elevated me. This must not be between us. We were both too high-tempered when I last saw you. We forget the position in which we stood to each other. I know my conduct requires explanation, and I wish to make it. Why, Howard, there is no romance about it; such things between attached persons happen frequently. It is the course of the true love, the wayward currents of which the poet has described. We were affianced. Well, I own, Howard, that with something of a woman’s fondness for her own will and ways, that sometimes, when you came to see me, I denied myself. Mr. Ashley might have

been with me, or he might not—it did not depend upon his presence or absence. Report at last changed its rumours—you know what an idle thing it is—and ceased giving me to you to make me Mrs. Ashley. You returned to Venice after an absence of a few weeks, you remember, and found this rumour rife. Well, upon the instant, without the reflection of an instant, you dashed into my apartments, and *demand*ed an immediate explanation. Howard, I have never been celebrated for any spirit, that I know of, except a spirit of endurance; but feeling as I did towards you—having given such unrestrained confidence—my pride, my woman's dignity, arose. I repelled, I own, in high-wrought anger, your reproaches. I returned scorn for scorn. I bid you go; but how could you mind an excited woman under such circumstances?"

"Excuse me, but all this is truth, Miss Atherton."

"You assure me there was no breaking of promises, vows plighted and sworn to me, for the long descended, little expecting, the eminently wealthy, the all accomplished—the Honourable Mr. Ashley."

"No, Howard, there was not; be seated," she resumed, as Pinckney stepped to the window. "How unreasonable you are! do you not believe me?"

"Miss Atherton," said Pinckney, turning round to her from the window through which he had been gazing in stern abstraction, "I will take an early opportunity of again seeing you. We shall meet at dinner, perhaps. Matters of great interest to me require my absence now."

"Well, Howard," she said, offering her hand to him as she spoke; "we shall meet at dinner, then. I have said nothing to Mr. Longdale about our acquaintance, only that we were casually acquainted. Say nothing to him yourself on the subject at present. You're in a moody, Byronic way, again—plague take

my lord of poets, for the fancies he has engendered in young gentlemen's brains," she continued playfully; "but we'll meet soon again: now do not make it long, Howard; it must be long, though." And they shook hands and parted.

On leaving Longdale's, Pinckney instantly mounted his horse, and took the road to Holly.

"So beautiful and so false," said he, as his horse bore him through the city; "she knows not what I know. Ashley told me himself of their engagement, showed me the letters that had passed between them; her letters, stereotypes of her's to me. It won't do; the chain is broken; Ashley is no more, and now she would return to me. What a woman; and what a difference between such and Fanny Fitzhurst. No, my hopes are fixed there now, with a wonder they could ever have been fixed elsewhere. Strange that I should have felt but scorn in Miss Atherton's presence, for one so fair, and but pity when I left her! How utterly false I have found her—let the past go to the winds! I shall meet Mr. Bradley at Holly as close to Fanny's side as though his claims were undoubted. Well, she must decide my fate the first opportunity."

Turning such reflections over and over in his mind, as Pinckney left the precincts of the city, he put spurs to his horse, and soon arrived in the vicinity of Holly, where he beheld Bradley emerging from the woods with his gun in his hand. As Pinckney passed him, they bowed with studied courtesy to each other, and Pinckney hastened on, hoping to find a fit opportunity of seeing Fanny alone. It was presented to him; for on entering the hall he met her, and in an anxious tone, said:

"Miss Fitzhurst, do allow me one word—will you not take my arm, and let us pass into the library?"

Fanny, without answering, timidly took his arm, and they entered. An hour after Pinckney repaired

to his room with a radiant brow. As he crossed the hall, he encountered Bradley, who had just returned.

"I hope you had luck in hunting, Mr. Bradley?" said he, in a joyous tone.

"Only tolerable," replied Bradley, throwing a suspicious side glance on the inquirer; "did Miss Fitzhurst go to Mr. Elwood's?"

"I believe not, sir; my impression is that she has deferred her visit until to-morrow."

So speaking, Pinckney bowed, and retired to his chamber.

CHAPTER V.

On the morrow the splendid equipage of Mr. Langdale drove up to Holly. He paid his respects to its inmates with the easy and graceful courtesy which marked all his actions.

"Miss Fanny Fitzhurst," said he, "I have come to beg a favour of you?"

"'Tis granted: what is it, Mr. Langdale?"

"Ah, you tempt me to make a request, which I know would make you break your word. Remember, I'm a bachelor; you smile, not so old, either. I have a newly-discovered relative, who has just arrived in this country from England; may I ask that you will do me the honour of calling on her?"

"With great pleasure, sir; I will make a visit to town to-morrow for the very purpose. What is the name of your relative? Is she married or single?"

"You are extremely kind, Miss Fitzhurst; Atherton is her name; she is a splendid woman, is she not, Pinckney?"

"She is, indeed, sir," replied Pinckney.

"Yet I hesitated to ask you the question," rejoined Langdale; "for when you visited me yesterday, you found her all alone, and staid but a few minutes, and went—where? I pray you."

"Directly thither," replied Pinckney, bowing to

Fanny, who blushed while a rosy tint flushed her very forehead.

"I expected as much, Miss Fitzhurst," said Langdale, addressing the lady; "this young friend of mine, during a fever, the result of his wounds, talked wildly in his sleep, and as I was watching by him I became unconsciously the depository of certain of his secrets."

Fanny blushed again, and after a moment's pause, asked:

"What connection is Miss Atherton of yours, Mr. Langdale?"

"Something like a second or third cousin. We have not yet traced the connection exactly; her uncle is a gentleman of the old school, and devotedly attached to her. You did not meet him, I believe, Howard?"

"No, sir; he was, my impression is, absent in England when I met Miss Atherton on the continent. He is an American, and a southerner. I know their connections south."

"Well," said Langdale, with enthusiasm, "she is almost that rare bird—a perfect beauty. What a full, flashing eye she has—what a graceful form;—and mind—has she not mind, Howard?—is she not bewitching?"

"Yes; she is, indeed," said Pinckney, with a peculiar smile. "Take care, Langdale."

"I must, if I hope to keep my bachelor vow."

"Why should you keep it?" said Fanny, gaily. "It is a matter of town-wonder that you do not marry, and here is a beautiful bird flown into your very cage."

"True, true; my time has come. What say you, Howard, to my choice?"

"A most excellent one, Mr. Langdale, "to get a wife. Would she suit you?"

"Would she not? how old is she?"

"We must not speculate upon a lady's age, Langdale," rejoined Pinckney.

Langdale staid to dinner; he was every now and then, whatever was the topic of conversation, quoting Miss Atherton, or alluding to her beauty, and the prize he had found in her relationship. Pinckney could not but smile while he watched him. He listened to his remarks with even more than his usual interest.

The evening found Langdale in high spirits by the side of Miss Atherton.

"You have been absent long," said the lady, throwing the lustre of her dark eye on him as he took a seat beside her.

"I have been to the country residence of Mr. Fitzhurst, where my friend Pinckney has been spending some time. Miss Fitzhurst will call to see you to-morrow. Pinckney used to tell me of an Italian lady who had stolen his heart, and I suspect made off with it without any return. I replied he was not incurable, and I find I have been a prophet."

"How so? do tell me?"

"Miss Fitzhurst has caught him completely; and, if I have any sagacity, he has caught her. They'll make a noble pair; saving your fair presence, coz, I know no one, personally, or mentally, her superior."

"Ay, is she so beautiful?"

"Yes, indeed, she is; I rallied Pinckney for leaving town so quickly yesterday, and with a profound bow to the lady, he confessed the cause."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed! how you echo me. Don't you think him a man to please a woman?"

"Perhaps to please a *very* young one, but he seems, does he not? as Master Stephen has it in Every Man in

his Humour, to be given up to most gentlemanly melancholy."

"He has strong energies, and they are inactive—that's all. He would be much happier if he were without fortune, and was struggling in the up-hill for fame and wealth. Yes, he sometimes gets a fit of this gentlemanly melancholy; but I don't believe the Italian lady had much to do with it. He describes her as a splendid woman, and no doubt she was; but utterly worldly (according to my notions), and one who would have made him happy for a month, and miserable for the rest of his life. She, I suspect, was older than himself. No! such a lady as Miss Fitzhurst is the one for him. It was amusing to observe how all regret of this fair Italian faded away from his mind, turned to pitying contempt almost, as his intimacy with Miss Fitzhurst increased. In fact, I suspect that the Italian had rather piqued his vanity than wounded his heart: and from his personal appearance, address, and fortune, I take it, his vanity has not been used to many wounds. Pshaw! it was all stuff; a youthful traveller's dream of some old beauty of the old world, such as those of the theatre—all point, furbelow, florence, folly, flatter, and fury, from which he awoke in the new world with a brain made reasonable to meet a new and youthful beauty, with feelings fresh as the rose-clad forest fountain of her native land, the bubbles of which nought but the bird's beak ever broke in the unbroken wilderness—he awoke here to realize the truth of love. I admire Pinckney—I love him; I know no young man I respect half so much. When you see Miss Fitzhurst, you will agree with me that they are just suited to each other. How romantically I have been holding forth! Alas! for us bachelors; if they are to be married I trust it will be soon, fair coz.

'To write, to sigh, and to converse—
For years to play the fool,
Is to put passion out to nurse,
And send one's heart to school.'"

"Have you understood that they were soon to be married?" asked Miss Atherton, looking up from her slipper, which she had been observing as Langdale spoke.

"I have not; but I doubtless suppose that they will be soon. Her family certainly will be highly gratified by the event. Ha, ha! Pinckney wished to make me believe that there must be a long interval for the heart to recover itself—a long dark night, as he expressed it, between the sitting of our first love and rising of the second—a passionless period. Why, this first love of his, if it was first love, went plump down in the wide ocean, without creating the least stir on its bosom, except, perhaps, the light rippling of vanity and pique. It went down, as Shakspeare describes the golden set of the sun, which argues a goodly day to-morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

GORDON'S machinations against Peggy had so far failed. On her arrival at Holly she told Miss Rachelina, as distinctly as her tears and heavy sobs would permit, of the death of her grandmother, and the accusation of Bobby.

The good lady expressed deep feeling for the situation of her unfortunate protégé; she said:

“It's alarming, child, to think of the many fearful situations in which your cousin gets himself placed. My brother has done everything for him that he could; he was bailed by Sidney in a large sum for shooting at Joseph Hitt with intent to kill, and it was my family's influence which saved him from the consequences, as they told Hitt it would be foolish for him to pursue the business any farther, and he dropped it. But, child, I know not what to say to this accusation of counterfeiting. My brother is now in bed, where he has been taking laudanum to ease the pain of his gout. I cannot disturb him: Sidney is away, and will be gone for some days. However, on to-morrow I will speak to my brother, and let him decide what can be done for Bobby. It is fearful to think of his situation. But, child, you must take some of the servants with you, and assist Agnes with the body of your grandmother; she can be buried to-morrow evening; everything necessary shall be provided,

child; and you must come here and make this your home. Do not cry so, child. Stay, child, stay; till I go and give orders."

Mr. Fitzhurst was so tormented with the gout that he had not feeling or patience to attend to anybody's ills but his own, or maybe he thought it was best to let Bobby remain in jail without bail, as a lesson to him; for he knew not how to reconcile the frequent accusations against the boy, with the idea of his entire innocence. The day after her death Granny Gammon was buried. A large concourse attended the funeral, and among the number Miss Rachellina and her neice. The old woman belonged to the Methodist church, and it was decided by its members that she should be buried in their grave-yard, which lay on the other side of the village of Springdale. The jail in which Bobby was confined stood about the centre of Springdale, immediately opposite to the court-house, as is the custom in many of the villages of the United States. It was a rough, two-story stone building, with thick walls, and very small, heavy, grated windows. A wall was partly built around it, but its completion was delayed in consequence of the present want of funds, or some disagreement among the county commissioners. Bobby was confined in a left-hand room of the jail as you faced it, and his window through the unfinished wall commanded a view of the street of the village on that side by which the procession was to pass. Bobby was standing by his grated window intensely gazing forth, and Pompey had placed himself on a pile of stones beneath it, and with his hand on one of the bars, was doing his utmost to comfort the prisoner, when the funeral procession came mournfully winding along, passing close to the jail wall.

"There, Pompey, look there," said Bobby, with a bursting heart; "that's my fault; just when they ac-

cused me of it, Granny died; she could'nt stand it. She always said I'd be the death of her."

"No, Mister Bobby," said Pompey, looking through the thick grates with deep sympathy; "it warn't your fault at all; how often must I tell you that. It was in the course of nature: and if it warn't in the course of natur, it was Jack Gordon's fault; and he done the whole of this; but who minds what a coloured person says."

On beholding his Cousin Peggy in deep black, walking close to the hearse, and sobbing so loud that he could hear her where he stood, he could gaze no longer, but turning away, placed his hands to his ears, and threw himself on the floor of his prison-house in speechless despair.

After the funeral, Peggy was allowed to have an interview with her Cousin Bobby, in which, on her telling Bobby that she had made up her mind to marry Gordon and save him, that individual's duplicity was brought to light. Bobby insisted upon it, that Gordon's object was to deceive her as well as himself, and obtained her promise that she would drop the idea of trying to save him in that way, as it would ruin them both. After this Peggy kept close to Holly, unless when she went to see Bobby, at which times she was accompanied by some one or other; and, therefore, Gordon, though constantly on the watch, had no opportunity of seeing her.

As Squire Norris observed, when he committed Bobby, the "county court was sitting, and he'd have a quick trial"—it appeared that such was to be the fact; for the day after his grandmother's funeral the grand jury found a bill against him for passing counterfeit money. The day of trial soon arrived; but the cause did not come on until late in the afternoon. As Sidney was away, and Mr. Fitzhurst, senior, could not attend, Pinckney, moved by his own impulses,

and requested by the family, had procured the best counsel the city afforded, and anxious for Bobby's fate, repaired to the court.

The prosecutor was a good-hearted, red-nosed practitioner, who was decidedly opposed to the court's sitting after dinner, which this court was in the habit of doing. Fed by Gordon to assist in the prosecution, but appearing merely as a volunteer to aid the prosecutor in his arduous duties, Mr. Lupton took his seat by the legal minister of the state. A large, impatient crowd were collected round and in the court, where they had been all day. There were many persons, too, before the jail, keenly desirous of getting a good look at the prisoner. The whole countryside had been ringing with the awfulness of Bobby's many enormities; and the gaping bumpkins were there to gaze upon the youthful moral monstrosity, who had such skill in counterfeiting, and who had passed off so many hundred spurious bills on the harmless country-people.

"Yes," said one fellow, standing amidst a group before the jail door awaiting the forthcoming of Bobby, "I expect he'll take the full term—and it's right; a man what can't boast of much larning like myself is constantly taken in by these 'ere chaps what lives on community. Just the last market day I took a two dollar counterfeit bill, and swallowed up all my yearthly profits that day—sir, at the races I bet a chap a dollar, an' won, an' it turned out counterfeit; an' cause I tried to pass it, I got threatened."

"Did you know it was counterfeit?" asked one of the party.

"Know it," was the reply; "how should I know it, when I tell you I've got no larning, no how. Two chaps said it was a counterfeit, I know, an' I just tried to pass her to find out. Egad, I think this chap ought

to be hung up till he were dead, as a sample to the country."

"Them's my 'pinions," said another, while the last speaker looked about him like a stump orator when he thinks he has made a *hit*.

In the meantime, Bobby, who was the only prisoner within the jail, except one who was confined in another apartment on a charge of assault and battery, was doing all he could to cheer his Cousin Peggy, who had been admitted to his place of confinement with a suit of new clothes, which she herself had rapidly and with fearful anxieties made for him, that he might appear as respectable as possible on his trial. It was an ominous suit of black, in respect to their grandmother. Peggy held one of Bobby's hands in her's, while with the other she was adjusting the collar of his jacket. The tears were streaming down her cheeks, and the deep black in which she was dressed, together with the sorrow she had lately suffered, and the dark room in which she stood, had made an alteration in her appearance that struck like a dagger to the heart of Bobby. His appearance made a similar impression upon her; he looked haggard in the extreme, but his deportment was heroically firm for one of his years.

"Cousin Peggy," he said, "I am innocent of all this—I am, as God's my judge. So sure as Granny's dead and in her grave, so sure I am innocent of all this. Aunty Agnes has been here to talk to me, an' I'm trusting in God. Let what may come of it, it's better for me, for I have not been living the life I ought to—I know it—I know it. Don't be down-hearted, Cousin Peggy, it's not a hanging matter."

"O! Bobby, Bobby! but it's a disgrace," exclaimed Peggy, throwing her arms around his neck; "you musn't think hard of me for saying so. I don't mean to throw it up to you, I know you're not guilty. My,

my! I came here to comfort you, and you comfort me. But we'll die before we see each other again, Bobby, if they send you to that awful place. O! if you only get through this, I'll love you all my life, an' none but you, an' I'll never look at such a wretch as Gordon again. Bobby listen—just say so—and I'll go out an' get Gordon to hurry away; I saw him as I came here, an' he wanted to speak to me, but I wouldn't—just say so an' I'll see him and mar——”

“No, Cousin Peggy, I would'nt say so to save my life, said Bobby—an' I said that before.”

At this instant the sheriff entered, and told Bobby that it was time for him to appear in court. Escorted by the officer, and with his Cousin Peggy walking by his side and holding his hand firmly locked in her's, Bobby left the jail. The first person whose eye Bobby caught, as he stepped from the jail door, was old Pompey, who had obtained leave from his master to attend the trial, and who appeared, by way of keeping Bobby in countenance, in his full livery suit. The sheriff was a kind-hearted man, and, knowing the friendly offices which Bobby had performed for Pompey, he was pleased to see the display of gratitude which the old negro had evinced during the boy's confinement, and therefore made room for him as he advanced to the side of Bobby.

“Your humble, 'bedient servant, master sheriff,” said Pompey to the officer with profound awe, as he stepped up. “Master Bobby,” he whispered in great agitation, “keep your heart up; you got a big heart, you ha' indeed. You got old Pompey out of as tough a job almost as this—and if the Lord of his 'finite mercy would put a white skin on me now, I'd save you—but what's the testimony of a coloured person?”

“Look at that,” said one of the crowd to another; “folks say that black rascal went halves in that very

booth at the races where this money was passed. I don't think the sheriff ought to allow that."

"Allow that," said another person, who was no other than Hardy the miller; "I tell you, stranger, I know Bobby Gammon, and I'd sooner take you for a counterfeiter than I would him; an' for the matter of that, before I would the old negro, either."

The stranger eyed the stout form of the miller, and said no more, while Hardy stepped up to Peggy, and assisted her across the street.

"There, mother, that's what I always told you Bob and Peg Blossom would come to," said Miss Maddox to her mother, as she stood at her shop-door, and congratulated herself on being a prophetess.

The prisoner was placed in the bar, near which the prosecutor and Mr. Lupton had been some time seated in deep consultation. The sheriff kindly placed a chair by the prisoner's box, and bid Peggy be seated; she did so, she looked round and beheld Gordon gazing at her with mingled expression, in which she thought there was a touch of regret that fixed her attention for a moment—it was so unusual to his features. When he caught her eye, he nodded his head slightly sideways, as much as to bid her leave the court, as she interpreted it, and he would join her—but she turned her eye from him. In a few moments she could not resist stealing a glance at him; his head was turned towards the bench, and he stood with his arms folded in a resolute manner. As Pompey was known to most persons about the court-house, he had contrived to get within the railing that kept the crowd from intruding on the bar, where he stood partly screened by a pillar, and endeavouring to pass unobserved, but to get as near to Bobby as possible.

The bench was not very imposing in its appearance, nor remarkable for its decisions, except, perhaps, for the frequency with which they were reversed by the

supreme judicature of the state: nor was this to be wondered at, when it was remembered that the judges owed their appointments, which were made by the governor and council, more to the political influence which they had exercised in behalf of the party in power, than to any reputation for legal lore.

All at once, like one whom a sudden thought had aroused to his duty, the superior judge, whose dinner had been substantial and vinous, raised himself up lazily on his elbow from a laughing colloquy which he had been holding with his right-hand man, and ordered the prisoner to stand up, and listen to the indictment against him. Resolutely Bobby arose, but he did not elevate his person as much as he might have done by standing on his longer leg, for he rested on the shorter one. While the clerk was reading the indictment, Peggy watched him with the intense desire to understand the meaning of the various repetitions and many counts in it, while Pompey internally came to the conclusion, as he listened to what he could not possibly comprehend, "that the learning and big dictionary words in the paper was clear against master Bobby."

When the clerk had read the indictment, and the question was asked of the prisoner, "What say you—guilty or not guilty," Bobby replied in a clear tone—

"Gentlemen and judges, I don't deny as how that I bought a cow and calf from Jack Gordon, and that I paid him, mayhap, with bad money; but as God is my judge, I took it for good money, and I thought it was good money when I passed it."

The eminent lawyer whom Pinckney had obtained in the city to defend Bobby, had only arrived a few minutes before the prisoner was brought into court; the call of an extensive business had kept him at his post in the city to the latest moment. No expectation

of the accumulation of professional honours had brought him to Springdale; he came merely in the way of his profession, and in the anticipation of a large fee. When Bobby was arraigned he sat within the bar conversing with Pinckney, whom he had often met at the table of Langdale, and who was explaining to him the case as distinctly as his own limited knowledge of it would allow. Mr. Mason was evidently interested in the sketch of the boy's character which Pinckney gave him, together with his adventures with Thompson when he rescued Pompey, and the shooting of Hitt; all which the narrator had frequently heard spoken of at Holly.

"And that's his cousin beside him? she is a beautiful girl; her grief is certainly deep and heartfelt; he certainly is a remarkable boy." "Ah," continued Mason, whose quick eye comprehended matters at a glance, "that's the old negro whom he saved from the lash of Thompson. I know Thompson—a harsh dog; the boy did the negro a favour worthy of his gratitude. Mr. Pinckney, I wish I had known more of this case before—I thought it was one among the thousand ordinary cases of contereiting—my business obscured my gallantry; I forgot how Miss Fitzhurst urged it upon me when I met her the other day in the city. What a thing habit is: I believe in time we might learn to dance to the rattling of a captive's chains, and be merry at the music. Sir, when I first commenced my profession I felt a nervous, deep interest in the fate of every criminal whom I beheld in the bar; and now I can scarcely get excited in the fate of my own client, unless something remarkable turns up in the investigation, or a passion for victory is aroused in me by the opposing counsel."

The whole court appeared impressed with the manner in which Bobby expressed himself. The

judge ordered the plea of not guilty to be entered, which was accordingly done, and the trial proceeded. The prosecutor made no opening remarks himself, but left that duty to Mr. Lupton, who held forth for more than an hour in a tirade against counterfeiters in general, and Bobby in particular, whose depravity he pronounced unparalleled in the annals of crime. When he concluded, Gordon was called to the stand.

Pinckney puzzled over the features, and particularly the form of Gordon, in strange perplexity, for he could not remove the impression from his mind that he had seen him before, but when, or where, he could not possibly divine.

With characteristic swagger and indifference to those around him, Gordon gave in his testimony. He related the facts of the sale of the cow and calf, and the payment of the note by Bobby, as they occurred. He also, with great apparent frankness, mentioned what had transpired at the cottage on the arrest of Bobby, saying, that the old woman, when dying, had accused him of misleading her grandchild, when the fact was, that he could prove by Mr. Sidney Fitzhurst, if he were in court, that when Bobby was taken up in the city that he had called on Mr. Fitzhurst for the purpose of getting him to defend the boy.

Here Mr. Mason told Gordon to confine himself to the case before the court—and Gordon said he had nothing more to say further, except that when he left the cabin the constable showed him a tin box, containing money such as Bobby had passed on him, which was found between the logs by the door.

“How do you know it was found there?” inquired Mr. Mason.

“Because he put it thar himself,” shouted Pompey, springing to the side of Bobby, as if moved by an impulse that he had been trying in vain to control, and

facing Gordon. The whole court were mute with amazement. "Because he put it thar himself—and, gentlemen all, if God of his 'finite mercy, would just for two minutes put a white skin on me and make me a witness, I'd swear to it, and prove it, for I saw Jack Gordon do it."

Endowed by a deep sense of gratitude with moral firmness, the old negro kept his stand by Bobby, and his eye on Gordon fearlessly. Gordon started.

"Silence!" exclaimed the judge. "Sheriff, what means this interruption?"

Before the sheriff could get to the spot where Pompey stood to take him into custody, for county courts have not as many officers in attendance as city ones, Mr. Mason arose and observed—

"May it please the court, there is something in this I would fain understand—"

"I understand it," said Lupton, springing to his feet, "that boy—"

"You must also understand, sir, that I am not to be interrupted," said Mason, with a glance on Lupton that quailed him to his seat. "Will your Honours suspend the cause for a few moments, while I speak to this negro in private. I feel the interest of my client demands it."

"Why, Mr. Mason, if you wish it particularly," said the judge, glancing around on the bar, as if he would discover in their manner if there were any error in the proceedings. "Certainly a lawyer of your prominent standing, sir"—Mason bowed low. "By-the-by, the counsel who opened the cause occupied us so long, and then there has been so much delay that we can't progress much farther this evening—so the court may as well adjourn. The gentlemen of the jury will take care not to hold any conversation with any person touching the cause in course of trial.

Witnesses be punctual in your attendance—crier adjourn the court until to-morrow morning, ten o'clock."

Without waiting for the adjournment of the court, Mr. Mason left the room, attended by the sheriff and Pompey.

As Pompey passed out, the negroes in attendance gazed at him with a mixture of admiration, awe, and fear. "I tell you what it are, Dave," whispered one negro to another, "Pompey Fitzhurst are an astonishing coloured person; he takes the shine everywhere."

"Yes, if he had a white skin on 'um, he'd plead law up to the handle."

Totally unconscious of the admiration he elicited, but labouring under a high-wrought excitement, Pompey followed the sheriff and Mr. Mason into a private apartment.

"What's your name, my old man?" said Mr. Mason to Pompey, in a conciliatory tone.

"Folks, master, calls me Pompey Fitzhurst, 'cause I belong to the Fitzhurst family, and my father before me; but my father's name was Pompey Johnson, an' I was named after him."

"Well, Pompey, tell me truly, what was the cause of your interrupting the court?"

"'Cause, master, I couldn't help it, though I know a coloured person can't give testimony; I couldn't help it; for I diskivered and observed Jack Gordon with my own eyes put that tin box thar before he went into the house."

"Who did you ever tell this to before?"

"Nobody, master; I held it intirely to myself. I knew as how I couldn't be of any sarvice to Mister Bobby, though he had done so much for me, an' I kept it to myself, 'cause I knowed if I told it I'd get myself into trouble, and it would'nt help nobody; but in the

court this day, when I seed Jack Gordon stand up thar so bold, and swear away Mister Bobby to the penitentiary, and poor Miss Peggy thar feeling so much, and Mister Bobby feeling so much, and I feeling so much, I couldn't stand it; and I spoke it, an' I would ha' spoke it if I had to die for it," said Pompey, folding his arms, while the dignity of truth was stamped as firmly on his black brow as ever it was on a white one.

"I believe you, Pompey," said Mr. Mason. "Thank you, master," said Pompey, while the tear glistened in his eye, and he turned his head away and brushed his check. "Master," he resumed, "I just tell you the whole on it, if you'll just listen to me—an' if you'll only get Mister Bobby out of this scrape, old Pompey 'll pray for you to the last day of his life to the good God, who hearkens to the black man just the same as to the white man."

"Well, Pompey, tell me exactly everything about it, and I won't despair of getting Bobby off."

"Master, I'll just tell the whole truth. Mister Bobby and I agreed betwixt us, that we would 'stablish a booth at the races. We put our money together, and did it, for he was mighty saving to get some things for his granny, who's dead since. Poor creature! she died the very night they went to her cabin to take Mister Bobby. I was out the door, but I heard it; she laid Mister Bobby's falling off to Jack Gordon, and she spoke an awful curse on him just as she died. Gordon hates all of 'em. He wants revenge, that's it. Miss Peggy would'nt have him; that's it, Master Mason. But I'm not telling it strait. I had to drive our family home from the races, an' I couldn't tell how Mister Bobby was a coming on; so after I puts away my carriage, and feeds my horses, I thought I'd go down to Granny Gammon's, and see

Mister Bobby about our booth, an' inquire how his Granny was; as word was about, and he had told me at the races, as how she was ailing. Well I went, and as I drawed near the house, I heard a parcel of people coming, as though they were bent there, too; so I did'nt know what to make of it, and I bethought me, that maybe the Granny was dead. Howsomever on I went, fast ahead; one fellow, it was Gordon's voice—I could'nt see them, mind master, for there ware no moon, and the starlight was uncertain like, but I know Jack Gordon's voice any where, he called on me to stop. Just then, somehow, I mistrusted something, and I went on to make believe I was going by the house, and when I got beyond it, and behind it like, till it stood atwixt them and me, I turned quick round towards the door, and hid in some elder bushes by an old shed near by the house."

"How came you to mistrust something when you heard Jack Gordon's voice?" inquired Mr. Mason.

"Cause, master, Mister Bobby had told me that he believed Jack Gordon wanted to do him some evil. Well then, I hid in them elder bushes, and they comes up, without making any noise, and all of 'em but one goes in. One chap just stood holding the door open like, and that let the light shine right out. I was as near to 'em, master, as I are to that fire-place; I saw plain; an' I saw Jack Gordon touch the man what stood in the door, an' then I saw something white shine in Jack Gordon's hand, and I diskivered and obsarved him put it plump right between the logs of the cabin by the door,—an' when he knowed that the other man seed him, he pushed right into the house."

"What did you do, then?"

"Then I staid there till they fetched Master Bobby

out, to take him afore Squire Norris: an' when they fetched him out, a man, and he must ha' been the same one what held open the door, and saw Gordon put the box between the logs, went to the place an' took out the tin box, an' he give it to somebody, and told him to mind and hold it fast, for that he believed there was counterfeit money in it; he said it shined, and that made him find it. Then Gordon came out, and wanted 'em to search the house; but they told him they had enough to do for Master Bobby, and so they dragged him off afore Squire Norris, and then to jail; fur I followed behind em', and saw jist how they acted. You see, Master Mason, I diskivered Jack Gordon, and a parcel of other chaps, cutting extras 'bout our booth all day, and spending money; an' I thought things were going wrong then: cause Master Bobby got in trouble once afore about such money, an' I believe, with his Granny, what's dead and gone, that it was Jack Gordon's doings."

Mr. Mason mused a moment, and then observed to the sheriff.

"Sheriff, I have often remarked, in the practice of my profession, that uneducated persons, and particularly coloured people, give in their testimony with striking accuracy. I suppose this observation surprises you?"

"I never thought of it before," replied the sheriff.

"It is a fact, sir. The reason is, I suppose, because they make no parade of pertinent phraseology; they do not distract their minds by thinking what people will say of them. They tell what they saw in whatever language rises to their lips, and the unadorned truth, in homely guise, comes home to everybody. I venture to say, that if that jury were allowed to-morrow to hear this old fellow's tale, that they would acquit Bobby without leaving the box."

"I think so," rejoined the sheriff; "for my part I never thought him guilty. I have known him for many years, and I believe that the strongest trait in his character is sterling honesty."

"You are right, I think. Where can I find this constable that arrested Bobby. Is he vigilant and faithful?"

"He is. I saw him in the court-house, just now. Would you like to see him?"

"If you please."

The sheriff left the room, and in a few minutes returned with the constable.

"You arrested Robert Gammon, I believe, sir, on the charge of passing counterfeit money?" said Mr. Mason to the constable, whose name was Jessop.

"I did, sir."

"Describe the circumstances, if you please, sir?"

Jessop accordingly narrated them with great accuracy.

"Who was the man that discovered the box?" asked Mason.

"I bethink me," said Jessop, after a pause of deliberation; "that he a kind o' clerks it for Squire Benbow, in the city; I know I have seen him about there."

"Ha! Benbow's; yes in old town. Well, I'll give you a letter to Ross, the old Hays of our city; you know him?"

"Yes, sir; and old Hays, too—they're mighty men," said Jessop, with an air of professional pride. "I know where Ross lives."

"I'll give you a letter to him—you must start forthwith; leave the village in a direction from the city so as to be unsuspected. Ross will assist you. I'll give directions in the letter; the house of this witness, wherever he lives, must be searched thoroughly. I hope there'll be some tin boxes forthcoming."

Mason wrote a hasty letter to Ross, sealed it carefully, and inquiring the name of Jessop, wrote it plainly in the corner of the direction, and made, apparently, a hasty stroke with the pen beside it, as is usual; but the mark had a cabalistic meaning, implying the trust-worthiness of the bearer.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER the court adjourned, Pinckney waited some time to see Mr. Mason, with the intention of showing him some civilities; but as he was still engaged with Pompey and the constable, and there was no knowing when he would get through, Pinckney returned to Holly, which Mr. Bradley had now left.

With what a confiding, yet flattering heart, Fanny met Pinckney. How coy the blush that melted into confidence! how full the confidence that in a moment grew shy, startled at itself, as if it would question the fulness of its faith, and know if the awakened world of love within, were, indeed, a reality, or merely a dream! "Her heart was of its joy afraid." Did Pinckney, indeed, love her, as he said? how thrilling the consciousness, that if words must not from the lips of gentle maid tell all she felt, 'twas well—for they could not. At one time, while he sat conversing with her, her coyness would all vanish, and when he had gone, she would take herself to task for her want of maidenly reserve; at another, her timidity would overpower her, and she would think, when he had left her side, what a bashful creature she had been, and resolve to banish it, at least sufficiently to meet his eye, and reply, without faltering, to his inquiry.

"'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art."

But it was all evidence of the depth of her affection. The beautiful illusions of life were around her. Her heart was like the fountain that throws up its silvery spray in the air, and hope was the sunbeam that gilded it with the hues of the rainbow.

"My dearest Fanny," said Pinckney; "I have some little business in town to night—how I hate leaving you."

"It will be dark now before you can get to town, Howard—and have you no fear of another assault upon you?"

"None in the world."

"Well, I have."

"Bless you! then I will go at once; my horse is fleet, and I can reach the city before night. I value my life now," and encircling her form gently, he pressed a kiss upon her brow and hand, and left her. He proceeded to his room, unlocked his trunk, and took from it the letters, ring and miniature, which our readers may remember had, on a former occasion, awakened restless and bitter memories. The bitterness has gone—given place to indifference, for as he put them in his pocket of his riding coat, he said to himself:

"I should have returned them before I left Venice; I must have those foolish letters of mine. What a fascinating creature Fanny is. Her father received my proposals with real pleasure, and Miss Rachellina, what a pleased dignity and importance sat upon her maiden brow! I wish Sid were back."

So speaking, Pinckney left his room, and passing out, mounted his horse, which he had ordered to be in readiness when he entered the house, he rode off, kissing his hand to Fanny, who called out to him, saying:

"O! Mr. Pinckney, if you see Mr. Langdale's beauty, apologise to her, or rather to him, for my not

calling the day I promised him. Say father's indisposition prevented me."

He bowed in gallant obedience, spurred his horse into a brisk canter, and with a heart full of the witcheries of Fanny Fitzhurst, gave himself up to happy dreams of the future. As he approached the place where he had been robbed, the shades of night were gathering in, and he naturally felt an impulse of watchfulness. Down the bridle-path which led to the hills near which Sidney had caught his horse, Pinckney heard the rapid clatter of a horse's hoofs. His attention was attracted; and while he still rode on at the same rate, he prepared his pocket-pistol for an emergency. Just as Pinckney reached the spot where the bridle-path met the main road, the horseman at full speed entered it. He reined back his horse as he saw Pinckney, and held down his head; but Pinckney at a glance recognised him as the leading witness against Bobby. It was Jack Gordon.

"You ride fast, sir," said Pinckney, anxious to discover something of the character of the man, who had interested him, not only on Bobby's account, but he knew not why:

"Me! yes; sometimes fast, sometimes slow," replied Gordon, in a voice that was harsh and husky, in the first words, but which he subdued, at the same time he checked his horse, and again gave him the rein, so as to keep pace with Pinckney.

"How far do you ride?" asked Pinckney.

"Ride; I ride—no, not to the city. I go about a mile below—I have some business there with a friend, and as I must be back to the court to-morrow, I'm making the best of my time."

"That's a very young man to be leagued with counterfeiters. Is he not?"

"Young!" he's cut his eye-teeth, sir. That negro and him have colleagued together for years. Damn

me! that black rascal ought to be strung up neck and heels. Did you ever hear of such a thing in a free country as to let a slave speak that way of a white man? I'll swear he's paid for it. I'd give a thousand dollars for him; I'd put his carcass in condition for the crows. What Thompson was going to give him would ha' been only a priming. They can't save Bob Gammon—he's got to go."

"You seem to have a stout heart in the cause, sir," replied Pinckney. "Have I not seen you before?"

Gordon thrust his hand in his pocket, and reined back his horse so quickly that the animal was thrown on his haunches. This surprised Pinckney, and he stopped his horse, and faced Gordon. "Ha, ha!" said Gordon, with an attempt at facetiousness, and apparently changing his purpose; "I have the luck of it. Maybe you're like old Pompey, Mr. Pinckney; you saw me do what never entered my head."

Pinckney's suspicions of Gordon's character were aroused. He said sternly, but certainly impudently: "Maybe I have; and remember my testimony is good." And without noticing him any further, Pinckney rode on. Tremblingly Gordon's hand went again to his pocket; there it remained, and he sat motionless on his horse while Pinckney pursued his way.

Pinckney had not ridden a hundred yards from the spot where he left Gordon, before he heard him start again at the top of his speed. Gordon seemed to have passed into the woods, for his horse's hoofs no longer rattled in the road, and Pinckney thought he heard the rustling of leaves and the breaking of sticks under his tread. Presently the tramp in the woods was parallel with his own horse's, as he thought, and in a few moments it seemed to die away ahead of him, as if he was surpassed in speed. Just after the noise ceased, he passed the very spot where he had been assaulted, and his horse—it was the one he rode at

that time, without any resistance on the part of the rider, shyed to the other side of the road. 'Twas lucky, perhaps, for Pinckney that it did so; for at the instant the sharp report of a pistol was heard in the bushes from which the animal shyed, and a bullet cut the whisker that protruded from that rider's chin. His horse took fright, and sprang uncontrollably on. If Pinckney had not been an admirable horseman, the suddenness of the start would have thrown him. He, however, kept his seat; but it was impossible for him at once to stop his horse, or even turn his head, which he attempted, without reflection, to do, that he might dash upon his waylayer, and shoot him down. The horse seemed determined that Pinckney should do no such thing, for he went nearly a mile before he would yield entirely to the control of the rein. Pinckney's suspicions naturally attached to Gordon, and he arrived at Langdale's pretty well satisfied in his own mind that it was Gordon who had assaulted him before. The more he thought of the affair the stronger were his convictions that his suspicions were just, and he determined to have Gordon arrested on his appearance in the court the next morning, when he reflected it would be of no use, as he had no testimony against him.

When Pinckney entered Langdale's it was some time after dark. He found within Langdale seated by Miss Atherton, in what he thought a whispering conversation, while her uncle sat by a centre-table busy with the evening paper. There was a confusion, notwithstanding her great self-control, in Miss Atherton's manner towards him; but it was so slight, that it escaped every eye but Pinckney's, even the quick eye of Langdale. Pinckney would not have detected it had he not known her so intimately. He was greeted cordially by Langdale, and presented to Mr. Atherton, who was a handsome, worldly old bachelor.

"Fanny, dearest, of all the dears!" how is the fair Fanny, Pinckney?" asked Langdale, in his cheerfulest tone.

"Blooming and beautiful, I thank you, sir," replied Pinckney, "and full of sweet converse upon your gallantry. Oh! Miss Fitzhurst charged me," bowing to Miss Atherton and Langdale, "to make apologies for not calling on Miss Atherton the day she promised; her father's indisposition prevented her. When he has the gout badly he will have nobody by him but his daughter. She will seize the first opportunity of calling, Miss Atherton. Langdale, who so seldom speaks highly of aught of womankind, has awakened in her all her sex's curiosity. I might say envy, if Miss Fitzhurst were capable of the passion."

Miss Atherton bowed graciously, and Langdale said:

"You have done me but justice. Is the fair Fanny capable of the other passion—jealousy? if she be, I'll warn her to keep a certain friend of mine in rosy bondage-bound at Holly. Not that Miss Fanny has not every attraction; but where two magnets are of equal power, the one that you are nearest to is sure to attract you; and when it has attracted you," bowing to Miss Atherton, "of course you think its powers unparalleled."

"You flatter that certain friend of yours, Langdale, beyond all bounds, by even insinuation that Miss Fitzhurst can have any interest in him: and if he were in your situation nearest to the one magnet, I have no doubt he would make your confession."

"Ha, ha! what a sad situation: speaking of magnets, what a sad situation he would be in, Miss Atherton, who should be placed exactly between two such magnets."

"He would be in the situation of Mahomet's coffin," said Miss Atherton.

"Yes, Miss Atherton," replied Pinckney, laughing, archly, he would be suspended between *heaven* and *hell*."

"Your compliment is not equally attractive, Mr. Pinckney," said Miss Atherton, loudly; "for it is evident that you would prefer one magnet, the upper one, though the laws of gravitation might in some cases aid the lower one."

"Doubtless all the earthy powers and passions would aid *that* one, but even in extremity, like a dying man, I should look up with hope."

Langdale looked quickly at the two, and fell into a musing attitude, while Miss Atherton said to her uncle:

"My dear uncle, not that I would drive you away from agreeable company, but you promised to call on Mr. Paulton; did you not, this evening?"

"True," said Langdale, "and I promised to call with him. So, Mr. Pinckney, I will make no apologies, as I leave you in a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Atherton."

Pinckney bowed; Mr. Atherton made his apologies, and with Langdale, departed.

When the door closed on Miss Atherton and Pinckney, there was the silence of more than a minute, which the lady broke, by saying:

"A fine night, Howard. Have you just arrived?"

"A few moments since; and on a special message. Pardon me one moment, Miss Atherton, and I will fulfil it." So saying, Pinckney left the room, and taking from the pocket of his overcoat which hung in the hall, the miniature, letters, and rings, returned, and resumed his seat.

"What does this mean, Howard?" asked Miss Atherton, turning slightly pale as she observed the packet.

"It means what it seems, Miss Atherton—that I have brought you the memorials of the past. I have

no longer any claims to them, and desire to restore them to their rightful owner. I should have done it before leaving Italy, but knew no one to whom I could intrust them; and it was also my desire that when I did so, that I should recover my own."

"You seem determined that I shall not misunderstand you, Mr. Pinckney; and there is also great directness in doing such an errand one's-self. Howard, Howard, Howard! but give them to me—no matter. Your's are now in one of my trunks, among some of my baggage which I have not had brought here. You shall have them at the earliest opportunity."

"If you please, Miss Atherton."

As she took the packet, she, with apparent carelessness, glanced over the contents, and observed:

"The locket is not here."

While Pinckney was explaining how he lost it, a servant entered, and said that there was a person in the hall, who requested that he might speak with her.

"A person to speak with me! why don't you show him in, if he is a gentleman?"

"He is not a gentleman, ma'am."

"Ah! some verbal message from the hotel: tell him to come in. The hotel at which I stopped was a very fine one, Mr. Pinckney."

As Pinckney assented, he threw his eye upon the messenger, who was just entering the room, and was surprised to see no other than the individual who, he supposed, had attempted to murder him—the witness against Bobby—Jack Gordon. He started with even more surprise than Pinckney, and looked as if he expected to be charged with something or other. Before Gordon spoke, Pinckney arose, and said:

"I must bid you good night, Miss Atherton."

"Good night, Mr. Pinckney; I hope I shall have

the pleasure of seeing you often. Do bring Miss Fitzhurst to see me."

Pinckney bowed low and left the room, resumed his overcoat, and stepped forth into the street, wondering what Gordon could have to say to Miss Ather-ton. The night was not a very bright one, but the lamp at a corner, some twenty steps off, rendered objects quite distinct. As Pinckney advanced towards the lamp, a man met him, who seemed to have been stationary for a moment before, and asked politely if Pinckney would tell him who lived in that house, pointing to Langdale's.

"Mr. Richard Langdale," replied Pinckney.

"Thank you, sir," rejoined the inquirer, loitering past.

Pinckney, after a moment's deliberation as to how he should spend the evening, determined to go to the theatre.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN hour elapsed before Gordon left the residence of Langdale. When he found himself in the street, by the directest course he proceeded to that of Benbow, who dwelt at least a mile off, in an obscure part of the city. His quick eye detected a figure under the shade of the lamp as he passed, and in his suspicious mind the wonder instantly occurred, what the designs of the person were. He hurried on, and began to fear that he was dogged; so, to avoid the consequences, he called a hack, and, stepping in, ordered the hackman to drive to a certain square, which was some distance above Benbow's. There he alighted, and cautiously hastened to Benbow's; but fearing to give his accustomed signal at the front entrance, he looked round to see if he was observed, and then entered an alley beside the house, and then the yard, when, at the back door, he made three raps, gave a whistle, and, after some time, was admitted by his coadjutor.

"What brought you in at the back door?" said Benbow. "I always suspect something when you come in that way."

"Maybe I have suspicions of the other way. I called here to-night before, and you were not in."

"Come in now, then."

"No; it's no use. I'm in a hurry, and must be back to Springdale to-night. Benbow, you must be out there early in the morning, before the court sits. I have fixed it so that you will get a summons by day. Let Lupton and me alone for that. He tells me you will be a good witness to prove that this Bob, who is on his trial, is in the habit of passing counterfeit money."

"I washed my hands of that business, I told you!" exclaimed Benbow, impatiently. "I attend to nothing but the regular business, and am getting afraid of that."

"In for a penny, in for a pound, Benbow, is as true as preaching. That infernal black rascal, old Fitzhurst's coachman, saw me slip the tin box between the logs. What a nigger says is no testimony, so they can't hurt me; but Lupton swears that my testimony must be bolstered up to convict him. The easiest and naturalest thing in the world, is to have you summoned; you committed him before for a like offence, and we want your testimony."

"But I say you can't have it."

"Can't have it; why, Benbow, you're cracked. Don't you see it's the very thing, if we can send this limping devil to the penitentiary, who'll suspect us? He can't 'peach against us; and as he has nobody to 'peach against, they'll put it down to his stubbornness."

"What do you want me to say?"

"Only that he was up before you for the same crime, and that he was let off on account of his youth. Don't you see it's the very thing?"

"Well, well; I've a misgiving in my mind that all this out-of-the-course will lead to the worst kind of trouble."

"You're always croaking—there's a rap at your door—'taint the signal, though."

"No, 'tis not," said Benbow, alarmed; "what shall I do?"

"Why, let 'em in."

"Come in, then, yourself."

"No, I must be off."

"Be off! I'm coming out to oblige you—you might as well oblige me."

"You're lilly-livered, Benbow—go it while you're young; however, I'll go in with you." And in they went together, to the front room, where Benbow held his magisterial office, the door of which he opened, and admitted Ross, the celebrated rogue-taker.

"Ah," said Benbow, giving him a hearty shake of the hand; "come in."

The welcome personage was a tall, fine-looking fellow, fashionably dressed, but still with an air of vulgarity about him. He wore a large pair of whiskers in fine trim, and possessed a remarkably quick and merry eye. There was a careless off-handedness about him, which seemed to indicate that he took the world easy, and had little to do with its cares, crimes, or criminals. He was beyond the middle age, but he wore his years like an abbot, and appeared indifferent—very—to things about him. He ungloved his hand, and shook indexes frankly, both with Benbow and Jack.

"Well, gentlemen," he exclaimed; "how does the world treat you?"

"Just so, so," said Benbow; "money's scarce."

"Oh! that's always the complaint," said Ross; "my friend Gordon here, I warrant me, won't agree

with you—now, at least, just after the races, where I am told he has been sucking them in all round. I envy the life of a sportman," continued he, throwing himself into a chair; "the world has no cares for them, and we constables nothing to do with them, except when they bungle in a professional way, and then they deserve punishment for bungling, if for nothing else."

"I agree with you there," replied Jack; "if I had'nt, I should'nt have chosen the trade myself—but it has its perplexities."

"Yes," said Ross; "it requires a man to be everywhere at once, sometimes. Now, you, I suppose, who were this afternoon a witness at Springdale against that counterfeiter, had to be in town to-night to attend some meeting of your cronies, and pluck a pigeon."

"No; I was only a little tired of Springdale, and I thought I'd ride in to-night for company, and be out to-morrow time enough for court. Ross, tell me, is there no law for punishing a negro who interrupts a white man in open court while he is giving in his testimony?"

"None particularly; he may be punished for contempt of court, like any other disturber of the peace under the circumstances."

"Contempt of court! yes; and there was a contempt of Jack Gordon that I would'nt take from a white man, let alone a negro. Ross, I wish you could manage so as to buy him for me."

"What per cent. will you give on the price?"

"Fifty, down."

"Ah! whose negro is he?"

"Old Fitzhurst's."

"What do you consider him worth?"

"Worth! he is the old coachman—worth! nothing

but to me; and I'll give a thousand dollars for him."

"And then get yourself hung for killing him. No, I'll have nothing to do with that business. Why, Benbow, where's your bottle; have you nothing to offer an old friend to drink? The weather has got comparatively mild again, but I'll stir these coals and take something, as I expect Jessop here soon on a business that will require the scent of a Vidocq."

"Ah! what's in the wind?" asked Benbow, as he proceeded to place a decanter of brandy, with tumblers and water, on the table.

"Wait a while, all in good time; business is business, and pleasure is pleasure. Benbow, you're the very man whom I like to issue a warrant for me when I wish to catch a rogue; there's virtue in them; they always seem to lead me on the scent better than any other magistrate's warrants that I know of. Here's my service to you, and may you never have as good a one issued against yourself."

"Against me!" said Benbow, replacing the decanter as he was in the act of putting it to the glass; "a joke, a joke, Ross."

"I know it is, and therefore am I joking. You look as if I was not, nevertheless; a secret conscience needs no accuser."

"That's true," replied Benbow, replenishing his glass; "and, upon the principle of another proverb, the virtue is not in my warrant, but in your skill."

"I'll lay you odds on that, and Gordon here shall be judge."

"Done," said Benbow; "a supper with liquor for the three of us, or as many more as you choose, should they happen to fall in."

"Agreed! and here's the proof. Last week, you remember, I arrested O'Rielly, the celebrated horse-thief. I met him about ten miles from here, and

suddenly presenting old Smith's warrant at him, told him I arrested him. He looked at the warrant, and said, 'Ross, it's no go.' That's a fact, said I, but there's virtue in this warrant, and I showed him yours, when he surrendered forthwith."

"Likely enough!" exclaimed Benbow; "but 'twas because Smith's term of office expired the day before. You got his warrant, and so you got one from me, and presented the wrong one at first. He was always a blunderer."

"Well, then, there was the most virtue in yours. Don't you say so, Gordon?"

"It so strikes me," said Jack.

"Pooh! what does Gordon know about law!" exclaimed Benbow. "His was no warrant at all, I tell you. There was no more virtue in it, than if Gordon was to fill up a warrant, or you were to pass judgment on a man. A warrant, gentlemen, is not a warrant, unless it issues from the proper person, from one, at the time of issuing it, in the full authority of the magistracy."

"Will you admit then," said Ross, walking carelessly to the door, and opening it, as if he meant to look out for a moment, will you admit—Halloo!—here's Jessop and Prettyman; come in (they entered accordingly); will you admit that a warrant from Stansbury, who is in full authority of the magistracy, to arrest you for counterfeiting, and search your premises, is of any virtue?"

"Me!" exclaimed the terrified Benbow.

"I am sorry, Benbow," said Ross, in a serious tone, "but such are my instructions; you can't but say that I have broken them to you like a gentleman, and like a gentleman I will fulfil them; you know me, and I know you; so we'll leave Jessop and Gordon here till we return, and we'll commence up stairs

first." So saying, Ross lit another candle which stood by, and asked Prettyman to accompany him. "You can stay, if you please, Benbow; only give me your keys, and it will prevent your trunks and doors from being broken open."

Benbow, paralysed with guilt, covered his face with his hands for a moment, and then, rising, mechanically said: "Do what you please with me."

"Benbow, be a man!" said Gordon; "you don't fear, do you?"

"No, no; but I tell you, Gordon—yes, I'll go with you—no, I'll sit here with Gordon; here's my keys."

"You had better go with Ross!" exclaimed Gordon; "I must be off soon."

"Yes, yes; I'll go."

"Show the way, then," said Ross, lifting the candle. Benbow led the way up stairs, followed by Ross and Prettyman, and leaving Jessop and Gordon below.

"Jessop," said Gordon, who, by a strong effort had compelled himself to keep his chair, "what does all this mean?"

"Mean! nothing, only that Benbow has some enemies who want to spit their spite upon him."

Meanwhile Ross and Prettyman made the strictest search up stairs, but without discovering anything whatever tending to criminate Benbow. They returned to his office, ransacked that, the cellar, and every other part of the house, with the same fruitless results. The while Benbow's confidence increased.

At first he talked of his innocence; why should he be counterfeiter; and then, as their probability of success waxed fainter, he began to speak of his magisterial character, and the damages a court of jus-

tice would give him in its sustainment. While he was thus expatiating they returned to his office, where Ross replaced the candle on the table, and helping himself to a glass of brandy and water, said:

"Benbow, you can't blame me,—'tis all in the way of business; you're a gentleman, I'm a gentleman, and I've treated you accordingly. Take something yourself. The warrant was sworn out by the sheriff of the next county, who came here for the purpose. Jessop knows that."

"What, of Springdale county, where they are trying Bob Gammon?" asked Gordon, who several times during their absence had arisen to go, but who was detained by the careless manner of Jessop, who seemed indifferent to his going or staying. He was also painfully anxious to know the result, and after a moment's reflection it occurred to him, that Benbow's suspicious fears had always prevented him from keeping anything to criminate himself about his house.

"Yes, the same," replied Ross, carelessly; "but business is business, and now we are done with it. So, let's have glasses round; and, Benbow, this is another proof that there are no warrants like yours; so here's to the virtue of your warrants."

"Well!" exclaimed Benbow, much relieved as he quaffed a bumper, "I hope, Ross, I may never issue one against you. I must say you have acted like a gentleman. I'll be even with them some of these days."

"Don't mind that, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Ross; "you're out of custody; I'll take the responsibility of not taking you before Stansbury; just let the matter drop. Good night to you, my friends. I must now leave you. Sorry I am to leave such good

company, but the best of friends must part. I always make it my business to be at the theatre every night before it closes, and it is now near ten o'clock."

Ross shook hands with all round, and proceeded to the theatre, whither we will follow him.

CHAPTER IX.

PINCKNEY, as he went to the theatre, was arrested by the glare of a fashionable jewelry-shop near by, and it occurred to him to step in and select a present for Fanny. The shopman busied himself to please his customer. Pinckney remarked that he wanted a locket, but that he did not like the fashion of those presented to him, when the shopman said :

"I have one, sir, though not for sale, which I think is the handsomest thing of the kind I have ever seen. It was brought here by a person to have the hair taken out, and altered ; and I wonder at his taste in wishing any alterations—but we must please our customers."

As he spoke, he opened a drawer, and, to Pinckney's surprise, produced the very locket which had been taken from him with his watch and pocket-book on the night of the robbery.

"Ah!" said Pinckney as he took it in his hand, "may I ask where you got this?"

"It was brought to me, sir, some time since, by a jockey-like looking man, who gave directions to have it altered and other hair inserted, as I have told you. I have delayed altering it, I can scarcely tell why—

but the man did not come for it when he said he would, and I have not touched it."

"Sir," said Pinckney, "look at it—can you discover any secret spring about it?"

The jeweller took it, and after a close examination owned he could not.

"There, sir," said Pinckney touching a spring, which flew open and disclosed a beautiful little miniature of a lady. This must convince you that I know something of the locket. Coming in from Mr. Fitzhurst's—"

"Mr. Paul Fitzhurst's?" asked the jeweller.

"The same."

"He is one of my best customers."

"I was robbed of this among other articles. This article I did not mention in the advertisement. I lost a watch and pocket-book besides; be so kind as to describe, as nearly as you can, the individual who brought it to you."

"He certainly was not a gentleman," replied the jeweller; "he was good looking, but, as I have said, jockey-like. I took him for a gambler."

"Would you know the man if you were to see him?"

"I think I should, sir."

"Do you think I could get a constable at this time of night?" inquired Pinckney.

"No doubt of it, sir; the theatre is within a few doors, you can get one there; and if you think you can trace the individual I will gladly go with you and identify him. I will go for one to the theatre. What time do you shut up?"

"Not until ten, or half-after, sir; above is my dwelling, sir; at any hour, though I should have retired, you can have me rapped up. I had a vague suspicion at the time the man came to have it altered that all was not right. I could not see what honest motive—it

could not be a matter of taste, certainly—influenced him.”

Pinckney bade him good evening, and entered the theatre. Almost the first person he met was Colonel Bentley. Pinckney took him aside, and told him the circumstances.

“Egad!” exclaimed the Colonel; “Ross is here, and he will be the very man for you. I’ll look for him.”

The colonel made inquiries about the theatre and in the saloon, and learned there that Ross was always in by ten or after. Pinckney waited very impatiently until Ross came, when he was made acquainted with him, and gave him the details of the robbery, remarking that he suspected a certain person. “But, sir,” he continued, “I have heard of your acuteness; and, as I presume you know him, let’s to the jeweller’s, and see if you can guess from his description.”

As soon as Ross heard it, he asked—

“Had he a quick step?”

“Think he had.”

“Hat a little on one side?”

“I don’t know that—yes, yes; I think so.”

“Did you observe that he showed where he has lost a tooth in the left jaw when he laughs?”

“I did not.”

“Talks a good deal?”

“Yes.”

“I know the man, sir,” turning to Pinckney; “his name is Gordon.”

“The individual whom I suspect,” replied Pinckney. “I wish you could find him.”

“I can, sir; and this very night. Mr. Whitman (to the jeweller), will you go with us?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied Whitman, putting the locket in his pocket, and telling his assistant to shut up.

"He's carousing now at Benbow's, the magistrate, with Benbow, and Jessop the constable," said Ross.

The three entered a hack at the theatre door, and in ten minutes were let out at Benbow's. They could hear a merry conversation within, and Ross *sans ceremonie* opened the door, and bade them enter. Sitting cosily around the table enjoying their segars, and with the brandy bottle nearly empty, they found the worthies. Gordon pushed his chair involuntarily back, as if he meant to rise when he saw Pinckney, but kept his seat.

"Don't be disturbed, gentlemen; don't be disturbed," said Ross, politely; "pleasure is pleasure, but business is business. Squire, I am about to try the virtue of one of your warrants again."

"Mr. Gordon, I am sorry to disturb the festivities of this convivial occasion among friends where I was myself lately a joyous partaker; but, sir, I arrest you for the robbery of Mr. Pinckney, the gentleman before you."

"Me!" said Gordon, jumping fiercely up.

"Mr. Gordon, allow me to remark, sir, like one gentleman to another, that that is in bad taste—always take things coolly, sir—'Tis what your lawyer would advise you to do if he were sitting beside you."

"Let him prove it," said Gordon taking his seat and the hint together, and looking at Pinckney with malignant defiance.

Benbow, much against his inclination, resumed the magisterial chair, and swore Pinckney and the jeweller. The former gave a detailed account of the robbery, and swore positively that the locket was his, and that he was then robbed of it, but could not identify the robber. He was followed by the jeweller, who gave the account of Gordon's bringing it to him to be altered: he swore further, positively to his identity.

Gordon drew his watch from his pocket as the examination proceeded, and his countenance was relieved, apparently, of all care.

"There, sir," said he to Pinckney, scornfully, as he took from the inner seal of his watch-chain a locket which could not be distinguished from the one Pinckney claimed. "I suppose your oath is broad enough to let you swear to that, too?"

"Let me look at it," said Pinckney.

"No, not out of my hands," cried Gordon.

"The reason, sir," said Pinckney, "why I know this locket, as he touched the spring and disclosed the likeness of Miss Atherton, is because it has the likeness of a lady concealed in it whom I well know."

"Ha! is that it?" said Gordon; "then examine that, and tell me if it hain't the likeness of a gentleman that you know better still."

Pinckney received the locket as Gordon offered it, found it in every respect like his own, and, touching a spring, disclosed his own likeness. It was one which, in fact, he had given in Italy to Miss Atherton, when he had received her's.

"Where did you get this?" exclaimed Pinckney, in amazement.

"Maybe from the lady who gave you that, ha! ha! ha!—what do you think of that, my buster—won't you swear to it?"

"I would swear to it, undoubtedly," said Pinckney, showing it to the magistrate; "it is my own likeness, and a good one—I had it painted myself by a celebrated Florentine artist when abroad, who took this of a lady that I knew then, and now, at the same time. What were you doing at that lady's to-night?" he asked of Gordon.

"What were you doing there, and be-hanged to you?" replied Gordon. "You're much of a gentleman, ain't you, to be dragging a lady's name up here. The

tailoring about you is all of the gentleman that belongs to you."

"Sir," said Pinckney to Benbow, "this individual must have stolen this from Miss Atherton to-night when I saw him there. I hope that you will place him in the safest custody to-night. Miss Atherton lives at Mr. Langdale's, and, disagreeable as it must be to a lady to appear against any one, early to-morrow, as early as you say, I will conduct her thither."

"It won't do, my lark," said Gordon. "I know more about you than you think I do; I've had my eye on you in other countries. Has that lady been here a month?"

Pinckney at first disdained to reply, but in a minute he reflected how foolish it would be, and answered, "No! she has not."

"Has she been here three weeks?" interrogated Gordon.

"No!"

"You'll die a dog's death yet, my gentleman; yes, a hanged dog's death. Here's the squire and Jessop saw me have that locket six months ago—I'll have you in jail, my visiter to the 'big house' before we have parted; you're friendly to Peg Gammon too, ain't ye?"

"Jessop," said Ross, "did you see that in Gordon's possession six months ago?"

"Let me look at it," said Jessop, and he took it in his hand, and, after examining it, said, "Yes, this certainly is the locket—he did not disclose the miniature then, but now, when I close it and examine it, I don't think I can possibly be mistaken."

"Let me look at it," said Benbow, and after examining it also, he remarked—"I never knew it held a likeness, but I've seen this in Jack's—in Gordon's—possession six months ago, I'm certain."

Pinckney concluded that the three companions were

all rogues together, and whispered so to the jeweller, who replied, that he knew nothing of Gordon or Benbow, but that Jessop bore the highest character as an honest officer, for he had spent a summer in Springdale, and there learned it.

Pinckney took Ross to the far end of the room, and asked him what he thought of it.

"I don't know what to think of it," replied Ross—"and when I don't know what to think, I don't say much. That Jessop brought me a letter to-night, from which I understand he is trustworthy and honest. I have been at fault to-night most damnably—it is perfect hocus-pocus.—I wish I was Vidocq—the greatest man that ever lived, sir—O! that we had him here."

"Well, gentlemen!" exclaimed Gordon, triumphantly, "there's one thing certain, that though you may set a rogue to catch a rogue, there's none of you can catch an honest man. I want this Mr. Pinckney held to bail to answer for false imprisoning me. Here, fork over those lockets—I believe I'll take the two of them; you need'nt (to the jeweller) make them alterations I ordered."

"I hope, sir," said Pinckney to Benbow, "that you will retain the lady's locket—the one which bears my likeness, until she shall be seen upon the subject."

"It's no go," said Gordon, filling himself a glass of liquor. "It's no go, my ruffled-shirted cock; I've been in the law before. The lockets are mine, and Benbow, who knows the law, knows it."

"You'll certainly keep them," said Ross to the squire.

"Ahem!" said Benbow, rustling in his chair. "I incline to think not. About this gentleman looking as Mr. Pinckney, I know nothing—he may be, and he may not be anything—what do you know of him?"

"Nothing," replied Ross, "but that Colonel Bentley

introduced him to me as a gentleman who had been robbed—and I see that he is a gentleman.”

“Very—very sorry, indeed,” said Benbow, stammering, “that I can’t see as you do—no harm meant, Mr. Pinckney—but with my own eyes I saw Gordon have that locket six months ago, so did Jessop; one he had then, even before this alleged robbery; the other, the match to it, because he happened to have after the robbery, and take to a jeweller to have altered, that’s no reason that he robbed Mr. Pinckney, no more reason than that he robbed the lady; and Mr. Pinckney is willing to swear that this is the lady’s. No! there may be more painters an’ one, and lockets may look as like as two peas. This is a case in which I would not advise; but Mr. Gordon can do as he pleases. I decide, however, that he has the right to both the lockets, and decree possession accordingly.”

“Not only possession!” exclaimed Gordon, “but I want this individual,” pointing to Pinckney, “held to bail in the sum of ten thousand dollars for malicious prosecution—I’ll show him what the law is.”

“Ahem! well,” said Benbow—

“Benbow,” exclaimed Ross angrily, interrupting him, “let me see those lockets a moment, Gordon,” he said, curbing himself, and turning pleasantly to Gordon, who handed them to him. “Benbow, this gentleman goes as he went; there shall be no virtue in any process of yours in relation to him to-night. Jack (to Gordon), you’ll have to bring your action of replevin or trover against me for this jewelry, for you shall not have it until you do.”

Gordon gazed on the resolute countenance of Ross, and, changing his tone, burst into a laugh, saying: “Ross, you’re a case. We’re friends, and friends can take liberties; besides, you’re an honest man, and I am not afraid to trust you with them: as to the matter of that, take them—I make you a present

of 'em both. Now, don't say I never gave you anything."

"No, I won't," replied Ross; "and in requital of your gift, as one good turn deserves another, I will, some of these days, present you with some jewelry myself; for instance, a pair of *bracelets*. Good night to you."

As Ross spoke, he opened the door through which Pinckney and the jeweller passed, followed by the baffled thief-catcher. They walked together some steps in silence, which Ross broke by saying, in evident chagrin—

"And I'll keep my word. I never was so at fault in my life. Accidents will happen: Napoleon was not always successful, and even Vidocq has been as foully foiled as this. Lord! how fate is bearing and forbearing with that scoundrel. Some of these days I'll astonish him even more than he has astonished me. He's a good deal in liquor."

"Who is this Gordon?" asked Pinckney.

"A sportsman, sir, as the phrase goes. Mr. Pinckney, here are the lockets, sir," said Ross, as they got opposite to the door of a restorateur, where the light shone forth; "they belong to you, sir, and they are better in your custody than mine."

As Pinckney took the lockets, he slipped a bank bill in Ross's hand, in requital for his trouble, and bade him and the jeweller "good night." He proceeded to Langdale's, where he lodged when in town, and found that gentleman, with his guests and Mr. Bradley, late as the hour was, at a game of whist.

"Ah! Pinckney, welcome!" exclaimed Langdale, as they all arose from the card-table; "I had a present of delightful game made to me to-day, and I have ordered the cook to wait until you came."

"I am sorry that you did so," replied Pinckney, "for though I cannot resist the temptation of these

night suppers, I am persuaded they are prejudicial to one's health."

As they proceeded to the supper room, Pinckney whispered, unobserved, to Miss Atherton:—"Oblige me by making an opportunity for me to say one word to you before you retire—I must leave in the morning early."

The lady threw a bright glance on him, and said, in a tone of tenderness—"I will, Howard."

"Fair coz," said Langdale to Miss Atherton, bowing across the table to her, as he took with her a glass of wine, "you make me proud of my dwelling. How true that scrap of verse is:

'Had you ever a cousin, Tom?

Did your cousin happen to sing?

We have sisters all by the dozen, 'Tom,

But a cousin's a different thing."

"Coz," replied Miss Atherton, "for I will call you coz, too, after that, do you know that I think you were meant for a knight of other days, instead of a merchant? I quere whether you are as agreeable in your counting-room as you are here."

"O! sink the shop. No, indeed, I am not: I have not at least the attractions there to tempt the effort. But I would not change my vocation for either of the professions; all the variation I ask, is a little of political bustle now and then. As for medicine, I don't see how any man of the least sensibility could practice it; and, as for the law, the counsel is so often the criminal, that there is as little difference between being at the bar and in the bar, in phraseology as in fact. The merchant is the great controller of commerce, and the world is indebted more to it for civilization than to aught else. It was the commercial

spirit which reclaimed this continent from the savages. Somebody called England a nation of shopkeepers; they should rather have said a nation of merchants. No, as far as my vocation goes, I am not only content, but proud."

"The law," remarked Bradley, "is the great profession of this country."

"That and counterfeiting," rejoined Langdale.

"We are, most of us, counterfeiters, one way or the other," said Miss Atherton, smiling.

"And few of us detectors," retorted Pinckney.

"Upon my word," said Langdale, looking at Pinckney and Miss Atherton, "I should like to know what were the continental relations between you two abroad."

"Like that of the mother country and her colonies," said Pinckney.

"Ah!" rejoined Langdale; "and which of you threw off the yoke—such rosy bondage would endure with me for ever."

"Yet," said Miss Atherton, in a tone of badinage, "Mr Pinckney is a rebel."

"Ha!" said Langdale; "tell me, Mr. Atherton, what were the intimacies between this gentleman and lady abroad?"

"That's more than I can tell," replied Mr. Atherton; "I see they are old acquaintances; but Clara's tongue must have been pledged to silence, for I never heard her speak of Mr. Pinckney, that I remember."

"Oh! uncle, how can you say so!" exclaimed Miss Atherton. "Don't you remember how I used to talk of the gallant young Southerner, who resisted all my powers?"

"Now, I remember me," replied Mr. Atherton; "I do; but, Clara, you had so many strings to your bow, that I hardly think you can recount them yourself."

"Come, uncle, that is unjust; you know it; I do wish, nevertheless, I had the power of coquetry—it must be delightful to use that only weapon a woman has. But you gentlemen wish to smoke, I know, and I have received a letter from a friend to-day who makes inquiries about Mr. Pinckney. If he has any curiosity he may see it, and I'll send him back to you in a minute."

So speaking, Miss Atherton rose, when Pinckney offered her his arm, and they passed alone into the withdrawing room.

"Miss Atherton," said Pinckney, "may I ask who that man, Gordon, is?"

"Gordon! what Gordon?"

"The person I saw here this evening."

"Really you have a deal of curiosity—I am an equestrian, as you know, and that person having heard that I had the desire to exhibit my skill in that way to the citizens here, came to boast of the qualities of an animal he has, by way of effecting a sale—"

"Where is the locket, if I may ask, which I gave you in Florence?"

"Where is the one I gave you?"

"I am not asking, Miss Atherton, an idle question."

"Howard, you may take me through the whole catechism,—I have it in my trunk?"

"Are you certain of that fact?"

"Now I remember—maybe I have lost it—I know I lost something which you gave me—"

Pinckney smiled.

"Two things, then, which you gave me, Howard, and the locket is one of them—"

At this moment the gentlemen entered the room, and a few minutes afterwards Miss Atherton left them to themselves.

In the morning, with the dawn, Pinckney was on

horse-back. He reached Holly to breakfast. In a *tête-à-tête* with Fanny he forgot Bobby's case, until Pompey, who had been fidgetting in and out of the room, reminded him of it. He instantly repaired to the court and heard the crier at the door calling the name of John Gordon; but no John Gordon answered. He entered the court, and found the judge on the bench, and the jury in the box, waiting the coming of the witness. Bobby was seated near his lawyer with Peggy beside him. At this moment Jessop, who had just arrived from the city, entered the bar, and held a hurried conversation with Mr. Mason, who arose, and, addressing the court, said:

"May it please your honours: I apprehend Gordon will not be here. In consequence of the information which I received from the black man whom I examined after the court adjourned yesterday, I despatched Mr. Jessop to the city last evening: what he learned or discovered it is not for the purposes of justice proper to be narrated publicly. Suffice it to say, that I understood from him that he met Gordon, the prosecuting witness, in town last night, and left him at an eating-house at two o'clock this morning, when Gordon told him that he should not be here to-day: perhaps your honours had better have Jessop sworn as to that fact."

Jessop was accordingly sworn. He stated that he met Gordon at Benbow's, whither he himself was despatched on business, and that he afterwards fell in with him at an eating-house, and that, as he was leaving it, Gordon called him back, and told him to present his compliments to their honours, and say that if he should not be here in time to-day they need not wait for him, as he had business of his own, which was of more consequence to him than the State's.

Here the prosecuting attorney arose, much against

the wish of Mr. Lupton; and stated that he did not think it was proper for him to press the case any further, as from circumstances which had within a few minutes come to his knowledge, and which he meant to place before the grand-jury at their next sitting, he was satisfied that the prisoner was entirely guiltless, and a much injured person.

"I knowed it!" shouted old Pompey, who had followed Pinckney into court, and who could not contain himself; "I knowed it, and now everybody knows it."

"Silence," exclaimed the judge. "Sheriff, take that man into custody, and put him in jail—"

Here Mr. Mason rose and said:

"It is so seldom, may it please your honours, that any debt is paid here, saving that which is set down 'in the bond,' that when the spontaneous one of gratitude breaks forth from an honest heart, and from one of a race, too, on whom ours does not often impose such claims, that I hope the acknowledgment of it will not be demurred, and will be forgiven, though it is not filed according to law. This boy once saved his humble friend from unmerited punishment, and it was the noble impulse of gratitude in the bosom of the African which led us yesterday to the inquiry which established the innocence of the youth. I therefore move your honour that the African be forgiven his unintentional breach of decorum."

The court countermanded their order to the sheriff, and the jury, after a short address from the judge, instantly pronounced the prisoner Not Guilty!

Poor Peggy threw her arms round Bobby, and burst into an ecstasy of tears; her sobs of joy were heard throughout the court-house above the tumult of approbation which his acquittal occasioned. It is a curious fact in human nature to know, that the sternest censurers of Bobby, as he was conducted from the jail the

day before, were now the loudest in their approbation of the verdict.

When Bobby, attended by Peggy and Pompey, passed from the crowd, the old coachman observed:

"Mister Bobby, the proceedings o' this day has given me Pompey, as old master would say, satisfaction beyond measure—but there's one thing I didn't like no how: that great lawyer from town, who pleaded to keep me out of jail—can't he plead, though? called me an African; now I is not an African—I is an American born and bred, and old master can prove it—he must ha' been thinking o' Nat Ramsey."

Mr. Mason dined at Holly that day, and was eloquent in his account of the trial, dwelling with deserved praise on the conduct of Pompey. When the company had retired from the table Mr. Fitzhurst remained behind in his gouty chair, and ordered old Pompey and all the servants to be called. When they entered, Mr. Fitzhurst said to Pompey: "Pompey, I have been listening to Mr. Mason's and Mr. Pinckney's account of Robert's trial to day. I rejoice to know that the lad is innocent, and I am highly gratified with the feelings which you exhibited. It was certainly wrong in you to interrupt the court, but the impulse under which you did it was the very noblest of our nature. I respect and honour you. You have always been a faithful servant, and I now find you a noble-minded man, and I have sent for you before my household to say, that I have got Mr. Mason to make out your manumission papers; here they are. I have settled on you what will make you comfortable for life; besides which, I have given you a spot of ground, and will build you a house on it. Henceforth and hereafter you are a free man. Give me your hand."

"Master!" exclaimed Pompey, "I takes your hand too proud, but I won't take your free papers. I ob-

jects to it; who'll tend the coach horses when I'm tending that ground; who'll care for me; who'll take care of the coach. It would break my heart to see another coloured person in Pompey's livery on the coach-box when I ought to be there myself; for I'll like to know, master, now, who but old Pompey can drive you over the ruts when you've got the gout, and not hurt you. You've said that yourself before to-day when old mistress talked about another coachman. You see at once, master, it won't do at all."

"Well, well, Pompey," said Mr. Fitzhurst, pretending to feel a severe twinge of the gout to hide his emotions; "just as you choose, just as you choose. But I say this to you, that I want you to understand that henceforth you're your own master."

"But, master, I wants you to understand that you're my master, too. We played together when we were boys; I waited on you when you grew up; I've waited on you ever since; and I'll wait on you till I die."

CHAPTER X.

Ross felt anything but gratified at his unsuccessful effort to affix the guilt of robbery on Gordon. If there is one passion predominant in the heart of a constable over another, 'tis the desire to be successful in such operations. And it is very natural—such success is the means whereby they live—or rather, it is the source of their most profitable emolument. Beside the general *esprit de cœur* common to his class, Ross, from his great reputation for success in such matters, felt peculiarly the dishonour of a failure. It was touching him in his tenderest point. It was like doubting the valour of a soldier, the eloquence of an orator, the skill of a statesman, or the imagination of a poet. He determined, come what might, without fee or reward, for the sake of his own honour and reputation, to follow him up, and fix the guilt upon him, for guilty he felt satisfied he was.

Ross, besides his constabulary dignity, was the keeper of a livery stable, and in that way, as Gordon was fond of swapping and trading in horses, he became acquainted somewhat with his character.

About eleven o'clock on the night after the adventure at Benbow's, Ross hurried from the theatre to his domicile, and entirely changed his clothes, selecting, from a number of suits, one which seemed made for a country wagoner, in which, with great attention to the character in which he was to appear, he arrayed

himself. From a number of wigs in a drawer he selected a carrotty, uncombed one, which he adjusted so as entirely to hide his own hair. He then combed back his whiskers, and, selecting a false pair of the same colour with his wig, he fixed them carefully to his face, having, before his glass, four candles lit, that he might make no mistake. This accomplished, he opened a box of paints, and with the skill of an artist adapted his eyebrows to his wig and whiskers. He then gave his cheeks a saffron hue, tied a coarse striped neckcloth carelessly round his neck, and drew on a foxy pair of thick-soled country boots. Having done these things to his satisfaction, he took a wagon whip from the corner of the room, and placing the glass so that he could see his whole form reflected, he scanned himself closely and complacently :

“I have learned a great deal from Vidocq,” said he to himself; “but now, were he in my place, he would not hesitate to shave off his whiskers and do the thing completely; but I think I’ll do pretty well without. To take off my whiskers would be paying rather too dear for the whistle. I’ll step into the Eagle as I go along, and see if any of the fellows recognise me.”

Thus soliloquising, he left his house by the backway, without suffering even any of his family to see him. He walked in the gangling gate of a wagoner, to whose tread the hard basement is disagreeable, though it was night, and he could not be observed. He seemed, when he assumed a character, to possess it completely. In ten minutes he entered the Eagle, which was an eating and drinking-house, where many of his acquaintance resorted. There were some dozen persons within, eating, drinking, and smoking. Gaping around as though the establishment was new to him, he asked :

"I say, strangers, does any one of you know a constable named Ross?"

"Yes," replied several persons.

"What manner of a man may he be?"

"A tall, good looking man, with big whiskers and a red cheek, and he dresses very neatly. Why?" replied one of the party, who was himself a constable, and a friend of Ross:

"Because I wants him on particular business."

"Ah! what's turned up—"

"That's the pint I want to see Ross upon."

"Well, I'm a constable—tell me."

"Yes, but you ain't Ross, though, stranger; I reckon every lawyer what pleads ain't a Squire Mason."

"I don't see how in the devil," said the constable, "Ross has got such a name. I'm told he went to arrest a man for robbery last night; actually found him in Benbow's, a magistrate, and couldn't come it."

"They say," said the assumed wagoner, "that he can scent out a rogue as a dog would a rabbit."

"That may be," replied the constable, "but from what I heard of the business last night, he can't catch him even when he has earthed him."

"Can't! maybe he didn't want to catch him."

"Then he ought to be earthed himself," retorted the constable. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

"You're right, stranger; but if Ross can't do my business, who in the devil can?"

"Speak out; what's the matter?"

"Speak out then, stranger; there would be no use in either the hand bird or the bush birds—they'd be a good ways beyond the reach of the school-boy's salt upon their tails."

"Business is business," retorted the constable, "as

Ross says; and if you can't say what your business is, you can't have it done."

"That's a fact," replied the wagoner; "is Ross as high a man as I am?"

"Taller, but not so thick; black hair and whiskers, with a touch of high living in his face: lately, since he's got a name—got his name up—he's given too much to high living and dandyism, and that accounts for the reason why he is not so successful as formerly—but as I say he's got his name up, and now he can lie abed."

"Why don't you get your name up, then, and lie abed too? it's bed-time."

"Look here, my country friend; if you're for any high lark, just say so, and I'll give you a bed in the watch-house in no time."

"Thank ye, stranger; I sleeps in my wagon; but I wants to find Ross."

"Go down to Rose Alley, then, and rap him up; he lives next door to his livery stable."

"I'm obliged to you, stranger; I knows the place—in Rose Alley, hey? I'll find him." So speaking, our wagoner left the Eagle followed by the constable.

"Look here, stranger," said that worthy, resting himself carelessly against the lamp-post in front of the door; "tell us what's the matter?"

"I'd like to, for I think high of you. I told you—but there's a friend of mine concerned, and he charged me by all means to tell it to nobody but Ross."

"How do you know that I'm not Ross?"

"By the best of tokens; you're neither tall nor good looking, nor you ain't no whiskers."

At this the constable turned on his heels and entered the Eagle again, and our wagoner walked off.

"I've learnt a good lesson from Bartlett," said Ross to himself as he walked away; "that puts me in

mind—hang it—here I've forgot my pistols ; I must back and get 'em."

Quickly Ross hastened to secure the weapons. The light suspended from the middle of his stable was yet burning, and, gliding in the backway, he pocketed his "barkers," and departed. Satisfied with the trial of his disguise at the Eagle, he proceeded to fulfil his errand. He avoided the street in which the Eagle was situated, and, taking a direct route, bent his steps to a less respectable portion of the city. When he nearly reached the outskirts, he stopped for a moment and eyed his locality. A broad street, which soon broke into the open road which led to Springdale, lay before him, while on his right was an obscure alley, illuminated by the light of a single lamp. At its mouth he stopped, and gazed steadily down the avenue. No voice was heard—no light was seen. "I have overstaid my hour," said Ross to himself; "I see no light from the window. I'll step down the alley, at any rate; maybe it is not to be seen from here."

Accordingly he walked down the alley, which was without a side pavement, and when he had got about midway, he looked up at a house which was better than its neighbours, but in which the inhabitants seemed to have retired, as there was no light to be seen about it. Loitering with a slackened step as he drew near, Ross observed it with much care, and passed on to the other end of the alley. Here he paused a while, irresolute, and returned again. Still there was no light. He reached the mouth of the alley, determined to return home, when, in turning round, he observed a light streaming from the window of the house we have designated. Instantly he advanced towards it, and, after observing the situation of the candle, which could be seen from the window, he

passed up an alley which divided the house from the one next to it, and, opening the back door without rapping, trod, with a loud, careless step, up stairs. His foot had scarcely touched the first step of the stairway, when a door was opened at its head above, and a female voice, said :

“Is that you, Jemmy?”

“Indeed it is; and I am glad to see you,” replied Ross. “This is market night at the fish-market, and I’ve been kept away, Debby.”

“Better late than never,” said Debby, holding the light to show our worthy the way.

“Pretty big market to-night,” said he, quickening his pace; “truck will be dog-cheap to-morrow.”

“I suspected as much,” said the woman, as she re-entered the room, into which Ross followed, closing the door after him.

The apartment in which Ross entered was scrupulously clean; but there was nothing in it but what the necessaries of life required. A bed, a few chairs, a trunk, with two or three cooking utensils, and an unpainted pine cupboard, were all the furniture it contained. The woman was about the middle age, decent in her attire and demeanor, and evidently one who had seen better days. She was the widow of a former partner of Ross’s, who had been killed by a kick from a horse, and who had left her pennyless. Ross, whose heart was not an unkind one, was in the habit of assisting her when she could not get work sufficient for her maintenance. She was one of that meritorious class of females, in whose behalf the late venerable and philanthropic Mathew Carey, just before he died, so successfully exerted himself. She supported herself by taking in sewing.

“I thought,” said Ross in a whisper, “when I missed the light, that I was too late.”

"No," said she, "he came in but a minute ago, while you, I expect, for I think I heard you go by (Ross nodded assent), were at the other end of the alley. He is very uncertain; and I began to think he would not be here to-night at all. He treats the poor thing shockingly; and if you could fix anything on him that would send him to the penitentiary, you'd serve him right. I know nothing about him, except that I know him from having seen him one day at your stable. He don't know me at all; for I was in the room with you where you keep your accounts, and I saw him by looking through the window that looks from it into the stable. I'm glad I happened to hear you mention his name when I was down there this morning—they'll take you for my country-cousin that I told her off. He has inquired before this who you are. I never should have known you."

"How shall I continue to see and overhear him?" asked Ross.

"In the closet under the stairs I keep my wood," replied the widow; "and there is only a board partition between that and their room, in which there are large cracks. I removed the wood away from the largest, and you can see and overhear distinctly: the door is unlocked, and I have left it ajar; so you can easily slip down into the closet."

"Good!" replied Ross, laying his whip upon the bed, and disencumbering himself of his boots. He then told the woman to move a chair, so as to hide the noise of turning the bolt. When he had turned it, instead of opening the door slowly, which would in all probability have made it creak, he drew it back quickly, and prevented that effect. With a step accustomed to such purposes, he stole down stairs, and entered the closet without making the least noise. Through a broad crack he had nearly a full view of the adjoining chamber, which bespoke more poverty

than the one above it, without any of its tidiness. A rag of carpet covered a few feet of the floor near the hearth, in which there were a few coals; a bedstead with one leg broken, the place of which was supplied by a bit of rough board nailed clumsily on, stood in the corner, with a bed on it, scantily covered, which, with three chairs, a rough table, and an old trunk under the bed, composed the furniture. A kettle and a broken skillet stood in the chimney corner. Gordon sat before the hearth, with his left arm leaning on the table, on which was a black bottle of brandy, and a tumbler. He looked out of sorts, and dispirited.

A woman, careless in her attire, but whose countenance and form exhibited the faded remains of what once had been great beauty, busied herself about the apartment, seemingly with no other purpose than to notice, unobserved, her companion, for she drew out the trunk, and replaced it without taking any article from it—the while throwing hurried and anxious glances on him.

“Damn it! have done fussing so,” said Gordon, pettishly.

“Oh, John!” exclaimed the woman, in accents of the deepest tenderness; “I hav’nt seen you much lately, and I am so sorry to see you troubled;” and, as she spoke, she went up to him and wept upon his shoulder, but he rudely pushed her aside, remarking:

“Damn it! why do you come with your tears to me; be contented now; that hussey that I wanted you to fix up here for, is not coming: I don’t know that I am ever coming again; so content yourself. Where’s the money I gave you to fit up here.”

“I have it, John—I have it.”

“I don’t see that you have spent any of it,” angrily retorted Gordon, looking round.

“No, no! none of it; here it is,” said she, rising

from a little stool on which she had thrown herself, and stepping to her trunk.

"Why did you not get it changed, as I asked you? I'll whale you to death some of these days—you know me."

"John, I would do anything for you—but not that—not that; let me be honest, in God's name. Terribly have I suffered for one violation of the law to please you; and John, passing this money, and being convicted of it, would not punish me so much in the disgrace, as in being separated from you. That's my fear. No! let me live here, and drudge daily at the wash-tub or the ironing-table, and hire out when I can—in that way I can support myself; only come and see me, John, and let me see you oftener,—yes, and I will change the money for you, if it must be so; but do not ask me to change it to bring another woman here. John, if you knew my heart, and how devotedly I love you, you would not so break it."

"According to your account of what it stands, I hardly think there can be any such thing as breaking it; but that jig's up about that hussey in the country. I'm a gone man; and if she don't look out, she'll be a gone woman. Will you change the money?"

"Yes; but not for her."

Gordon raised his fist in the act of striking her, when she said:

"John, don't strike me; the woman up stairs will hear you, and she's decent and orderly, and has promised to get me something to do."

"She has—has she! Well, what money have you got? I don't mean what I gave you;—what change—what good money?"

"Don't speak loud, John; she might overhear you. I have a half of a dollar, which I got yesterday for washing; will you have it?"

"Yes; I shall want it to night. I'm going out to

the tavern' at the forks of the road not far short of Springdale, and the pewter in these times is the best thing there. The woman up stairs promised to get work for you?"

"Yes; and she is quite a decent kind of a body. She's a widow, and that man we heard go up stairs is a country friend of her's. I don't know what her husband was—

"A country cousin, hey? I expect he's pretty much of a green horn. He treads like a fellow who cares not who knows his comings and goings; I can't tread that way myself of late; I've had dark misgivings. I believe that the liquor I've taken lately has unnerved me—blast it! love your enemies! I'll take another glass,"—and he proceeded to fill his cup accordingly.

"John, don't drink any more; you always seem to fear most when you have drank the most—"

"Woman, afterwards—afterwards, but at the time not; the boldest things I've done was then. Want some?"

"No, John."

"Who do you think I saw last night? If it wasn't that I have so many fears upon other matters, I'd make a speculation. Your old mistress."

"Who? not Miss Clara?"

"Yes; she's Miss, or Mrs. somebody; and if it wasn't for Tom Fenton, who I expect has peached, I could frighten hush-money out of a certain quarter. She'd give something for me to keep dark, I reckon."

"John, what motive have you to injure her? I am sure she was a friend of yours in great need; and she has always been a great friend of mine."

"Yes, I understand; very well—we'll see; but, by Jove, I know that which will cost her dear. I suppose you call her a friend of mine in making me marry you."

"Well, John, a friend of mine, then. What harm can you do her, John?"

"That's my business."

"Did she ask for me, John?"

"Yes. I told her you were dead."

"Where does she live, John?"

"What! you want to go and see her, do you? make a call, and prove me a liar?"

"John, why should you object to my seeing her?"

"If for no other reason, because I told her you were dead."

"John, do let me go and see her."

"Not another word, if you don't want to be knocked down." Saying which, Gordon filled himself another glass of brandy, and turned away from the woman, who, musingly, and with a sorrowful countenance, gazed into the fire.

CHAPTER XI.

THE silence of Gordon and his wife, for she was no other, was interrupted by a gentle tap of the widow from above stairs at their door.

"Who is that?" exclaimed Gordon, putting his hands on his breast.

"Nobody, John, but Mrs. Baxter from up stairs—shall I let her in? let me put away the bottle first."

"Well, you never told her you were my wife, did you?"

"Never!"

"Well, let her in then. I should like to form my own opinion of her."

Obedient to the order, Mrs. Gordon opened the door and welcomed in Mrs. Baxter.

"It is very late," said the widow, bustling to a chair which Mrs. Gordon handed her; "but this is market night at the fish-market, and a country friend of mine wants to make change for a ten dollar bill; have you got two fives, sir?" to Gordon.

"The very thing," said Gordon; "you're in luck; ask your friend to walk down and take a friendly glass with me. Catharine, that change I gave you the other day." Catharine looked imploringly at Gordon, who took no notice of her, while the widow remarked, rising: "Well, you're very kind—I'll call him;" and she proceeded up stairs.

"For God's sake, John," said his wife to him when they were left alone; "don't pass that money on him."

"For the devil's sake, and that's your own, keep your tongue, or I'll knock you down. No, then," he said, as the sudden thought struck him; "I won't pass it on him, you shall do it yourself."

The steps of Ross and Mrs. Baxter were now heard descending the stairs, and as they entered the room the widow observed that that, pointing to the disguised constable, was her friend.

"Aha! glad to see you," said Gordon; "now is the time for the country folks to make money. Let's have a glass to our better acquaintance."

"Agreed," said the wagoner. "I objects to liquor much while I'm working, but it comes very natural to me when I'm from home."

"It's good if kept in subjection," said Gordon, handing him the tumbler, and apologising for having but the one; like fire, it's a good servant but bad master. Have we met before? there's something in your voice that strikes me, but I certainly can't say that I remember you."

"Maylike we have met—I'm not certain—I think I did see you in market one morning. Do you live in these parts? My service to you, stranger," and he swallowed his liquor.

"No, no; not exactly. In a big city like this, men, though, might live forever and never know each other. How much money do you want changed?"

"Only a ten dollar bill. I've got word that a friend of mine living up by Springdale wants to barter with me for a farm, and I think I'll go there to-morrow and see if we can't drive a bargain."

"Aha! Springdale! are you much acquainted in that neighbourhood?"

"No, not the least. I live in the other direction. I sent out to him yesterday some money that I owed him, and he sent word that to-morrow he would be at Springdale."

"I mistrust him a little."

"What's his name?" asked Gordon.

"Battleborough—old Job Battleborough. Do you know him?"

"No, I don't—I heard of such a man, though. Catharine, give the gentleman the two fives there, on the Merchant's Bank."

"What's your note?"

"The Mechanics."

"Ah! let's look at it; yes, a good note—it's well to be careful now-a-days. Catharine, hand the money."

She hesitated, when Ross remarked, "I see you let your wife keep the money, and she hates to part with it. Mayhaps she thinks that of mine is not genuine."

"I don't know what she thinks!" exclaimed Gordon, throwing an angry eye on his wife. "I suppose she ought to be willing to accommodate her neighbours; she says that Mrs. Baxter has been very kind to her."

"I always like to be neighbourly," rejoined Mrs. Baxter, looking at Mrs. Gordon, as she handed the money to Ross, while the latter rose, and said:

"I'm obliged to you, stranger—whenever I can do as much for you I'll do it. Good night to you."

"When do you go into the country? I'm going myself, and should like to have company," said Gordon, holding the light and observing the stranger closely. The minuteness of the inspection caused Ross to look steadily, but unabashed, in the eye of Gordon, and to say:

"I don't care when, for the matter of that; if I had my horse here, I'd go to-night."

"Where is your horse?"

"At the—the Eagle, I think they call it."

"It's a fine night," replied Gordon. "I hate travelling alone. What say you to another glass. Then get your horse, and meet me here in half an hour. I expect we can trust ourselves together, and keep off bad company?"

"Agreed! agreed!" They drank over the proposition, and shook hands; Gordon staggering as they did so, for he was intoxicated, when the wagoner, on leaving the room, said to Mrs. Baxter, that he had left his whip in her room and would get it. She accordingly went with him.

"Give me a pen and ink," said Ross; "I don't want to make myself known to my man at the stable, and I must take an order to him from myself. I shall say to him that I left your humble servant at the theatre. The thing works well, almost too well."

"Why run the risk of his company out into the country, when you know his character?" said the widow. "Why not get some officers and take him?"

"No, he's baffled me once, and I'll show him that I can play as deep a game as he can. I know the man at the cross roads; I'll make a first-rate police report of it. He has, by his dress, entirely changed himself—he does it well, too."

"Well, well; I can't but think you're doing wrong, Mr. Ross," returned the widow, "and I shall lose my best friend in you."

"Must do it," said Ross. "How in the world would I have ever gotten my name—if not for daring in these matters."

The conversation in Gordon's room was as interesting as that above.

"John," said his wife to him, "you are not going with that stranger?"

"I am, certainly—why—you are always blasting me with doubts."

"Because, my dear John, he eyed you so very closely when you were looking away from him. I don't know why it is, but I think he means you some wrong."

"A woman's reason. How does he know but what I mean him some wrong?"

"But, don't do it—don't do it, John; think that here would be this woman to swear that he left the house with you—and about the money, too."

"Hang the money! you gave it to him; and they can't bring the guilty knowledge home to me—and, to put you at ease, nor you, either."

"John, I did not hesitate because I thought of myself—there he comes down stairs; you must do as you choose—but I wish you were more of yourself. He observed you had been drinking."

"He did, hey?—well, that's the reason he takes me to be honest; there's something in the fellow's tone that I have heard before—or it might have been only the liquor. But I tell you, if you must know, this, that I suspect the officers are after me, and if I am seen in this half-rough country dress of mine with a countrymen, who'll suspect me? It's a bold stroke to be off clear to the hills. I believe I was dogged the other night to a certain place. I could'nt trust myself to come here till it was dark. Damn it! I've been in a cellar all day. This woman up stairs has never seen me before, and she don't know me in any other dress. I thought that countryman was a coming in here—it seems he's gone—did you hear him go out?"

At this moment the door opened, and the widow entered, saying she would keep them company if they liked till her friend returned.

Ross proceeded directly to his livery stable, rejoicing in the success of his plan, for he had no doubt that he should be enabled to hear something of the counterfeiter from his contemplated operations. He soon rapped his boy up, and gave him the order, which, as the circumstance had turned up before, and all turned out right, was instantly obeyed, and without being in the least suspected by his hostler, the great admirer of Vidocq rode off upon apparently an errand of reckless involvement of his personal safety.

Before Ross returned to Gordon's the latter left the house several times as if on the look out, and, on hearing the tread of a solitary horse in a brisk trot, he entered, and announced his approach.

"Where is your horse?" asked Ross, entering the room. "I staid a bit, for I went to the market to speak to my man who sells for me."

"Up street," was the rejoinder; and, bidding the women a hasty good night, they went off together. Gordon, walking by the side of Ross, with his left hand on his horse's neck, until they got to a shed which stood upon a common, from which Gordon led out his animal already caparisoned, and they rode away.

In a miscellaneous, common-place conversation, in which each tried to disguise his true character, and which was not kept up as briskly as it had commenced, owing to the rapid rattling of their horse's hoofs, our new acquaintances proceeded onward. The exercise of riding, and the freshness of the night air, which was invigorating and wholesome, though it sighed through the forest as if mourning for the green glories of summer, soon sobered Gordon; and, not having the most distant recollection of what had occurred, a morbid suspicion was possessing his

mind, which was not only a part of his mental constitution, but which was greatly increased by the decaying excitement of his frequent potations.

Gordon broke a long silence, after they had proceeded some ten miles, by observing :

"A damn good horse that of your's, stranger—as far as I can see he's well kept; you must be fond of a nag."

"Did you ever see a farmer that was not? I love a horse next to my wife and children—don't you?"

"Better, maybe," rejoined Gordon. "I say, stranger, here's a house—a bit of a tavern, I suppose; yes, there are wagons—and there's a light in the bar-room—they be in early to-morrow—suppose we alight, and take something?"

"No, I believe not," replied Ross.

"Well, you can do as you like; I can't stand this night air without something. I've been taking too much this day or two."

"I'll wait for you; there, the bar-door is just opened, so ther'll be not much rapping." Alighting with a dogged step, Gordon trod heavily into the bar-room and closed the door after him. In a moment afterwards he came out with a glass of brandy in one hand and a light in the other, and said to Ross :

"Here—I never drink alone."

Ross accepted the glass, and, as he put it up to his lips, Gordon exclaimed involuntarily :

"By heavens! I know that horse—how came you with him?"

The assumed wagoner, or farmer, started, but recovering his self-possession, instantly replied: "I thought, stranger, that you were agoing to charge me with stealing him; I bought him this morning from a chap they call Ross—a peace officer, I believe."

"I'm a judge of horse flesh," said Gordon after a pause, which did not suffer Ross to be entirely at his ease, "and I thought I had seen the animal before. Will you smoke?"

"No, I thank you."

"I'll be with you, then, in a moment," observed Gordon, and he entered the tavern and returned with a segar, when he mounted his horse, and they rode on to the cross roads. A brisk ride soon took them to it. The regular road to Springdale was here crossed by another, which led through the valley at the foot of the hills, and formed a part of that which our readers may remember was called the "old road," and which our early acquaintances, Pompey and Bobby, trod the night of Mr. Elwood's husking match. The tavern which stood at its junction was not remarkable for its respectability, though it was well known if not much frequented. The keeper of the establishment did not bear the best character.

Gordon alighted at the door, and thundered away with the butt-end of his whip for some time before there appeared any indications of inhabitancy, saving the fierce yelping of a cur, mingled with the growl of a large house-dog. At last a gruff voice asked from a window up stairs—

"Who's there?"

"Tell him, stranger," said Gordon to Ross, "for I expect he knows you better than me."

"Travellers," shouted Ross.

"Got no accommodations, my friends—it's now hard unto the morning; you'd better ride on."

"Can't do it," said Gordon, and after a considerable parley the door was sullenly opened, and our companions entered. The host, after consulting with his wife, who occupied together a bed-room adjoining the bar, which also served for a parlour, said that he

could give them beds in a room back of their's, but they'd have to take them as they were. This was assented to by the travellers. Ross asked to be shown to it, when Gordon said he would look after his beast, and went out accordingly, remarking:

"I'll soon be back—I'm sleepy."

Ross lifted a light which the landlord offered him, on the promise that he himself would attend to his beast, and entered his bed-room. Gordon took a light from a remaining candlestick, and, placing it in a dark lantern, bade the landlord show the way, which the publican did. As the latter went before, Gordon stepped without noise to the window of the room in which Ross was, and looked through at him intensely. He observed his companion place his hand in one of the beds which trembled, and look inspectingly around. His false whiskers had gotten away so as to exhibit his natural ones, and his wig was somewhat in the same predicament.

"Ross," muttered Gordon through his clenched teeth. "Yes, it's Ross; he's feeling to see if the nest's warm—the bird's off. My brave bully of a constable, you're nearer your last home than I am. Damn this liquor—it will ruin me yet."

Stepping away from the window, Gordon entered the stable after the tavern-keeper, and said, "Hall, where's Tom?"

"He didn't think all was fair," replied Hall, in a whisper, "and he left his bed through the back door while I was opening the front one for you."

"Do you know that man in there, Hall?"

"No; I didn't notice him particularly; a friend, ain't he? you brought him."

"It's Ross, the constable."

"Damnation, is it?"

"Yes; his time's near over. Let's shoot him through the window."

"No; no such things in my house. What, if some of these market folks should hear the crack of the pistol?"

"I don't care who hears it. He's on my track after me like a bloodhound—and he carries it off as if there was nothing but fun in it. It takes two to play that game. No man's life is safe with such a dare devil as that after him. Where's Tom?"

"Up in the loft, I expect."

"Tom," said Gordon, ascending the ladder, and speaking in an eager whisper. "Tom, I say."

"Come to me, if you want me—some one may be below," whispered a voice, lower and more eager than Gordon's.

Gordon obeyed the request, and, passing along, felt amidst the hay for Tom's hand, and found it grasping a pistol.

"That's right—you're ready: there's treason somewhere, Tom."

"And on my trail," said Tom, gritting his teeth.

"How did you hear it?"

"From Benbow's account of Ross searching his house—from their being after you. It's that matter of your own at Springdale with that cripple and the gal that's did the thing. I waited here to-night for the boys to come with my share of the notes, and I'm off to Canada or some other diggings. The devil's delight is kicked up."

"I'll go with you!" exclaimed Gordon, "if you assist me to revenge myself on Ross: he's in Hall's now."

"In Hall's now?" whispered Fenton, springing up, "then we're done for. I lay my life he's in this very barn—ruin, ruin."

"No, he suspects nothing; he's disguised as a farmer."

"Disguised as a farmer—here, and suspects nothing," muttered Tom.

"He's after me, then—and only me."

"Do your own revenge then, Jack."

"Ah! speak low; but he's been after you before to-day."

"Yes, the pair of us. He ought to have his throat cut."

"And we ought to do it; low, speak low. Bully Ben and Pounder, you say, will be here to-night."

"They ought to be here now—hush. Hall will leave a sign out to let them know things are wrong there to-night—and they'll come round the back way here. Bully will make a sign of a cat's mewing."

Tom had scarcely whispered the remark when the sign was made and returned by his scratching against the wall.

In a few moments the counterfeiter were huddled together in the straw, and were made acquainted by Gordon with the facts familiar to our readers. Besides Gordon and Fenton, there were met Bully Ben, Pounder, and Hall.

Hall objected sternly to any violence in his house.

"All this trouble was brought in the camp from you, Gordon," he said, "and that Benbow business."

"All from me!" said Gordon,—“all from Ross.”

"I must leave you," said Hall, "he'll suspect something; you all know what he is."

"I know what he is," muttered Bully Ben through his teeth. "He had me, against all law, beat nearly to death, to make me confess—when I had neither judge nor jury. And when I sued him afterwards, he got off by denying it—though I swore plumply to it. I was handled worse 'an a nigger, and I'm for revenge—revenge. Let's take him to the cave."

"Agreed," said Gordon; "the cave. Hall shall entice him in the front room—no, I'll go in, and while he's in bed, you must make a rush on him." These

plans were all matured so as to have Tom at the window to shoot him if he attempted to escape through it, while Pounder, Bully Ben, and Gordon, were to make him captive in the room. Gordon then entered the house with a careless whistle, and found him seated by the table, reading:

"You take it coolly, my new friend, after such a hard ride," said Gordon, throwing himself on his bed, carelessly.

"Always do," replied Ross.

"What may be the matter that you're reading?" inquired Gordon.

"I picked up the book after you left, stranger—'tis called the adventures of Burrows, the counterfeiter."

"Ha! a great scoundrel."

"That's as men think, my friend," replied Ross, "just as men think. The lawyers cheat their clients—the brokers the banks—the banks the people—and the counterfeiters all. But counterfeiting is a commoner trade than you think—many a fair checked girl is but a counterfeit, and sails like a pirate, and counterfeiters are land pirates, under false colours. How many men do you think wear false whiskers and false hair?"

"You for one," said Gordon, wondering why his comrades did not enter, and mad at their delay.

"Certainly, Gordon, my friend," resumed Ross, without testifying the least surprise, "and both of us false clothes—business is business."

"But you're done for, hang you!"

"No, that's going too fast, Gordon; never count your chickens before they're hatched—you're, maybe, my prisoner."

"Not exactly; here, through the window, Tom!" exclaimed Gordon, and as he spoke he sprang to his feet, while Bully Ben and Pounder rushed in. Ross

made no attempt to escape or to draw his weapons. His entire coolness astonished the gang into inactivity. Bully Ben held a pistol in his hand, but made no attempt to use it.

"Done like men, gentlemen!" exclaimed Ross; "done like men—and, let me add without complaint, gentlemen, who scorn to attack a foe with odds."

"You attacked me with odds," cried Bully Ben, "when you had me thrashed in that style."

"But it was in the way of business, Ben; and I gave you a hint afterwards that saved you—confess the fact."

"You said you did," retorted Ben, "but I don't believe you had the proof against me."

"Clear—conclusive; but it's wrong in you, gentlemen, to quarrel with me; you seem to think me a natural enemy—not so: I never arrest a man unless I am satisfied that I can convict him—and not always then. There's policy in war—and now, as we're at peace, there's no policy."

"Ha, ha! well, you *are* a buster!" exclaimed Pounder.

"Precisely," replied Ross, "we're all busters, as you call them, if we are great men in our line—boys, you're busters, too—Bully Ben's a buster, and as to Gordon here, he's a buster, equal to the biggest of you."

"But what makes you pursue me in such a way, like a hell-hound?" asked Gordon.

"A great mistake, Jack," retorted Ross; "didn't we part fair friends that night at Benbow's? had we not social glasses this very night? How know you that I've anything against you? No, you have a greater enemy than I ever was to you."

"Who's that?" asked Jack.

"Liquor, Jack—liquor!" said Ross, emphatically.

"That's the fact!" shouted Bully Ben and Pounder, while Tom, who had entered the room, struck with the appearance of things within, and forgetting his duty at his post, remarked:

"That was into Gordon."

"Gentlemen," continued Ross, speaking of liquor, let's have some. Gordon, how did you know me?"

"By your whiskers, Ross—by your whiskers: your false ones slipped aside."

"Damn them!" said Ross, tossing them from his head with a vexation that astonished the counterfeiters, and made them look at him with their first expression of features.

"Here, Hall," he continued, "bring in the liquor; boys I was different game from what you thought; I have nothing against you, but against my whiskers I have a quarrel. Hall, let's have your shaving apparatus here—I'd take them off if they sat as closely to my head as my scalp."

Gordon and his companions called out to Hall to humour the joke, and preparations were made accordingly. Ross fixed his table and arrayed the lights as if he were seated in his own bed-room. He commended Hall for the neatness of his shaving-cup, and said he liked the habit of burning spirits of wine in heating the water, and, as he spoke, he ignited.

"But bring the liquor," said he.

It was accordingly brought, and they all helped themselves—Gordon particularly—to a copious libation.

"Boys—or rather gentlemen, excuse the familiarity," observed Ross, pausing from the operation of lathering his most ample whiskers, "as I expect you always mean to continue in your present honourable profession, may you live the full measure that the

law allows, and die as it points out. I'll give you three pieces of advice, which I have learned in my observations. Firstly; as the preachers would say, never take an accomplice where you can do the deed without—accomplices entertain often suspicions of each other, and in that way we constables come to find you out. A fellow is always wanting to know where his accomplice is, fearful of being blown. Secondly; the moment you are arrested hold your tongues, and make no confessions or admissions—I know many a man so ruined. Thirdly; always send for a keen lawyer, and pay him well: And fourthly, and lastly; always keep on the best possible terms with the gentlemen of my profession. We often do each other great services—secret services that the world is not aware of, and we respect each other accordingly. In fact, our professions mutually sustain each other.”

“Fact!” shouted Gordon, tossing himself on his bed.

At this moment there was heard without the rapid trampling of horses.

“We're betrayed,” shouted Bully Ben, aiming his pistol at the head of Ross and firing, but wide of his mark. It would not have taken effect, perhaps, though aimed directly at the body of the constable, for that quick-witted character, before the trigger was pulled, jerked the bed-clothes round him. Bully Ben presenting his shoulder towards the window jumped through it, sash and all, followed by Pounder and Tom Fenton. Gordon jumped up, and staggered towards the window to follow their example, but was thrust back by Ross, and fell on the bed in a state of drunken insensibility.

“What's all the rumpus, Hall?” said Ross, stepping to the door, and calling out to the landlord, who was letting in the horsemen.

"Nothing," replied Hall, stepping up to him and replying in a whisper, "but a parcel of chaps who are larking it from Springdale."

"It's not the first lark that's nearly cost a man his life. It's morning, ain't it?"

"Yes, it's breaking."

While Gordon was prostrated in drunkenness, Ross proceeded to tie him, while the counterfeiter muttered to himself: "Catharine, mind me now—we'll fix him, Tom—die dogs—hang liquor."

After accomplishing his purpose, Ross resumed his seat before the looking-glass, and finished shaving himself with great deliberation, making this internal reflection, as he looked at Gordon:

"Damn him! I thought well of him until I saw his treatment to the woman. He can go it with a rush. I suppose I must take him to Springdale jail, as that's the nearest—not very safe, though. What's that my business; all I've got to do is to cage the bird. The other fellows are clean gone, except Tom Fenton—he's got, what they say I have, the bump of adhesiveness. He'll haunt about here till he's nabbed. I've that bump, by-the-by, myself, or I never should have held on so long to my whiskers." Then surveying himself in the glass, he continued: "I don't know but what I look more like a gentleman without 'em."

Ordering his breakfast in the room where Gordon lay, Ross had a knife and fork placed for his prisoner, and awoke him. Gordon glanced wildly round, while the full force of his situation broke over his bewildered faculties, and he exclaimed:

"No, no; give me brandy—brandy!"

Proceeding to get it himself, Ross handed it to him with the remark:

"I told you, Jack, it was your worst enemy."

Gordon gulped it down without a word, and, in a half of an hour afterwards, Ross had him seated in a wagon, which he drove himself, and conveyed him safely to the Springdale jail.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM motives of humanity, when Ross returned to the city, which was immediately on his securing Gordon in jail, he called to see Mrs. Gordon, and break to her her husband's fate, and contribute his mite to the relief of her distress.

The afflicted woman had been out till past dinner-time, roaming the streets in the hope of getting some employment to obtain a meal, and with a vague anticipation that she might see or hear something of her former mistress, and thereby gain an opportunity, after extorting a promise from her not to do Gordon any injury, to inform her of his threats; for her gratitude to Miss Atherton was ever abiding in his memory, and like a fountain ever flowing. Her efforts had been vain in tracing her mistress, or obtaining food. She could not bear the idea of begging, and she returned to her wretched home to endure as she might the gnawings of hunger.

While she sat on her little stool, with her face buried in her hands, thinking sad thoughts, Ross, who had rapped twice unheard by her, entered the room. Its gloomy appearance, and the more than gloomy appearance of the woman, struck even his feelings, used as they were to scenes of wretchedness and sorrow. She arose, and respectfully offered him a chair. He took it, and telling her who he was, and what he

was, informed her of Gordon's imprisonment in the Springdale jail to await his trial.

"Then you were here last night?" said she.

"I was; and I saw enough of you to respect you. Gordon, if you can, you should forget. I tell you plainly, there is no chance for him; if he escapes an indictment for counterfeiting and another for perjury against a boy, I think they'll fix on him the robbery of Mr. Pinckney.

"Mr. Pinckney! what Mr. Pinckney?"

"A gentleman who is a friend of Mr. Langdale, one of our richest merchants."

"Do you know, sir, where Gordon was, besides at Mr. Benbow's?"

"Certainly; and I don't see what he was doing there unless to beg off from Mr. Pinckney, but he was at Mr. Langdale's. Jessop tracked him."

"Mr. Langdale's! where is Mr. Langdale's?"

"In Washington Square, number —. Maybe you'll find there the lady that you and he were talking of— your old mistress."

Catharine looked at Ross in bewilderment, but spoke not.

"I wish I had those ten dollars to return to you; but if I must go to prison, can't you put me where John is."

"I've no authority to take you to prison, and wouldn't exercise it if I had," said Ross. "I did my duty in arresting Gordon, and I shall be well paid for it. I consider that I owe you ten dollars, and here they are."

"No, no; let me work for you, and repay you in that way."

"Certainly, you shall," said Ross; "here, take the money, and I'll send you round some work, or call with my wife and see you about it."

Expressing her gratitude more by manner than

words, Catharine took five dollars, refusing to take more, and Ross left her."

Fixing her scanty dress with as much skill as possible, Catharine proceeded directly to Mr. Langdale's, and, entering the area, asked the servant for Miss Atherton.

"Tell her Catharine Gordon," said Catharine, "and she'll see me," looking over her dress.

Hesitating for a moment, the servant went and soon returned, telling Catharine to follow her. She was conducted to a splendidly furnished bed-room, where Miss Atherton sat in a voluptuous dishabille.

"Shut the door after you," said Miss Atherton, quietly to the servant who lingered on the threshold. "Catharine is that you?" she said, advancing with emotion, and taking the hand of her former maiden; "I'm glad to see you—I heard you were dead—but sorry you have so much altered. You are in distress."

"Deep, deep!" exclaimed the servant-maid, shaking all over with emotion; "in body and in soul, in heart, in health, in hope—ruined and undone forever."

"Merciful father! what can I do for you? will money relieve you?"

"It's strange, Miss Clara, but something seems to bind me in my darkest hour to you. Gordon told you I was dead?"

"He did," said Miss Atherton. "Sit down and tell me what has happened to you? After he left you, you followed him."

"I did; but first excuse me, Miss Clara: you know the character of Gordon—he is now in jail, at a place called Springdale, for counterfeiting and other crimes—excuse me—but can he in any way do you any injury?"

"Me an injury—why, Catharine?"

"Because, last night when in his cups he—but you promise me to tell it to no one to his harm—"

"Certainly not; I'll only use what you tell me in self-defence."

"Miss Clara, I owe you so much that I am bound to tell you what he said: he threatened you, and said if he was not so much taken up with his own risk that he could get hush-money out of somebody, whom I thought he meant you.

"Me!—where did you say Gordon was? confined at Springdale, was it not? about twenty or twenty-five miles from here. Did he ever tell you any way in which he could injure me?"

"Never," replied Catharine; "I have only been with him a few months; he left me behind in the old country. At times he would speak against you; but I don't think he liked you after you made him marry me."

"Likely—that's it. Now tell me about yourself, Catharine."

"I've not much to say, Miss Clara. After John married me, and we quit service with you, he threw off restraint, and became much wilder. We got very poor, my child died, and he took me to London, where, in a few months, after trying to make me an outcast, he abandoned me, and came to this country. I followed after him in the next ship, and after a world of trouble, and search, and sorrow—spending all the little money I had, and working for my daily bread, and roaming from city to city, and sometimes giving up in despair,—by accident I met him one day in the market in this place. He was mounted on a horse, and had several men who seemed like jockies talking to him. He always would gamble. I went up to him, and called him aside to speak to him. He looked surprised and angry at first, and the next minute told me to say my say out before company.

He then turned from me to his friends, and said, nodding his head at me, that there was game. I could not bear it—I burst into tears, and walked away. He followed me at some distance, and damned me for leaving home; but I begged and prayed with him so at last that he took me to a miserable room from the house where I was living—where—but I won't speak of his treatment to me. He has been getting worse and worse; more dissipated and more, until he is now in prison"—and the poor thing wept bitterly.

"My God, woman, why did you live with him—why did you not annihilate him!" exclaimed Miss Atherton, stamping her foot on the floor.

"O! Miss Clara, if you had loved as I have, the ground he trod upon, though it were the desert, would be more to you than paradise without him—the darkest night brighter than the brightest day—poverty, misery, and the world's scorn with him, better than the world's wealth without."

"I traced those feelings in you, or you never should have married him. I pity you from my soul. How dare any man to outrage so a woman's feelings—feelings such as yours were! Give up all notion of him, and let him die a blasted convict."

"I can't—I can't!" exclaimed Catharine. "You can't make the heart young again; the roots of the knotted oak can never be tendrils again—they can never be transplanted—in the bosom of the earth where they grew up in their strength they must be left or wither—even to expose them is withering."

"You speak truly of some hearts, I believe," said Miss Atherton, with a brow which bore the stamp of passion and power, "but not of all. I respect your womanly affection, but I trust, for the happiness of my sex, that such is to be found oftener in romance than in reality. Catharine, you must feel no false

delicacy with me—I have abundant wealth, and will assist you; were I in your situation and you in mine, remembering the past, I would both ask and expect it of you.” So speaking, Miss Atherton handed her several gold pieces. “You must get whatever you want—clothes, and whatever else, and tell me. Let none of this go to fee some pettifogging lawyer who won’t know the first principles of the case. If there is any hope for John, I will see that he has able counsel. Come and see me to-morrow—be punctual, Catharine; no foolish errand to Springdale to see him and let him couzen or beat your money from you; he is better as he is: if he has not money he will get no drink but what is good for him—and abstinence from intoxication may reform him.”

Here the servant entered with a card in her hand, which she gave to Miss Atherton, which the lady looked at peculiarly, and said:

“Tell Miss Fitzhurst that I will be down in a moment; and say to my maid I do not want her. “Catharine,” she continued to Gordon’s wife, “you shall fix my dress for me; it will not be the first time, and may not be the last.”

“My fingers are all thumbs now, Miss Clara,” said Catharine, smiling at the memory of brighter days; “but I’ll try—the washing-tub and floor-scouring have unfitted me for such a duty. How I used to love it. You used to be easier fixed than other ladies, and never found fault.”

“I am not as patient as I used to be; but no matter—some of these days maybe you will be with me again, and we’ll make these men behave better. No, Catharine, these plain pearl ear-rings, they become black—now, that solitary ring. Call and see me to-morrow, Catharine, or this afternoon—or to night, if you feel like it, and if I am not engaged we’ll talk over other times. Be of good cheer—these men,

Catharine, have a maxim, my girl, that faint heart never won fair lady, and we women must have, for our maxim, this: that faint lady never won or kept false man—so there shall be no heart in our maxim at all. Good bye.”

“Good bye, Miss Clara; God forever bless you,” said Catharine, descending the steps behind her former mistress, and dwelling upon the splendour of her peerless beauty.

The ladies met like two who had been anxious to see each other, from what they had heard mutually of the other's personal and mental attractions. Miss Atherton was some years the elder, and the impression of intellectual superiority and great womanly tact and observation sat upon her brow. Perhaps Fanny's first impression of her new acquaintance was that she was a thought too worldly in her manner; but it passed away from her mind in five minutes. Miss Atherton thought she saw in Fanny something of what she herself had been, or might have been but for the past—something, but she felt their characters were different naturally. Though her brow was sunny as the marble when the sunlight falls upon it, yet a cloud crossed her heart when Fanny, in making the apology of her father's sickness for her delay in calling, added:

“Mr. Pinckney was to have escorted me, Miss Atherton; but some involvement of his affairs from the low price of cotton compelled him to go to Mr. Mason's, the lawyer; so I determined, as I came in expressly to see you, that I would not be deprived, by any further untoward circumstances from making your acquaintance.”

“I hope your father is better?” inquired Miss Atherton.

“Much better. Several pleasant occurrences of late have relieved him;” and Fanny spoke of Bobby's

trial and Pompey's conduct, saying how much it had gratified her father.

"I hope Mr. Pinckney's loss is not great?" inquired Miss Atherton.

"I don't know exactly its extent," rejoined Fanny, who, not knowing why, could not refrain from blushing.

"Caught," thought Miss Atherton to herself; "she'll have him if he were penniless; she's proud, and would be proud to show her disinterested love. Pinckney has not told her of ourselves—pride again."

This thought of the instant passed through her mind, when she asked Fanny if she had ever heard of Gordon, the counterfeiter. In reply to which inquiry, Fanny gave an account of his conduct to Peggy and Bobby, and of his desire to marry the former. After a very long call, Fanny took her leave, pressing Miss Atherton to call and see her soon, and explaining that they were not spending the winter in the city in consequence of her father's gout.

"I promise you," replied Miss Atherton, "that the first fair day—day like this—that occurs, the day after to-morrow, if it's that day, I will ride out and see you. I am determined, if you will allow me, to know you well." They shook hands and parted.

"A beautiful woman," thought Miss Atherton as she viewed her own fair proportions in the glass; "beautiful—and my good friend Howard has caught her heart. Can he have lost his fortune—no, I don't believe—would I be very sorry? I ought to be. It will require a woman of more determination of character to make a distinguished man of Pinckney than my visiter. Can't I get him back? he treats me with so much the air of an escaped bird that won't be caught again. I must to Springdale; I must know something about this Gordon. I suspect, and—I

wonder if Howard had any particular feeling other than the call of business which kept him away."

Her reverie was interrupted by the announcement of Pinckney's name. He entered, and looked black when on inquiry he learned that Miss Fitzhurst had called and left. He staid but a few moments, and took his leave.

"He tries my woman's temper to the uttermost," soliloquised Miss Atherton, when the door closed on him—"to the uttermost—why he was once the creature of my smiles."

Fanny expressed herself to Pinckney in the most unbounded terms of admiration of Miss Atherton. "Howard," she said, laughing, "you'll make me jealous if you go there much."

"Ah! I fear Fanny that I not only shall not go there, but shall be absent from you for two or three weeks. My affairs, I believe, will compel me to go to New York. I am in hopes that my visit will make all right. That Mr. Mason is certainly a splendid man; it is a treat to talk with him and Langdale. I wish often, Fanny, that I had studied one of the professions; in this country there seems to be something in the very atmosphere which requires a man to be employed. But we must go to Europe in the Spring, and I will there prove to you that I have not flattered you, and show them what flowers grow in America; but your city has already shown them that."

"And Miss Atherton,"

"Yes; but her's is a beauty to please a boy—one who has not seen the world."

"O! no, not always so, Howard; think how Mr. Langdale speaks of her. I shouldn't wonder if they made a match."

"Ah! would you not? I hope that Sidney will return before I go. My dearest Fanny, the pain of separation, but for so short a time, will make me feel

more desolate than when I stood upon the shores of Europe an utter stranger."

In a few days Pinckney left Holly for New York. His parting with Fanny had that pleased anxiousness which we may suppose two lovers to feel who, by separate pathways that join ere long, have parted for a moment, each to pluck a flower, which they meant to present in exchange when they met again as a token of their everlasting love, and that thereafter they should part no more.

CHAPTER XIII.

Miss ATHERTON kept her promise, and made an early return of Fanny's call. As the ride was a long one, she spent the day and night at Holly, and they had a long *tête-à-tête* together. How soon under such circumstances an intimacy ripens.

Saddened by Pinckney's absence, and gaining no comfort from her visits to Sarah, who was sadder, and dared not impart her feelings in sympathy, Fanny sought the excitement of the city to relieve the loneliness which, in spite of her efforts, pressed upon her heart. She made her home with Miss Atherton at Langdale's. She found in the gay circle of fashion that Miss Atherton was all the talk—the envy of the belles, and the toast of the beaux. The admiration she excited seemed so common to her that nothing in her manner indicated her consciousness of it.

And Langdale, with his intellect and manner, and full appreciations of beauty and address in woman, how he delighted to seat himself upon the sofa between them and spend the joyous hours! He knew so well the art of pleasing—and he had known so much of the sorrows and selfishness of existence, that whatever could lend a charm to it he garnered with a miser's care to enjoy with a poet's sensibility. He scanned the beauties, from their silken slippers to their slightest curl or ribbon, with that feeling of

delicate perception that made the minutest touch in the poetry of life a minister to his enjoyment. How quietly, yet shrewdly, he would comment upon any little trait of character he had seen exhibited in society, and with a tact that gave it the interest of a novel: or if literature was the theme, who that heard men could fancy him the keen man of the world, who knew the interest table so well, and had turned it to such good account amidst day-books, and ledgers,—draymen and hogsheads; yet the truth is, that it was this contrast that gave such a zest to his enjoyment of the society of his inmates; and how quickly he anticipated any little want in his household which would or might contribute to their gratification; the fanciful bird-cage and its glittering inmate, if it struck his eye in the street, was so unostentatiously, if attainable, conveyed to his home. The richness of the hot-house, the varieties of the exotics, some beautiful specimen of statuary, some rare fossil, some glorious painting, if met with, he made his own, to contribute if but to a moment's pleasure. And amidst it all the cares of business clouded his brow not an instant, or gave to his thought and presence of mind the least abstraction. If some merchant-friend dined with him, whose soul was wrapped up in sordid traffic, Langdale continued the conversation, not only to make him pleased with himself, but amusing to his inmates, and when he left, with what a quiet good humour he would trace some trait of his character, or tell some tale of him on change, but without the least malice—scandal he despised.

Miss Atherton, who had seen the world thoroughly and in its highest circles, would often wonder to herself over his powers of pleasing, while Fanny, in listening to him, would forget for the moment even Pinckney.

One day, when Fanny and Miss Atherton were

together in the latter's chamber—it was one of those gloomy days of autumn when the fire looks so pleasant within and everything so unpleasant without—on such a day, while Fanny was busied with a bit of fancy-work, Miss Atherton was busy in rummaging in her trunks among a number of letters and trinkets, when looking up, she said :

“ Fanny, what a dull day—it's enough to give one the horrors to look out ; yet everything within, nevertheless, is not unjoyous. It's a day that makes one look back ; don't you think so ? I always call them your confidential days.”

“ That's a good term,” replied Fanny ; “ 'tis strange, indeed, how our feelings change with the weather. I can't say that I have been moping all the morning, but I have a kind of pleasing thoughtfulness upon me. From your pile of letters, and your being a single lady, I can judge what kind of reminiscences you are calling up.”

“ As to that, maybe you are mistaken—but here I have a whole trunk full of letters—from belles and beaux—friends and foes ; from foolish old lords and gay young gentlemen—even down to a servant maid, Are you fond of poetry ?”

“ Very, indeed.”

“ I suppose every young gentleman who rhymes thinks he writes poetry. Here's a scrap from a certain gentleman to a certain friend of mine, upon the gentleman's understanding that the lady was engaged—It is called :

DESPONDENCY.

I'm sad : there is a pall of gloom
 Above me in the sunny sky,
 As if the spirits of the tomb,
 With their dark train, were sweeping by.
 I feel like him, whom tyrant's chain
 Bound to the dead in days of old,
 I feel my pulse in heart and brain—
 In the world's contact growing cold.

I'm sad : for thy sweet dreams to-night,
 Fair spirit of my song and soul,
 Not hither will they take their flight
 Or spread around me their control :
 Another has thy plighted vow,
 And soon the yielded hand he'll take,
 And press the kiss upon thy brow,
 And thou for him will then forsake
 The world—and he for aye will be—
 The world, and the world's law to thee.

I'm sad : for had we met before
 Ere yet that plighted vow was spoken,
 I might have—but no more, no more—
 I bear within the bitter token.—
 I might have loved thee with a love
 Which even in despair is true,
 Which day by day should seek to prove
 Daily the deeper debt were due.—
 I might have loved thee as he loved
 Who gave the world for smile like thine,
 And marked its changes all unmoved
 If I had clasped thy hand in mine.—
 I might have loved thee, and thy smile
 Had flung a blessing on my brow
 As deep as in the darkening wile
 That dwells upon my spirit now.—
 I might have loved thee, might I do
 As much as though I now might woo.

"There, don't you think that gentleman loved and meant to love, though hopelessly!" exclaimed Mrs. Atherton, laughing, and laying the MS. on the table beside her.

"It sounds in that fashion," replied Fanny; and I like what seems to be the intenseness of his feelings."

"Feelings! now, Fanny, do you think that any one ever sat down to write poetry who felt at the time."

"So the writers of it say," replied Fanny; "and I can fancy nothing more natural. We see a friend to unburden our hearts; and why not, when we have no friend, to make our pen one—as somebody talks of a lover breathing his mistress's name to the flowers."

"Oh! you are thinking of Hudibras!" exclaimed Miss Atherton:

"I'll carve your name on barks of trees
With true love knots and flourishes."

Fanny blushed, and Miss Atherton continued: "listen to this: here's an extract from the same writer, but in humble prose:

"Whom could I love but thee! In the world I've left behind me—a wide continent through which I travelled—I saw none who for a moment attracted my attention. Here, in this bright land, where beauty assumes its loveliest forms, and borrows all the graces of poetry and the arts—the cultivation of centuries—still I passed on indifferent to the living though not to the dead, until I saw thee—then whom could I love but thee? and from that hour, of whom else have I thought? why do I linger here when friends are calling me to my distant home, sunny as this, but that thou art all the world to me, and I have no home but in thy smile! Last night when I saw you with the gay flatterers

around you, to whom you listened seemingly with so pleased an ear, whose ear did I seek if not thine—and was it not deaf to me? why sometimes then have you smiled on me? was it with the Syren's wish to beckon through flowery paths to destruction? yet but smile if you only act it, let me but be near you—

‘ Let me but breathe
The blessed air that's breathed by thee,
And whether on its wings it bear
Healing or death, 'tis one to me.’ ”

“ In the name of mercy!” exclaimed Fanny, smiling, as Miss Atherton stopped, “ what became of that swain forlorn.”

“ What became of—him! he's still in flesh, I presume—still in flesh—men have died and worms have eaten them, et cetera. Don't you think a school-boy, upon the instant, could finish the quotation? ‘ but not for love.’ Listen to this:

“ ‘ Hope has been called a flatterer—a sycophant; yet she is the only sycophant and flatterer who forsakes not the wretched, but whose smile grows warmer as their wretchedness increases. To all the living she is a bosom friend, and she forsakes not even the dead, for she haunts the grave of the departed, and visits the sleepless pillow of the bereaved with the promise that the severed shall meet again. And O! after such a promise how sweetly slumber visits the eyelids of that lonely one. Then why am I so forsaken that she comes not to me? In vain I court her smile, and solicit her to promise me, when you frown upon me, one impulse of cheerful existence for the future. But no! she acts towards me as your slave, and you forbid her to visit me with even a whisper that is gladdening. Oh! beloved ——’ ”

"Read the name out," interrupted Fanny; "read the name out, O! beloved *Clara*."

"Could you think," exclaimed Miss Atherton, that so hopeless a youth would dare to practise the profanity of using such a beloved one's Christian name? No! were it you, he'd have to say 'O! beloved Miss Fitzhurst.' If hope had been your slave, as he represents, and you had told her to smile upon him, then it might be 'O! beloved Fanny.' Our sex seldom rise to the dignity of the solitary surname, such as Cæsar, Washington, Napoleon, except in mythology; for instance, Hope—she's a female and flirt, and yet we always call her plain Hope."

"The sex is known by the character without the designation," said Fanny, laughing. "I wonder if ever she flattered into this gentleman's presence again! Do let me see a scrap of his hand-writing—they say it shows the character, and I fancy his must be excessively tremulous—that scrap of rhyme, if it has not the name."

"Yes, it is a tremulous hand," replied Miss Atherton, handing to Fanny the MS. of the lines on 'Despondency' with a careless hand, but a peculiar smile.

"Astonishing!" exclaimed Fanny; "how much the hand-writing is like that of Howard, of Mr. Pinckney. And his initials!" said she, in a faltering tone, dropping the paper from her hand. "Deceived, and so cruelly."

"Miss Fitzhurst, how agitated you are!" exclaimed Miss Atherton, in a tone of apparent alarm. "I regret exceedingly that the discovery of this secret, or, I should rather say, this mere fact, should so much agitate you. I did not fancy that Mr. Pinckney was other to you than an acquaintance; and you must do me the justice to say, under what I presume are existing circumstances, that it was your joke upon his hand-writing, and your expressed wish to see it, that caused

me to show it; beside, hand writings, now I reflect, may be alike, and this you are not certain, are you, this is Mr. Pinckney's?"

"You know it is—but no matter—it is immaterial," said Fanny, making an effort to resume her work. "Read on."

"Not for worlds!" exclaimed Miss Atherton: "not for worlds! I assure you, Miss Fitzhurst, that there is nothing in my feelings and relations towards Mr. Pinckney which does not leave him free as air. Whatever rights of explanation there are arising from this unfortunate little incident, they rest entirely between you and Mr. Pinckney. Indeed, if I had, for a moment, fancied the possibility of anything unpleasant to your feelings occurring in this careless examination of my trunk, I would have locked it up forever, and have thrown the key into Lethe. I repeat, therefore, that there is nothing in my feelings or relations towards Mr. Pinckney which does not leave him perfectly free to act; and if you feel yourself so placed towards him—it never crossed my brain for a moment as to need of him an explanation, I beg and pray of you that you will mention the precise manner in which you discovered his communication to myself. Among those many packages which you see there spread out, which, as I told you, are from a variety of persons, from lords to waiting-maids, it was by the merest accident I chanced to light upon a stray letter of his; one of the extracts was not his—and I forgot that he was not now in Europe. These little effusions have no effect upon myself; I look at them as the offerings of a gallant, gay, young gentleman, who was then fresh from the poets, and who would not write so wildly now, though he might be truly and devotedly in love. I thought you looked at them in that light yourself, for you may remember we laughed heartily over them—not that

they are not remarkably well written, but from their excessive professions of hopeless attachment. I hope you thoroughly comprehend my feelings in this matter, Miss Fitzhurst?"

"Thoroughly," said Fanny, "thoroughly."

"Indeed, Fanny, I hardly know how to advise you. I had heard that Mr. Pinckney was attentive to you; so I have heard that Mr. Bradley was. Mr. Pinckney I had heard so often here and in other places given away, that I continued to hold him a gallant devoted to our sex at large. Indeed, I do not know how to advise you."

"To whom else have they given him?" asked Fanny, trying to force a smile.

"To whom? such things so escape my memory. Ah! I have heard Colonel Bentley say, by-the-by, a friend of your family's, Fanny, that he thought at one time, to use his expression, that our Lothario was smitten with Miss Grattan; so you see how utterly ignorant I was that the discovery of his hand-writing in badinage to anybody could give you a moment's uneasiness. I dare avow, now, that Mr. Pinckney, in his interviews with you, never mentioned that he knew me abroad but casually—did he?"

"He did not—but—"

"Hear me, one moment, Fanny. No one has ever heard me speak of him in any way but as a Lovelace. Your brother, intimate as they are, I do not believe ever heard him mention my name, except as one that he had met and admired. Not even in his letters from abroad, where he was, with the same pen and ink in his hand with which he wrote to him, puzzling his brain to concoct these *billet-doux* to me. Pardon me—but I think I can guess a little at what may have been understood by you as regard to his feelings towards you, but you never heard him mention me but as a casual acquaintance."

"No, never. Don't let's talk in this way—it's nothing," said Fanny, deeply blushing.

"Well," resumed Miss Atherton, "to show you the light in which I view these little communications, I have never mentioned to a soul that he ever showed me any attentions abroad whatever. In truth, it would be excessively unpleasant to me to have my name brought into the matter in any way. Should it be, let me not be thought too urgent in requesting—in repeating the request—that you will fully explain my innocent and unconscious agency."

"It's wearing late," said Fanny, rising; "it is time for us to prepare for dinner;" and she arose from her seat, when Miss Atherton took her hand, and, impressing a kiss upon her brow, walked with her to her chamber door.

Poor Fanny! compressing her lips together, she leaned against her bed in speechless agony for several minutes, when, by a strong resolution of her will, she made her toilet, and entered the withdrawing room a moment after Miss Atherton, where she found Mr. Langdale standing by her side, while she was preparing to play on a most tasteful harp which that gentleman had just purchased.

"Are you unwell, Miss Fitzhurst," said Langdale to her, on observing her pale brow.

"No, sir; not at all."

"A little sorrowful only," said he; "then come, coz, play for Miss Fitzhurst Moore's beautiful song—'O soon return.'"

"No; let me sing you a song of your friend, Mr. Pinckney, which was written abroad, and was popular with the Americans there. I like the tune, if I don't believe entirely in the hopelessness of the sentiment."

So speaking, she sang the following lines, to which Langdale listened attentively, attracted as he was, not only by the gracefulness of her form, which her atti-

tude at the harp so finely developed, but by the softness of her tones, and the distinctness of her enunciation; in which last particular she did not prove herself a follower of fashion.

O ! BLAME HER NOT.

O ! blame her not—her love was deep ;
And if her heart was lightly won,
Her memory will the vigil keep,
And let her's be the only one.

In vain would we control the heart—
The farthest river seeks the sea,
And thus, though they be far apart,
Her fancy is no longer free.

If heedless in the mazy dance,
And careless of the flatterer's tone,
Remember, that indifferent glance
Is but the wish to be alone.

There is no cure within the crowd,
It but renews the deep regret ;
For there, when the false-hearted vowed,
She promised never to forget.

And though but one that promise heard,
And though that promise he forgot,
The faithful maiden keeps her word—
O ! blame her not—O ! blame her not.

"There, sir!" exclaimed Miss Atherton, rising, and bowing to Langdale's compliments, "I have christened your harp for you with your friend's song; it is a beautiful instrument of most delightful tone. I must say of all the gentlemen I have met in two continents, that a certain coz of mine knows best how to charm his guests. Won't you endorse that, Fanny?"

"With my whole heart," said Fanny. "Mr. Langdale, can you tell me when the mail goes eastward?"

"Ah!" said Langdale, "I may quote your friend and my friend's song to you, and apply it to you both—

'—Thus, though they be far apart,
Her fancy is no longer free.'

This afternoon, Miss Fitzhurst, at five o'clock—the mail closes at half-after-four. Do you know, Miss Fitzhurst, that this song of our friend's, of which my fair coz seems to have exclusive possession, reminds me of a suspicion which has often crossed my mind?"

"What is that, Mr. Langdale?" asked Fanny.

"Why, that our friend, Pinckney, and this coz of mine, know more about each other in relation to themselves than we wot of. I have thought it often, have not you?"

"Why should I?" said Fanny, turning pale.

"I cannot give any conclusive reason," replied Langdale, "but my surmises are strong. He makes me jealous, I assure you. You know your power—

therefore, from a selfish motive, I beseech you keep him closer to your side when he returns."

Miss Atherton struck the keys of the harp, as if she were unconscious of what was said, and, dinner being announced, they each took an arm of Langdale, and proceeded to the dining-room.

Fanny in vain endeavoured to make a show of dining. As soon as she could she withdrew to her chamber, and, after gazing vacantly into the street for some time, she took pen and paper, and, addressing Pinckney, wrote as follows :

"Miss Fitzhurst's compliments to Mr. Pinckney, with the return of the presents and letters she has received from Mr. Pinckney. She hopes by the next mail to receive her's. Miss Fitzhurst would remark, that if, hereafter, either business or pleasure should bring Mr. Pinckney to ———, that she considers that no courtesies heretofore existing between them will require his appearance at Holly. On the contrary should Miss Fitzhurst and Mr. Pinckney ever meet, it must be on the footing of entire strangers."

Making up a package of his letters and presents, and enclosing them in the above, Fanny called her servant, and, giving him the means to pay the postage, ordered him to take it immediately to the post-office. This done, she locked her door, and, throwing herself on her bed, gave loose to her bitter feelings.

Miss Atherton was standing at the front door as the servant descended the steps, where Langdale had just left her, and, observing the letter in his hand, she asked :

"Ay, John, is that for me?"

"No, Miss," he replied, holding up the letter so that Miss Atherton could read the direction; "it is a letter that Miss Fitzhurst has ordered me to put into the post-office."

"You had better make haste then, John, or you will be too late for the mail;" and the menial hastened on his errand.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Gordon was committed to jail, he summoned all the energies that guilt and inebriety had left him to escape the consequences of his crimes. He inquired of the jailor the morning after his commitment if Mr. Bronson was in the village; and learned from him that that worthy had been absent from Springdale some time, and had not yet returned. Daily he made the fruitless inquiry, and almost momentarily he was casting his eyes round the walls of his prison devising some mode of escape; but his appalled heart throbbed thick with the consciousness that without assistance, strongly ironed as he was, that even that jail, so inferior in strength to the city jail, would hold him until justice consigned him to the penitentiary.

He wondered if to that unguarded prison window Bully Ben or Pounder, or Tom Fenton, would not come in some deep dark midnight to save him.

"No, no!" he would soliloquize; "they have not the heart; and if they had, they lay the break upon me—and here they will leave me to my fate. Damn them! if they were here and I were free they might watch awhile for my coming." Thus, in speaking his feelings towards them, forgetting that he was portraying very naturally what their's were to himself. Then he thought of his abused wife, and tried to devise some means of making her acquainted with his

situation; believing, notwithstanding his brutal conduct towards her, that she might be induced to convey him secretly some instrument whereby he might effect his liberation.

After Bobby's deliverance, the man who had committed the assault and battery, the only other prisoner then in jail, had been released; and in his gloomy and silent solitude, Gordon felt it would be relief if he could hear the clanking of any other fetters in unison with his own. As he lay upon his miserable mattress, the intense solitude which sometimes would reign over the quiet village would press upon his brain like the weight of mountains, and he would impulsively toss up his hands as if to remove it. The least sound that came to his ears was welcomed, for it relieved his mind in his efforts to divine what occasioned it. The solitary mouse that stole across his prison-floor he tried to allure nearer to him with crumbs of bread thrown as noiselessly to it as the feathery fall of the snow; and when the motion of his hand would start the little pilferer back again, he would groan in the anguish of his guilt, and fancy even the tiny animal knew the depravity of his heart, and shunned him because he was friendless.

His nerves were utterly unstrung by his long course of dissipation, and he would fancy in the midst of day that darkness encompassed him, and ten thousand fiends were heaping living coals of red-hot fire upon his heart. O! how the poor wretch begged, and begged in vain—for it was against the regulations of the prison—for a little brandy, to give him nerve. At other times, in the midst of the night, he would fancy it broad day—but a strange, unnatural day, in which the sunbeams whirled and whisked about him like witches in a dance. Sometimes they would assume the shape of spirits in air—and it seemed wonderful to him how their features, in smallest miniature, not

bigger than a pin's point, could be so distinct. While he wondered how they would swell and bloat, and become loathsome and reptile-like, and come and crawl upon him, and thrust their forked tongues in his face, and belch forth breaths of fire, or of putrid rottenness. They seemed to creep into the soles of his feet, and into each finger, and steal into his veins and revel in his blood, until they gathered at last in one great knot about his heart, and fed upon it—while the hair of his head became living serpents, and stung his eyes out. At other times he would fancy that a fair spirit of light descended from heaven into his room; a visitant of mercy, who bade him confess, repent, and go free; and when he had confessed all his crimes, she would turn into a denouncing angel, an accuser before the High Judge, and she would pour forth the vials of wrath upon his head, and he saw the mountains reeling and rolling towards him, yet they would not cover him, and could that feeble hand hold them from hiding him! the feeble hand of Granny Gammon! O! how distinctly she wore that death-in-life look that countenance when she cursed him.

Again he would fancy that little dogs with club feet danced round his couch; they were so comical that he laughed till his bones ached. There was one little black fellow, with a stiff, pompous, curled-up tail, that led him through the hills, and by Aunt Agnes, and by Holly, and took him to the tree where he met Peggy the night of her grandmother's death. Instead of being angry with him she was all delight, all joy, all willingness, and she had a little bird in her hand that sang so sweetly. While he played with the bird, she plucked flowers—yet it seemed strange to him how he could tell their colours so distinctly by the starlight, but he could—and she made them into garlands, and in graceful dalliance wound them round his waist; in humility and in token of respectful attention and love,

she kneeled and bound them round his ankles: she begged and implored him not to be angry with her when he drew back his foot to spurn her from him, but a sudden pain prostrated him to earth, and lo! she had bound him in fetters. Then the little black dog, with the curly tail, kept getting larger and larger, and at last he got a livery suit on him, and turned out to be old Pompey, while the bird proved to be Bobby, who whistled for joy.

Then Ross, the constable, and he took a ride, and he stopped to drink, but Ross would not, and after he had drank, Ross proposed a race, to see which could ride to the devil fastest, and he agreed; and they dashed on up hill and down dale through Springdale, and away past the cross roads. They mounted at last a steep precipice, and they were spurring side and side, neck and neck, when Ross gave Gordon's horse a cut with a baboon's tail which his whip turned into, which made his steed spring ahead clear over the precipice into the bottomless pit of brimstone. Ross peeped over, and laughed at him till the woods echoed.

Then his wife came, and she looked so kindly on him. She leaned over the precipice, and stretched out her hand to save him. Their fingers touched. O! what a glow of joy thrilled through him: but just as she was about to pluck him as a brand from the burning, Ross threw a rope made of counterfeit notes round her, and drew her back, while the fiends clapped their hands for joy, and laughed till the hills and valleys echoed with their malignity.

Then Ross called to him, and told him that if he had one single cent wherewith to pay toll of good money, that he should come forth, scott free; and Gordon thought he turned his pockets inside out in search of the half-dollar that his wife gave him, but he had spent it in buying liquor and treating at the

tavern where he and Ross stopped, and the counterfeit notes fell thick and fast around him. At last out came Ross's ten-dollar note, but a current of cool air whisked it away off, while the counterfeit ones tumbled the faster from his pocket, and, igniting immediately, gave him such intense agony as to cause him to leap madly about, at which the fiends laughed louder than ever, while his wife and Ross disappeared.

Then he thought, after a weary travel, he stopped by a shady fountain embowered in trees, and then threw himself down, and soon sunk into a sweet sleep. Awaking feverish and all athirst, he reached over for a draught, and the limpid stream turned to molten lava, and poured down his throat and burned his heart out, and he heard Ross call out in a tone of derision: "I told you, Jack, it was your worst enemy." He found himself still in the bottomless pit, with little devils skipping round him perfectly crazy with delight.

All at once they seemed to leave him at the approach of a small, gentlemanly-looking little man, dressed in black. Gordon took him at first for a clergyman, but he proved to be Satan himself. Strange, but as he advanced to Gordon the bank notes under him seemed to moulder and grow cooler, and a fiendish glow of satisfaction ran through the prisoner's veins. He announced himself by taking off his hat. Gordon observed that his eye was a merry one, and though it certainly had a touch of deviltry in it—it was merry deviltry, and not very malignant. His nose was too large rather, and too much hooked, and he was bald, with a little rein of hair above his ears, and a big tuft on his forehead like the forelock of time. His hair was originally black, but, having been so long amid the flames, it had got tinged with a crispy red here and there like the first gray

hairs in the head of a gentleman growing elderly. Gordon felt proud, he knew not why.

"Sir," said this personage, with great apparent cordiality and kindness, not unmingled with respect, "you give yourself unnecessary uneasiness: most of those poor devils that were dancing about you have forfeited their souls forever, and yet you see they are quite merry. The cause of your trouble is, that you are in a state of purgatory; you have not committed murder yet; sell me the fee-simple of your soul, and you shall go back and dwell on earth, and be as old as Methuselah. "There," said he, offering him notes to countless amounts, "are the means to gratify all your wants!" As Satan offered them, Gordon thought that Peggy, Bobby, his wife, and even Pompey, with tearful eyes, besought him not to take them—but he stretched out his hand. Then the shade of his mother appeared to him, and, in tones of unutterable wo, prayed him to touch not.

"But you have always disobeyed your mother," said the tempter; "why should you mind her now?" Then the voice of Granny Gammon called out to him that she would take back her curse if he would forbear.

"Forbear! why should you forbear?" cried out Satan; "it will give you revenge on all your enemies."

"Give me the money," cried Gordon, "I'll seal the bond with my heart's blood."

With tears and wailing, his mother and the rest disappeared, while Satan plunged a flaming pen into his breast, and drawing it out, dripping with blood, bade him seal the bond. He did so, and throughout all the regions round them was a yell of delight. Gordon felt proud. He thought he said to them in the language of the player whom he had seen enacting Byron's Manfred—"Back, ye baffled fiends—" and he

laughed himself so loudly that he was startled at the echoes of his own tones.

Then he thought he trod the earth again in the hot fulfilment of his revenge. How his soul revelled in its purposes! how he thought he would scourge Pompey—and he made the motion of a blow with his arm; how he would gloat over Peggy, who should cringe at his feet, while Bobby stood impotently by.

He thought he stopped at Springdale, and ordered a dinner and wines, while the landlord, and even the Fitzhursts' and Pinckney, fawned around him. With what an air he ordered his bill—Lo! when he pulled out the bank notes for which he had sold himself to pay it, Ross arrested him for passing counterfeit money, and he was thrown into Springdale jail. There his wife came to see him, when, maddened with her because she had not brought him the means of escape, he dashed her brains out against the wall.

In an instant he was transported back again into the bottomless pit. O! what a thrill of horror ran through his heart as a hollow voice called out:

“You are mine forever and forever.”

He started up from his prison floor. He felt the walls to convince himself of his locality. He grasped his limbs all over and every feature of his face to satisfy himself that he was still in the flesh. He struck his manacled hands against his brow till the blood gushed from his nostrils, and as he felt it trickling forth he threw himself back on his dungeon floor, and thanked God fervently that he was still on earth, though a prisoner and guilty.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE morning, when Gordon had just recovered from one of those terrible visitations which almost amounted to madness, at an unusual hour, for it was not yet time for his midday meal, the wards of his prison doors were undrawn, and the jailor conducted into his presence no other person than Mr. Bronson.

That worthy stepped back as he gazed on the haggard face of Gordon, on which the light from the solitary window fell with strong and contrasting force. He could hardly recognise in his altered features the reckless sportsman, who was in the habit of lounging about his store.

Gordon nodded his head to Bronson in token of recognition, and, turning to the jailor, asked—"For God's sake, put lighter fetters on me than these—and give me a little brandy, just a drop—or some opium—laudanum."

"Gordon!" exclaimed the jailor in an angry tone, "you are the most agravatingest feller I ever had to deal with. You want me turned out of my sivation as jailor to this 'ere establishment, don't you? I've told you fifty times afore that the sheriff says to me—you know, Mr. Bronson, that our sheriff is a man of mettle and stern, an' he always keeps his word—Pike, says he to me, put the heaviest fetters in the jal on that Gordon, and grant him no indulgences whatever—

saving what the rules allow ; if he escapes you loose your place."

"Why should he feel that way towards me?" asked Gordon.

"That's the question you must ask yourself," replied the jailor. "Our sheriff is a first rate gentleman ; but he's notional—very notional, indeed ; and once he gets a notion into his head there's no getting it out. To Bobby Gammon, from the first, he gave all kinds of indulgencies. Why, he used to make me let that black feller Pompey in here to see him. My notions are, that every man what has the keys turned on him for a particular offence should be treated alike."

"Why should he dislike me?" said Gordon again. "I never electioneered against him ; I would have voted for him had I been here."

"If you had made him sheriff it would ha' been the same thing," returned the jailor. "Now I'm for having stand-by rules, but he told how this thing would turn out from the first ; he said that Bob would get off—at least that he wasn't guilty. He thinks hard of you on that account ; an' after I locked you up the first night, and went over to the tavern, I finds Ross and him together. Ross wanted to bet him a ten dollar hat that you'd break out. The sheriff said he never bet upon the discharge of his duties, but he said he did'nt think you would, and he turned to me and told me to mark what Ross said ; and I've got to mark it or loose my sivation—an' I've a wife and family."

"Well," said Gordon, "it's hard—hard—O! God."

"It's harder for me," retorted the jailor. "You say you can't sleep at nights ; and I know you don't much, from the way I hear your fetters rattling ; but, man, don't you think that keeps me awake, too? Don't it make me think that you're trying to break jail? and don't I think of the loss of my sivation, and

the sufferings of my wife and family, if such should be? Here I have thirty dollars a month, and house-rent free in the best built and strongest place in the town. The biggest storm that ever bursted couldn't faze this ere establishment—you might as well just keep yourself quiet a little more o' nights. I tell you, man, you can't get out of this jail; and hang it, what's the use of your groaning and grunting so through the night. If you want a doctor, say so. You're not the first man that I've turned the key on in this very room—Bobby Gammon was locked up here."

"Was he?" said Gordon, starting.

"Fact, sir," replied the jailor, and turning to Bronson, he continued: "Would you believe it now, Mr. Bronson, that this here feller, just 'cause he's in here for passing counterfeit money and one or two other things—though they're not down in the commitment—would you believe that sometimes at night he hollows and yells as if ten thousand devils had got hold on him? No longer an' last night I had a great mind to come down here at midnight with a cowhide, and flake him 'til he couldn't say boo to a goose. I takes it very unkind on him, indeed, a breaking o' my natral rest in this way—particulary considering that Mrs. Pike is, as you know she is, sir—an' I don't know at what time I may have to be off for Doctor McVittee. He's frightened my wife several times, so that I thought he would hurry on the interesting event—and maybe play the devil with matters and things. Besides, that everybody in Springdale—for they can hear him plainly all through the village these still nights—thinks he does it out of deviltry—to defy them, an' disturb 'em of their natral rest, too. There's only one person as I've heard of that defends him at all, and that's Bobby."

"What did he say?" eagerly inquired Gordon.

"Why," replied the jailor, with a knowing grin, "he

puts it down to your conscience. He says he was passing the jail one night from a little quilting frolic at Bill Hardy's mother, an' they heard you, and felt so for you, that his Cousin Peggy stopped her ears with her hands and cried. Now, you know it's all gammon, Gordon," continued the jailor, looking at him as if he perfectly understood him, "all gammon, for last night I myself with my own ears heard you laugh the most devilishest, cunningest laugh that ever I heard tell of—my wife was certain that you were laughing that'ere way cause you were breaking jail and was jist on the pint of making off. Then you see I had to get up an' look round, an' the loss of my sitivation crossed my mind, and my wife's sitivation—and I dreamed all night damned unlucky dreams. I tell you, if you don't quit it you'll catch the worst flogging you ever heard of. Here you are, nothing to do upon yarth but sleep all day and cut up your deviltries all night. Why don't you keep awake in the day-time and sleep at night. I just advise you for your own good to quit. I tell you, man, if the sheriff would only tell me once to give you a taste of my brown Betty—you know I'm used to the business—there would'nt be a single man in Springdale that heard you, who would take you to be at your deviltries then. I tell you, man, it's outragus, an' I leave it to Mr. Bronson here if it ain't, to disturb a whole, large, respectable place like this in spite an' me, and considering the sitivation of my wife."

Gordon gazed half vacantly on the wall, but said not a word.

"Well, say your say," said the jailor to Bronson and Gordon.

"Can't you let us have a little talk alone, Mr. Pike?" asked Gordon. "You know, sir, that I may want to say some things to him—he's a kind-hearted man—concerning my defence, and what lawyer to

employ, which in your responsible situation as jailor it would not be proper for me to say before you."

The jailor shook his head doubtfully.

"My respected and respectable friend," said Bronson, insinuatingly, to Pike, "perhaps you had better let us have a little private talk. You remember when that counterfeiter was here before, I gave him some ghostly consolation. This unfortunate man—for any man may be unfortunate—temptation is an awful snare—may wish to communicate something to me of his spiritual state, besides messages to send to his distant friends."

"Then," said the jailor, "I must lock you up together."

"Must you!" said Bronson, starting, and looking round the black and charcoal scribbled walls, "you didn't lock me up before."

"Orders, strict this time, Mr. Bronson; must be obeyed."

"Well, well," said Bronson; "but, Pike, my respected and respectable friend, don't stay long."

"Never fear, Mr. Bronson," said Pike, laughing; "never fear—there's no authority to keep you here—an' I never acts but by authority." So saying, the jailor withdrew, deliberately locking the doors after him.

Not until the last key was turned in the outer passage door was silence broken between the two, when Bronson asked:

"Gordon, what did you want with me?"

"When did you get here?" asked Gordon.

"Late last night; I saw Pike this morning just as I was going to my store, and he said you kept pestering him to come and tell me that you wanted to see me."

"Yes, yes," said Gordon.

"Well; what for?" inquired Bronson, impatiently.

"Mr. Bronson, I want you to go my bail."

"Go your bail, Mr. Gordon!"

"Call me Jack, call me Jack—like you used to."

"Jack, then—there's no bail—they won't allow bail. Under present existing circumstances if they would allow bail they'd put it up so high as to swamp the biggest estate in the state; and as for taking me, they wouldn't do it."

"But will you try—will you try?" asked Gordon, half angrily, half imploringly.

"Mr. Gordon," said Bronson, after some hesitation, "I don't know that you have any particular claims on me."

Gordon looked at Bronson, searchingly, and said:

"Don't know! Yes, you do know, Mr. Bronson."

"What are they?" enquired Bronson, in a tremulous tone, approaching nearer the speaker, yet assuming indifference; "what are they? speak low."

"Mr. Bronson, we often bought goods of you at a thousand times their value."

"We! what we? You chose to give me my prices—you had your money's worth."

"Money's worth! that may be—but you knew the money," replied Gordon, quickly.

"Knew the money! to be sure I knew the money; it was good money, wasn't it? Have a care, Gordon, don't make me a witness against you," said Bronson in a friendly tone. "I may be called upon, as you have been frequently at my store. I know nothing against you—make no confession."

After a moment's pause, and a steady look at Bronson, Gordon asked:

"Where's Benbow?"

"Benbow!" exclaimed Bronson, with a triumphant smile; "He's off—no one knows where. I understand, sir, that since my absence from Springdale—business took me away southward—I have been ab-

sent some time—in that time, sir, I understand that a gang of counterfeiters have been discovered, and that it was asserted that Squire Benbow was one of them. I knew him very slightly; but I can't believe it."

"You knew him well, Mr. Bronson."

"Mr. Gordon, I shall not quarrel with you as to what constitutes an intimate acquaintance," retorted Bronson.

Gordon's face fell. He shook impulsively his fetters, as if he would renew his courage, and then remarked:

"Mr. Bronson, you knew all about us."

"Knew all about you!" echoed Bronson; "what's the use of speaking so loud. Do you want to compel me to be a witness? I assure you, Mr. Gordon, I know nothing of you but what is good, and unless you inform me otherwise yourself, I have not said that I would not testify to the fact. Have you anything against me, Mr. Gordon? speak it out, sir," said he, sinking his voice.

"Mr. Bronson, you knew about us," reiterated Gordon.

"I am not certain that I did, sir; on the contrary," replied Bronson, "which is to your advantage; but suppose I did, it was not for me, a Christian man, who believes in mercy, and who practices it—it was not for me upon suspicion, very slight suspicion—I don't say even that I suspected—it was not for me to have the fearful penalties of the law inflicted upon a fellow-being—a frail, human creature like myself."

"I'm here—I'm here!" exclaimed Jack Gordon, in a desperate tone, "and the rest are all scattered; but I'm a desperate man. I can tell tales, you know—I can tell tales."

"Tales!" exclaimed Bronson, but in a much lower voice; "not so loud, my respected friend: what tales.

can you tell? Who'd believe your tales!" he exclaimed, in a more assured tone. "You are here an accused man; I don't know whether you will be convicted or not. I trust not; but who would believe your tales. It would make a man more popular if you were to tell them against him, as it did that unfortunate youth, Robert Gammon, who has grown bolder than ever since his acquittal. I wonder you don't appear against him. But you see immediately, Mr. Gordon, that tales are nothing. There's, in all respect, I say it, sir, no shifting of responsibility in these matters. Tales have advanced that Robert Gammon in this community in a manner that's perfectly astonishing. Sir, I believe they would elect him to office, were he eligible. Tales! what could they do against a man like me, Mr. Gordon. I am a member of the church under grace, a leading member, sir; a character unimpeached; have given greatly to the poor; and never missed from the service, unless kept back by sickness, or something unavoidable; have sustained this character for years: when I go to purchase goods, bear the highest testimonials—the highest—have unlimited credit. Tales, indeed! I want to be your friend, Mr. Gordon. I trust in mercy; and for your own sake, you will not compel me to be your foe."

"Will you at any rate help me?" said Gordon, in a tone that proved he had not much chance of operating upon his fears.

"That was spoken rightly, my respected and respectable friend, Mr. Gordon!" exclaimed Bronson, rubbing his hands, and adjusting his wig—"that was in the correct tone. The rumours against you, sir, I never have believed; I always held you to be an honest man, sir, and on all proper occasions I have said so. I shall say so again, sir, on all proper occasions. You must not be down-hearted, my friend; I will help you—

yes, I will; and though you should be convicted, Mr. Gordon, and sentenced to the penitentiary—don't let any angry feelings of the moment induce you—nor threats nor promises—to say a word against your true friends—such you shall find me to be, sir. I assure you, sir, that Robert Gammon's popularity is astonishing. But as I was about to remark, even though they should send you to the penitentiary, remember the governor has the power of pardoning—ha! don't you see—and some men that you and I know of, have influence. Who, I ask you, was the very last man in this prison—ay, in this room? Strong. What was he here for? counterfeiting. Was he not convicted? But did his friends despair? Who, I ask you, Mr. Gordon, got up the petition for his pardon, and rode this county night and day for signers, and got him off. They had scarcely got his head shaved, sir, before he was off. Mr. Gordon, that individual always sticks to his friends."

"You promise me, then, to do what you can for me?" said Gordon.

"I do, sir," replied Bronson; "be discreet, say nothing to criminate yourself or others; for your friends that are scattered may be caught. Now I must leave you—I'll have some clothes sent to you by our charitable society; at least, I'll get a friend to propose it and I'll carry it through; I'd speak to the sheriff, but we are not on the best terms—so give me your hand—God bless you! Why don't that fellow Pike come; does he mean to keep me here forever: There's such a thing as false imprisonment I'll learn him, and I believe it may be done by a jailer as well as by anybody else. Pike, I say," he continued, kicking and shouting at the door. "Pike, O! Pike."

Slowly the steps of Pike were heard echoing along the passage, and then the unlocking of the doors succeeded, and the gaoler stood in their presence. "Hope

I didn't keep you waiting much, Mr. Bronson," said Pike, with a grin; "but I stepped to the 'pothecaries for something for my wife, and left the keys in her charge. I've just got back."

"Friend Pike, whenever I can do a service to an unfortunate fellow-creature, I do it—I think it is the duty of all of us. If Mrs. Pike wants any baby's clothes cheap, and of the latest pattern, ask her to call over. We shan't quarrel about the time of payment. Good-bye, Mr. Gordon, be of good cheer. The Lord is everywhere, as much with you in this prison as he is in the sanctuary."

So speaking, Bronson withdrew, and, hastening out of the jail, left Pike to lock his solitary charge up at his leisure.

After glancing round the room to see that all was right, and peering into the corner and at Gordon's manacles and himself, Pike requested him, as he valued the comfort of his bodily condition so long as he remained in that jail, to cut up no more capers with his fetters, and not to laugh so loud when he felt disposed to merriment in the middle of the night, but just to take a quiet laugh to himself, and to reflect upon Mrs. Pike's present "hinteresting sitivation." After making this admonition, the affectionate Mr. Pike securely locked up his charge, and forthwith repaired to the presence of Mrs. Pike, to enjoy himself in the bosom of domestic felicity, which, it appeareth, may be found even in a jail.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROCEEDING to his store, and giving a hasty order to his clerk concerning certain goods which he expected to arrive from the city, Bronson, with hasty strides, left the village and hastened to Elwood's.

"Yes," he soliloquised, "this Gordon knows what he has heard his comrades say, and something himself besides; but, I thank God, there's nothing they can bring home to me. If this fellow had a character, and his comrades had ditto, they might do it—but—that was a lucky thought of mine about Robert Gammon, the little rascal; but as it is, suppose I did sell them goods at a high price—I've the right to put my own price on my own merchandize. They can't prove any passing on me; no, no, I took care of that; but I did pass it, though, and if I did, who can prove the intention the '*quo animo*,' as Squire Lupton says. Yet it's gathering round me; it's gathering round me. My prospects are darkening—the respectable here don't receive me as they use to—no, Bronson, they don't. I have made my mind up to it; I must, and will have that girl; Elwood dares not refuse me—he would if he dare; but I hold him with a grasp of iron. Sarah was not half so civil in her reception as she used to be—not half so civil the last time I saw her. I shall have no more dilly-dally in the matter with her; she must, and shall marry me, and Elwood shall

see to it. It was lucky, lucky—I thank God I saw him—hey, Bronson? very lucky.”

Thus communing with himself, and turning the same thought over and over in his mind, Bronson reached Elwood's door almost unconsciously. He found Elwood in, who received him with forced cordiality, and invited him to a seat.

“No! no!” exclaimed Bronson, impatiently; “I wish to speak privately. I suppose your neice is well?”

“Tolerable. She has been quite unwell.”

“Is she here?”

“Yes, in the house; won't you see her?” asked Elwood.

“No! not now. Come, walk out with me,” said Bronson.

“Can't we speak here?” asked Elwood, seemingly averse to leaving the house.

“No, I tell you—no! Will you walk out with me?”

“Don't be in such a heat,” expostulated Elwood, and taking his hat from the floor at his feet, where he was in the habit of placing it when he took it off, Elwood followed Bronson to a secluded spot behind the barn, some three hundred yards or more from the house. As they walked along each was so occupied with his own thoughts as to make no effort to keep up a conversation. Bronson walked with dogged determination; and Elwood, as if he feared an interview which he had not the courage to deny. When they reached the spot, Bronson broke silence, by saying, firmly.

“Elwood, you promised me long ago your neice. I returned last night—almost the first words I heard from my clerk were that she was attached to that infernal—the Lord forgive me—to that aristocrat, young Fitzhurst. We must be married to-night.”

“To night!” ejaculated Elwood.

“To night, or you must take the consequences.”

“The consequences—the consequences!” muttered Elwood to himself, and then he said aloud: “I’ve told you, Bronson, that she should and would have you. I had talks with her since you have been away, and she is not so averse to it. It’s a lie—a damned lie, about Sidney Fitzhurst and her being engaged. Such a thought never crossed my brain; and I’ve seen them together. It’s a lie.”

“Sir, I tell you its the truth; Peg Gammon and Bob say so, and they got it from that hag Agnes.”

This remark did not produce the effect upon Elwood which Bronson intended—for his face brightened, and he said:

“The girl’s of age, and if she will have him how can I prevent it?”

“Will have him! prevent!” ejaculated Bronson, literally gnashing his teeth. “Do you know your fate?—do you know the hemp is spun for you?”

Stung, if not startled by the remark, Elwood rejoined with courage unexpected by his companion:

“An alliance with that family would prevent the consequences of any alleged cr—deed done so long ago, and of doubtful proof.”

“Doubtful proof! I like that. What I saw with my own eyes—doubtful proof!—that’s something new under the sun. You’ll find out whether the proof is doubtful or not.”

“Bronson,” said Elwood, “I’ve been thinking much over this matter since you have been away.”

“So have I,” ejaculated Bronson.

“Hear me, hear me!” said Elwood. “Your manner this morning has determined me to speak out plainly, because the crisis has come. God knows you have hush-money enough; you’ve a mortgage on my place for which I never got a cent; I have lent you money repeatedly which you have never paid me; and not

content with all that, you would have me compel my niece to marry."

"Yes, sir, that's the word—compel!" exclaimed Bronson, who, nevertheless, was evidently surprised at the tone of his companion; for though sycophantic enough where he was compelled to be, Bronson preferred the bullying style when it suited his purposes as well. "You must do it—you're mine, body and soul. I'll deal plainly with you since you're so plain. She's your heir; her property you have used; a lawsuit if she were to marry another might deprive me of this ground!" exclaimed he, in a rage, stamping his foot upon it—"of this ground, which is and shall continue mine. Why should you escape the consequences of crimes which have given others to the gallows. You think you must go scot free, hey? This ground and all you're worth, had I came out upon you, would have gone to fee your lawyers—every cent to fee your lawyers—and my testimony would have hung you as high as Haman, notwithstanding—Aye! and it can do it! Change your tone, or it will do it. The prospect of this aristocratic marriage makes you blind as a post to the risk you've placed your neck in."

"I'm not certain of the risk," said Elwood, but in a tone that began to falter.

"Run it, then!" exclaimed Bronson, taking advantage of it. "Run it; many a man has run it before. Did I not give you myself the life of Eugene Aram to read; see how long he trod the earth with impunity. Look at that general—a general, sir, high in authority, in British authority, who whipped a soldier to death. I shall add another to the catalogue of such trials."

"But the proof—the proof was strong against them," rejoined Elwood, "and their acts were premeditated; mine were not—God knows mine were not."

“But how’ll the jury know it!” exclaimed Bronson, exultingly. “Not from my testimony, I assure you—I could save you now if you were on trial—I could hang you now if you were on trial. You’re a man proverbially cruel to your slaves—that’s the point to start from—I appear before the grand-jury—I say that I am a religious man—that all the world knows, of unimpeached and unimpeachable character; I state that a feeling of mercy towards one I hoped would become a useful member of society prevented my making the proposed development before—but he is not, I continue, a useful member of society—reports say that his unkindness as a master increases. My conscience, therefore, compels the development. I circumstantially narrate how twelve years ago, this very month, I was passing through your woods to the mill.”

“You need not speak so loud,” said Elwood, glaring round, but fascinated by the desire to hear what Bronson could prove, though he had heard him recount it more than once before.

“I was passing through your woods to the mill, it was an early autumn—I think I have observed, gentlemen of the jury,” Bronson continued, speaking as if he were giving testimony, to produce the greater effect upon his listener, “and I have been led to observe our autumn from this murder—I think I have observed that they are earlier now than formerly. As I was saying, passing through the woods of the prisoner at the bar in a hollow about a quarter of a mile behind his house, I saw him, the prisoner, with one of his slaves, named Jessee; I knew him well, a weakly, gentle creature.”

“He was not weakly or gentle neither, by G—!” ejaculated Elwood.

“Hear my testimony,” continued Bronson, taking advantage of the other’s emotion, and emphasizing

what he said with his first right-hand finger in his left hand, while Elwood seated himself on a log for a moment and jumped up again. Hear my testimony, "in my opinion, and I knew him well, gentlemen of the jury—I am speaking as if I were under oath—a weakly, gentle creature, loading his cart with firewood. He, the prisoner, ordered Jessee, poor fellow! to lift an immense log in the cart—it was an ox-cart, gentlemen, and the log was so large that it would take three of you to lift it;" here Elwood looked up as if he were making a mute appeal from the falsehood. "Yes, gentlemen, I feel satisfied it would take three of you to lift it—Jessee could scarcely move it—his master, the prisoner, leaped from the cart, and commenced whipping him most unmercifully with the horse-whip."

"I never struck him but one blow," exclaimed Elwood, and you said, yourself, at the very time I gave the mortgage, that you believed it was done in sudden passion without any design to kill.

"First impressions are almost always roving," continued Bronson, coolly; "my testimony, as I now remember the shocking event, will make out a case against you of murder in the first degree—a wilful, deliberate, and most cruel murder on a harmless and unoffending slave. After, gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner had beaten him as I state, he ordered him again to lift the log: he couldn't move it—again he was beaten."

"Why didn't they hear him at the house," cried out Elwood in a frenzy.

"His master telling him, all the while he was striking him," continued Bronson, "that if he dared to utter one word, he would kill him on the spot. When, gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner at the bar grew wearied with beating Jessee, he ordered him again to lift the log. How the poor slave exerted himself—but in vain.

'I'll kill you, then,' cried out Elwood, 'you're not worth your salt;' and, so saying, he struck him to the earth with a billet of wood; and beat him till he was stone-dead. I could see all this through the trees, as I was advancing towards the prisoner, while he was so determined in his purpose that he never even looked round, as I discovered. After the prisoner was satisfied that his unfortunate and unoffending slave was dead, he dragged him by the feet to a hole a short distance off, formed by the roots of a tree which had been blown down by a whirlwind, and covering the body carefully with leaves and sticks, he drove his cart home."

"I never hit him but one blow in the world," exclaimed Elwood, wiping the cold drops from his forehead, "and that was in a passion, with a stone. You, yourself, helped me to cover him up, for you come up at the moment—and God knows that I have suffered enough in mind for it, and how much did I pay you then, and since, to say nothing about it: it has kept me a poor man."

"I have a memory most distinct for some things; some things I cannot remember. What will be the further testimony in this case, corroborative of mine? That some boys—this accounts from not opposing persons gunning on your place—that some boys, in hunting in your woods, discovered the skeleton of Jessee. A coroner's inquest was held over it—it was pronounced by Dr. McVitte, to be the remains of an African; such was the verdict of the jury of inquest, also that the skull was fractured. They concluded by giving it as their opinion, that the bones were the remains of an African, who had been murdered by some person or persons unknown."

Elwood sighed heavily.

"Furthermore," continued Bronson; "another point

which you never thought of, sir, and in which you overlooked yourself. You advertised Jessee as a runaway."

"'Twas by your advice," said Elwood,

"Such will not be my testimony—you advertised Jessee as a runaway, and you described the clothes he had on at the time. The buttons were peculiar, you stated, of his jacket; they were taken from an old regimental coat of the revolution and had an eagle on them. Among the bones of Jessee, in corroboration, it will be shown that buttons were found, and on their being brightened, they turned out to be continental buttons—ha! you forget these little things in all such cases fix the facts in the jury's mind, and fasten upon the prisoner the verdict of—Guilty."

"I will see her—you shall have her if I can content her!" exclaimed Elwood, in agony; utterly appalled at the array of facts and falsehoods; which Bronson was so able, and expressed himself so determined to bring against him.

"Then we are friends," said Bronson, taking his hand, "as we have ever been, with but this little interruption, which arose on your part. I will not call on her this morning. Go, forthwith—you are in the right peace of mind to extort the definite promise—let the marriage take place to-morrow at farthest. I'll see her this afternoon. Now—now's the time—" so speaking, and leaving Elwood transfixed to the spot, Bronson drew his hat over his brow, and taking a pathway through the woods hastened to the village.

The facts of the killing of Jessee were simply these: Elwood was a man of uncontrollable passions. He was in the woods with his ox-cart, accompanied by Jessee, whom he ordered to lift a certain log into the cart. Jessee, who was a stubborn, self-willed negro,

did not choose to exert the strength which he was capable of, to lift, at which his master damned him. Jesse answered him back impudently, and without a moment's reflection he lifted a stone and felled him to the earth a corpse. Bronson was passing through the woods ganning—it was at a day before interest had taught him the policy of joining the church; he was a needy adventurer, and he availed himself without scruple of Elwood's fears. For the sum of a thousand dollars he promised to say nothing of the matter, and assisted Elwood in hiding the body. It was afterwards discovered, as he has asserted. By his guilty knowledge, he held a control over Elwood, which grew at last to be absolute.

He had obtained large sums of money from him at different times, and had got him to mortgage his property for a small sum to a third person, once when he had not ready cash, which mortgage Bronson had paid, thereby obtaining an assignment of it to himself. Elwood never had had the courage to offer to foreclose it. The thought that there was a possibility of allying himself through his neice, to the Fitzhursts, had never entered his mind, and on its being alluded to by Bronson, who had strong suspicions to that effect, he summoned up the short-lived resistance which we have recorded.

Elwood repaired instantly to his house, and to the chamber of Sarah. Utterly unnerved by the threats of Bronson, he revealed to her the facts of the case, and the perjury which Bronson was determined to commit, to make him a victim, if she would not consent to be his wife. Throwing himself on his knees before her, he implored her to save him by marrying Bronson on the morrow.

Horried at the disclosure, and at the fiendish guilt of the man who was willing to commit perjury for

revenge, and consign her relative to the gibbet, unless she would wed him, she could only say; "I will," when she fell from her chair as lifeless as the body of Jesse under the deadly blow of her suppliant.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE must now transport our readers to New York. On the steps of the Astor house, of a bright morning, Pinckney was seen looking upon the park. Already more than one fair cynosure of that brilliant city had dwelt with an admiring eye upon the young southerner, whose graceful form and handsome countenance attracted the notice of all who chanced to glance at him; and there were few, particularly of the gentle sex, who passed by unobservant of his gallant bearing.

Taking the arm of his friend, Matemon, from Charleston, he said:

"Let's go to the post-office."

"With pleasure," replied Matemon. "Pinckney, you're a lucky fellow; your cotton which you thought was going off at so great a sacrifice has sold at the highest profit; your coffers are overflowing, and your are about to wed one who will not only add to your abundance, but whose mind, beauty, and heart, are worthy of all praise."

"Yes," replied Pinckney, "I do believe in the last report; at least I have secured a prize that is beyond the caprices of fortune."

"You're a lucky fellow, indeed!" exclaimed Matemon. "I envy you."

Arrived at the post office, Pinckney received Fanny's

package, with a letter from Langdale, which last he put hastily in his pocket, and, stepping aside from his friend, with a lover's impatience he opened what he thought the love-freighted mission with a heart all joy.

He could not at first believe the evidences of his senses, as he perused Fanny's laconic note. Twice and thrice he read it ere the full conviction impressed itself upon his startled senses.

Nerving himself with self-possession, Pinckney took the arm of Matemon, who, as they retrod their steps, said :

"What news from Holly ? that must have been a love-letter, Pinckney ?"

"Why do you think so ?"

"Because you stepped aside to read it. The lover is like the miser—he counts and recounts his treasure privately."

"Ah ! you are mistaken ; this time it was no love-letter. Matemon, I have some letters to write—I cannot make those calls with you as I promised. Apologise for me, will you ?"

"You will disappoint those ladies, Pinckney. You had better go," rejoined Matemon.

"Thank you, no. I have a letter which must be answered by return of post. I'll see you at dinner." So speaking, the friend departed. With a curling lip and a firm step, which concealed a whirlwind of emotions, in which at the moment wounded pride predominated, the proud southerner proceeded to his apartment. Arrived there, he ordered his servant to deny him, no matter who called, and strode the room for an hour without knowing that a minute had elapsed. Deep, dark, and misanthropical were his feelings—over which, like a sunburst that flashes and vanishes, better thoughts came to be crushed in the moment of their birth.

“No!” he exclaimed as such an emotion crossed him. “No! there can be no mistake in the origin of this communication. It is as mercenary as Mammon itself—as mercenary as hell. This bright dreamer of abiding affection; this fair creature of eighteen; this lady lapped in fortune’s favours; realization of romantic love—she who would have clung to me, as she avowed, though poverty and famine clung to her, has thought better of it. My fortune’s gone, she thinks, and she goes too. By heaven, I would not have believed it! but for this conclusive testimony, though a cloud of angels had borne evidence to the fact. Fool, fool! thrice fooled! O! what a dream of happiness has melted from my anticipation. This delicate flower had the serpent in it—not taken to my bosom yet, though—not taken to my bosom—yet for better and for worse. Well, though they think—they must have done it—it could not have been of her own heart;—but what is the heart worth that so yields—though they think I have lost my pelf, they shall find I have not lost my pride.”

Agained Pinckney perused Fanny’s note, and, seating himself at the table, he hastily wrote the following reply:—

“Mr. Pinckney’s compliments to Miss Fitzhurst, with the acknowledgment of the return of ‘the presents and letters she had received from Mr. Pinckney.’ Mr. P. returns Miss Fitzhurst’s, and asks no acknowledgment of their reception. While Mr. Pinckney congratulates himself that his supposed loss of fortune has shown him the mercenary notices of those whom he supposed above all such influences, and with whom he was on the eve of forming so close an alliance, he regrets poignantly that the facts will go far to destroy his belief in any human being’s disinterestedness. In justice to himself, Mr. Pinckney

must say that such motives as he has alluded to were as alien to his heart as he supposed them alien to Miss Fitzhurst's. Mr. Pinckney re-echoes Miss Fitzhurst's remark, that should Mr. P. and Miss Fitzhurst ever meet it must be on the footing of entire strangers. Mr. P's only regret is, that their original dissimilarity of character had not kept them strangers."

Fanny herself did not make up her package half so quick as Pinckney, or order her servant to take it to the post-office, with half the determination with which he despatched his on a similar errand.

Again he strode his room, with something almost of fierceness in his eye, like one who has retaliated upon an enemy. Strange this balked love is! and how in the human heart the flower it most nurtured, will, under some overwhelming influence, seemingly turn to the deadly Upas.

Then he reflected how he should revenge himself further, and almost made up his mind that he would instantaneously return to ——, and offer himself to Miss Atherton. Such revenge is often taken—if that can be called revenge, which is the certain proof that the unwedded is the beloved one.

This reflection brought to mind Langdale's attentions to Miss Atherton, and it occurred to him to peruse the letter which he had received from his friend. He did so, and was somewhat surprised at its contents, which ran thus:

"MY DEAR PINCKNEY:

I mean to make this bulletin short: the agony is over with me; my resolutions have suffered a complete Waterloo defeat. I am caught at last. I have determined to become Benedict the married man. Like him, I mean to laugh at all those who laugh at

me. Congratulate me, my friend—Miss Atherton has consented to draw closer, and make indissoluble the bonds of relationship already existing between us.

“Your letter of the day before yesterday informed me that you would be here next Monday; on the following Wednesday, I propose to lead my fair cousin to the altar, and I expect you to do me the honor of officiating as my groomsman. When we bachelors are caught, we speed the hours to make up for lost time. As you see, I shall be married before you, and I wont tell you what a happy man I am, for fear that your remembrances of our former conversations might make you smile; yet I might do so, for we could then both smile with and at each other.

“My fair cousin sends her warmest regards. The mistress of your heart I have not seen for some days; I heard yesterday that she was somewhat indisposed. You hear, doubtless, of each minute as she counts it. But I tell you this, that love and friendship may both combine their power to hasten your speed to our city, and to the greetings of

Your friend,

RICHARD LANGDALE.”

“Fanny indisposed,” said Pinckney, with a return of tenderness; “what can be the matter with her. Could her friends have forced her to make that communication to me?” No! let me dismiss her from my mind; but I will go to this bridal; should she be there she shall see—aye, and feel how entirely as strangers we meet. The talk it will make! I thought Langdale was coming to this. I wonder if she loves him; not a whit, I fear. She’s a splendid creature. I should say that I am victimised all round the compass,—but I’ll to the bridal—as groomsman. When shall I be a groom? Never—by God, I hope never!”

Pinckney rung for his servant, and desired him to

learn when the conveyance departed for Langdale's city; and at the very moment he made his last remark of never being a groom, if his heart had spoken as loudly as his lips, it would have developed the fact that he wanted a good excuse to be near Fanny, if only to show her, he said to himself, feeling self-detected by the emotion, how entirely as a stranger I shall act towards her.

Here his servant entered, and announced the fact that in half an hour the steamboat would start. Pinckney ordered him immediately to get his baggage in readiness, and to proceed with it to the boat—but he scarcely had issued the order ere he countermanded it.

"She'll be certain that I want an explanation," he said to himself, "if I go. What if she does, she'll soon be mistaken; she'll find that I am to be Langdale's groomsman. I go—I go. Indisposed—she may not be in the city at all. What can trouble. I don't care what troubles her; I'll go."

And with this misanthropical reflection he hurried his servant off with his baggage, wrote a hasty note to Mateman, requesting him to follow, and leaping into a hack desired the driver to hurry, for fear he might be left behind.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND the sacrifice—Sarah Grattan had consented to that self-sacrifice to which the immolation of the Hindoo woman on the funeral pile of her dead lord is as an hour's suffering to a life-long torture. She lived to save her uncle; but for that she would have died ere she could have consented to be the wife of Bronson. O! what a life of unmitigated wretchedness such a woman leads linked to such a man! Hourly she blushes at his manner, appearance, and character, when in society. Hourly, when alone with him, how she shrinks from that wanton disregard to her feelings, that downright brutality, which even his moments of fondness exhibits; and if she becomes a mother, what must her emotions be, bound as she is by the strong tie of holy nature to her child, to see reflected in his features and conduct the character of such a father! Yet, alas! how many women do we see daily in society who are such sufferers! victims to parental authority at the shrine of wealth! Martyrs who, with an upheld hope, endure to the last, and tell not even unto a mother what they endure! The pallid cheek, the wan temple, the drooping eye, speak the fact for them to an observer, while ninety-nine out of a hundred remark; "'tis a pity Mrs. So-and-So has such delicate health.

What a fine house she has, everything that heart can wish." At that very time, too, to add to and heighten the gloom of her loveless home, maybe with a Christian's faith, she is praying for strength to overcome some blighted affection from which she was torn to be made a living sacrifice.

Sarah's uncle had scarcely left her apartment, after extorting her promise to marry Bronson on the morrow, when Aunt Agnes entered. She was in fact met on the steps by Elwood, who had rushed down stairs to call the servants to the assistance of his niece. He jerked his hat over his eyes, told Agnes that Sarah had fainted, and implored her to hasten to her room.

It was with great difficulty that she succeeded in restoring her charge to consciousness; when she had done so, she insisted upon knowing from Sarah what had troubled her.

"My dear aunty—I am sick—sick; I would I were dead. God forgive me for saying so," said Sarah, reverently throwing her wan eyes upwards.

"My child," said Agnes, "it is the sorrow of the heart that ails you—I know it all. Your uncle has told you Bronson's threat, and you have promised to marry him."

"Merciful Father, Aunt Agnes!" exclaimed Sarah, starting from her pillow, "you will not betray my uncle. Maybe I can learn to like—to like—"

"Child, child!" said Agnes, interrupting her, and taking her hand, "speak not—from your kindness and affection to those who do not deserve it at your hands—speak not a falsehood. My beloved child! I would willingly lay down this aged body in the grave to serve you. How shall I do it; I was in the clump of trees by the barn—I overheard their whole conversation. Bronson is a more evil man than your uncle. I expected this result; I would have stepped

forth to them, and threatened them both with the law, but I feared they might make way with you, and compel you, where you had no friends, to this marriage, which must not be."

Here Aunt Agnes recounted circumstantially to Sarah the interview between her uncle and Bronson, which, from the clump of trees near by, in which she had stopped to rest herself on a visit to Sarah, she had distinctly overheard. Sarah buried her head in her pillow, and wept when Aunt Agnes told what passed between them with regard to herself and Sidney.

"Tell me, child," said Aunt Agnes, when she had concluded her narrative—"I speak frankly—is there any affection existing between Sidney Fitzhurst and yourself?"

"Not that I know of," faltered Sarah.

"Not that you know of," said Aunt Agnes, reproachfully; "do you not know that you love him, child?"

"Aunt Agnes, Aunt Agnes! what avails either the question or the answer?—what avails it?"

"Child, does he not love you? Do you not know it?"

"Know it—no, no! I thought he liked me once, but—but—"

"But what, speak to me, child; I feel for you as much as the mother that bare you could feel, were she by your side."

"He is to marry Miss Moreland."

"And must it be," said Agnes, half in soliloquy, "even my fate to see those who were born for each other separated, and by such cruel circumstances—Where is Sidney, child?"

"He went on a visit with Miss Moreland to see her friends—may be to Philadelphia—previous, I suppose, to their marriage."

"I am surprised at this—surprised!" exclaimed Aunt Agnes; "I had other thoughts; but, child, you must not be made a sacrifice to this Bronson."

"Dear, Aunt Agnes, say no more about it. I would not be made a sacrifice, but to save my uncle—I have none to care for me but you; those whom I thought cared for me are indifferent to me; my life must be short and miserable, at least it is not in the power of mortal now to make it otherwise. O! my dear Aunt Agnes, pray for me, ask the great God of his mercy to give me strength to bear my bitter destiny."

"Child, the ways of God are just, though inscrutable to us. My poor, poor, Sarah," she continued, parting the hair from the pale brow of the sufferer; "when I have held you in these arms a little infant; how many scenes of happiness have I painted for you; how full of sunshine I made your pathway of life, and does it end in this—it must not be; my faith is, that the righteous even here shall escape the snare of the sinner; but, child, I must leave you—I will be back to-night."

"Aunt Agnes," said Sarah, with firmness, "do nothing in your love for me to injure my uncle. I have nothing to live for: a few weeks ago I thought the world all brightness before me—but now I have nothing to live for. My frail frame cannot hold out this struggle long—let me save my uncle and die. I am most miserable. The pang here," said she, putting her hand on her heart, "my marriage with Mr. Bronson can neither increase nor cure. May be I shall feel some relief in marrying him, from the conviction that I have saved my uncle."

Aunt Agnes gazed on her charge with melancholy earnestness, and, repeating that she would be back by night, she left the chamber and the house.

With a step, to which the energy of her purposes gave an elasticity and firmness beyond her years, Aunt Agnes hastened to Springdale, and to the store of Bronson. She found that individual in, behind his counter, dealing flattery on a bumpkin customer by wholesale, for the purpose of getting a retail profit of a sixpence out of him in the sale of a bit of ribbon for his sweetheart. Bronson knew that his customer was to be married, and his own approaching nuptials made him eloquent in praise of the articles which were intended for the bride.

Bronson's clerk was not in, and Aunt Agnes took a seat, and observed Bronson with a searching eye until the customer was served and had departed; she then, in reply to his question of what she would have, asked:

"Mr. Bronson, are you to marry Sarah?"

"Sarah!" re-echoed Bronson, rubbing his hands, and taking the old woman's visit for one of congratulation, with the intention of coaxing a present out of him, he continued: "I think, Mistress Agnes, that you might have said—it would have been more respectful—Miss Grattan. Yes, it's my intention to make her Mrs. Bronson. These are horrible times—not times for a man to get married—profits all swamped in losses—but her uncle insisted upon it—and, I suppose—ha! ha! you were young once, Mistress Agnes—you understand these matters. I suppose the truth was she prompted him."

"She prompted him!" said Agnes, scarcely able to control her indignation, "but what, Mr. Bronson, if she did not prompt him?"

"That, Mistress Agnes, I shall not readily believe. What did you come here for, old woman?" replied Bronson, regarding her sternly.

"To appeal to you as a man; and to tell you that

your marriage with Sarah would be the death of her."

"The death of her! ladies don't die so easily, old woman. You're here—I see it—you're here from that young aristocrat, Sidney Fitzhurst—that sabbath-breaker and race-ground lounger. He, nor no power on earth or elsewhere—the Lord forgive me, I mean out of heaven—can prevent my marrying her. So, go back and tell him it won't do. Fine feathers make fine birds, but fine birds don't always have the best nests. Ha! ha! tell him that, old woman. I have seen Elwood—he has seen his neice—she fixed upon to-morrow morning nine o'clock. I should have set the evening, and had a brilliant party of it—but her coyness preferred private marriage."

"A private marriage!" exclaimed Aunt Agnes, rising to her feet; "I'll bear it no longer—you foul disgrace to humanity, do you know that I know the whole plot between you and Elwood to sacrifice my Sarah. You think, or you pretend to think, that you can give him to the gibbet for the slaying of Jessee. I believe that I can marry you, not privately, but publicly, to the penitentiary."

"Me!" exclaimed Bronson, in great terror. "Mistress Agnes—I don't understand you, my dear Madam—you jest."

"There is no jest about in it, sir. I overheard the whole conversation behind the barn between you and Mr. Elwood: the threats you used to make him compel Sarah Grattan to marry you. The whole of it—every word. If he is a murderer, you are the secreter of a murderer; for money, extorted money. More than that; my house is by the old mill—lonely, but in that lonely place there has been transactions with counterfeiters, if I mistake not. I have come to play the game with you, which you played with

Mr. Elwood. My silence is purchased upon the promise that you see Sarah Grattan no more."

"Take a seat, my good madam, take a seat," said Bronson, in desperate alarm.

"No; I have other duties to perform, and this one is first and peremptory. Make the promise, or I go instantaneously before a squire, and make oath to all I know."

"What do you know? what do you know?" said Bronson. "Let's walk down through the village to the common. I'll lock my door and go with you."

"Unnecessary trouble, Mr. Bronson; I would not trust my life there with you. Do you promise that, to-morrow you will not go near Sarah Grattan, nor speak to her of marriage again? Man, I am not to be trifled with, and have other business."

"I—I—my dear madam, I will; but stop a moment."

"See that you keep your promise, then," said Agnes. "I shall not stop another moment."

So speaking, Aunt Agnes left Bronson to his own reflections; and before he could get round his counter to gaze after her, with the uncertainty of a guilty mind as to what his purpose was, she had disappeared behind a corner dwelling, on her way to Holly.

Fanny had but a few hours before received Pinckney's communication. She was stung to the quick, to think that Pinckney attributed her dismissal of him to his imputed loss of fortune; while the conviction that she had acted too hastily, and the reproaches of her own wounded affections, were daily growing stronger from the hour she hurried off her servant to the post-office from Langdale's.

"What," said she, in this frame of mind, "what had his writing to Miss Atherton, a long time ago,

when he was so young, to do with his affection for me? It had nothing to do with his heart, or his character—nothing to do with the love I bear him, which I cannot—I cannot conquer. Petted, and petted all my life—to what wretchedness it has brought me. And then to think that he should attribute my conduct to his loss of fortune. He had nothing else to attribute it to—nothing else. I am degraded in his estimation—for ever degraded. What slaves this self-will makes of us. Here's father, and aunt too, asking me so many torturing questions about Howard—about Mr. Pinckney—it's Howard no longer. I wish I could let him know—though we should never meet again on earth—I wish I could let him know that his loss of fortune had nothing to do with it. How meanly he must think of me; and what else can he think."

Pompey interrupted the sad reflections of his young mistress, by announcing to her that Aunt Agnes had called to see her.

"Bring her up into my chamber, Pompey," said Fanny, rising from a low stool, on which she had been seated, and mechanically adjusting her hair and dress.

"Child," said Aunt Agnes, entering the room, and taking Fanny's hand; "you look pale, too; what has come over you girls?"

"Pale! do I?" said Fanny, starting; "I'm very well—no, I'm not very well. Aunty, I have been thinking of Jane Lovell's story, and it makes me sad."

"What should make you think of that, child?"

"I know not. We can't account for our thoughts always," replied Fanny.

"Your lover's away; that's it, child," rejoined Agnes. "And now I'll give you a piece of advice: avoid the first impulse of wounded feeling, which may

lead you to mistrust either the affection or the conduct of your lover or your husband. It may estrange you from each other before you know it. And, dear, act always with confidence and frankness towards those, and, especially, towards *him* you love. The little deceptions—harmless coquetry, as it is called—which women sometimes practice towards their lovers, has made many a love story a sad one.”

“Aunty,” exclaimed Fanny, in a surprised tone, “why do you particularly give me such advice?”

“Because, child, I have observed your character, and think it necessary.”

“Not the last part. I wish my dearest, dearest brother would come home,” replied Fanny; “I can sit on his knee, and tell him everything—all my troubles.”

“It was he that I wished to see,” said Aunt Agnes, “when will he be here?”

“We expect him every moment: he has been detained longer than he anticipated. That puts me in mind of a letter that I should attend to—really I have neglected his requests. Aunty, you stay. O! how is Sarah?”

“Sad, child; sad: why don’t you call and see her?”

“I have been sad myself: and I thought, as I had been in town sometime, that Sarah should call and see me first. It was foolish in me, but—”

“Well, child, it was foolish, as you say—call and see her to-morrow, and I will see you both there. It is getting dark, and I must go.”

“No, aunty; stay all night.”

“I cannot, my-dear, I promised Sarah to be back. To-morrow, remember, my child.”

“I will. Do, aunty, send Pompey to me.”

So speaking, Fanny shook hands with the old woman, and she withdrew.

Pompey made his appearance; and, writing a hasty note to Sarah, she enclosed within it a letter, and bade Pompey mount a horse, instantly, and bear it to Mr. Elwood's.

CHAPTER XIX.

AUNT Agnes stopped more than half an hour below stairs, after she left Fanny, talking with Peggy Gammon, who, with her Cousin Bobby, had been since the death of their grandmother inmates of Holly.

When she left Peggy the night had set in, which was nothing to her who had traversed the spot and neighbourhood so often, and furthermore it was a bright evening. With her mind absorbed in interest for Sarah she took her way to Elwood's. She had not advanced more than a quarter of a mile when she was overtaken by Bobby, who, as fast as his lameness would admit, came hastening breathless to her side.

"Good-night, Aunt Agnes," said Bobby, as he limped up to her. "Cousin Peggy sent me after you to be company home for you."

"Bobby, that was not necessary; I have walked these woods at all times. My boy, go back again; with your lameness it must fatigue you."

"Indeed, it don't," said Bobby, quickly. "Aunty, what did you tell me that for; I have been gunning through the woods all the afternoon, and I don't feel tired at all."

"Bobby, I spoke in good feeling towards you, my boy. I'm always fond of company. Did you get much game?"

"Yes, aunty, considerable—eight quails and two rabbits, and only missed two shots—yes, an' I saw a big bird, he, he! that I like to ha' shot one day—and he don't like me nor Cousin Peggy neither."

"Who's that Robert; no mischief, I hope?"

"No, aunty; it was only Mr. Bronson, who told granny once about my laughing in meeting. I saw him skulking round Mr. Elwood's just about dark. He's brooding some deviltry, I'll bet."

"Skulking about Mr. Elwood's! Did you speak to him?"

"O, yes! we spoke together, an' he soft-soaped me considerable; an' advised me to go home 'cause the night dews—he, he, he! might harm me."

"What else did he say?"

"I overheard him tell Tom, who was just going home from wood-chopping, to tell his master that he wanted to see him there. I stopped behind a tree to fix my gun, an' he thought I had gone ahead."

"I wonder," said Aunt Agnes, "when Sidney Fitz-hurst will be home."

"Home! he's just come as I left there—I just had time to shake hands with him, and hurry after you, aunty."

"Then, child!" exclaimed Agnes, "we will turn back."

She accordingly returned, speaking not a word to Bobby except an occasional yes, or no, in answer to him, which were more than once misplaced.

Without any ceremony Aunt Agnes entered the room where Sidney sat with his sister on his knee, and his father and aunt beside him, welcoming him home.

"Mr. Sidney!" exclaimed Agnes, with deep emotion, "do you feel an interest in Sarah Grattan?"

Startled by her manner, Sidney looked earnestly at her, and replied:

“Yes, Aunt Agnes—the deepest interest.”

“Then fly and save her!” There is a plot between Elwood, her uncle, and Bronson, to compel her to marry Bronson.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Sidney, gently, but quickly removing Fanny from his knee, and springing to his feet.

“Far, far, from impossible!” exclaimed Agnes, “Sarah thinks you feel no interest in her—and to save her uncle from the consequence of disclosures which Bronson can make, and from perjuries which he will dare, she has been forced to consent to marry Bronson. Young man, if you love her, fly *now* to Elwood’s and save her.”

“Love her!” screamed Miss Rachellina; “think of our family.”

“Son!” ejaculated Mr. Fitzhurst—but it was of no avail—Sidney sprung to the door, seized his hat, and in a minute more was speeding to Elwood’s as fast as steed could bear him.

Bobby’s remark was true. Bronson was indeed after some “deviltry.” When Agnes left his store he awaited most impatiently the return of his clerk, to whom he stated that business would probably prevent his returning that day, and if any one enquired for him, to say that he had gone to the city. He accordingly left his store, and went directly to Elwood’s, but, instead of entering the house, he lurked about in the confines of the woods until he saw Tom, whom he ordered, as Bobby stated, to tell his master that he wanted to see him.

It was sometime before Elwood joined Bronson; his guilty fears, after an internal resistance, at last predominated, and he sought him in the woods.

“Ah, my friend!” said Bronson, with great effected cordiality, advancing to meet Elwood, “I sent for you on this matter of which we discoursed this morn-

ing—to have a little private talk with you. Despatch is the word—your niece has consented, hey?”

“Yes,” replied Elwood, “to-morrow.”

“I knew she would. You have a great influence over her, and you ought to have—but despatch is the word. Now, while she’s just thinking of it—now, we’ll send Tom for Squire Norris, and have the matter ended at once. “I’ve business that will take me away to-morrow, and I wish to make all square and right before I go.”

Elwood stammered out something about his niece not being well; but Bronson replied she might be worse to-morrow, and that he had made up his mind to marry her that night. Elwood then reluctantly led the way to the house. Bronson stopped suddenly, and asked:

“Is that old woman, Agnes, there?”

“No,” said Elwood.

“Ay, that’s right—she is an old hag—and must be kept away; we must see to that.”

On arriving at the house Elwood went to Sarah’s chamber, and communicated to her his interview with Bronson, and implored her to yield to his wishes.

Stupified, Sarah could say nothing. Taking the silence for the consent, Elwood told her that he would send for the squire who could perform, according to law, the ceremony as well as a clergyman. He then withdrew, and despatched Tom to the village for the magistrate, after which he joined Bronson, who acted the amiable with all his might, but whose restless impatience would not let him sit still a moment.

When her uncle left her, Sarah sat motionless, and as if unconscious of her own existence. On her maid’s entering with Fanny’s letter, which Pompey had brought, she started up, and glared at her wildly, and then laughed hysterically, as she received it.

Sarah tore open the note: Fanny asked her to

come and see her, and stated that the enclosed she had received from her brother the day before, with the request that it should be handed to Sarah immediately. Fanny further said, that by some neglect or other in the post-office, the letter in which that was enclosed had been detained some time, and that it was only by accident she got it by her aunt's seeing it among the list of advertised letters.

A flash of unutterable joy broke over Sarah's features as she opened and glanced over Sidney's letter. It was a declaration of the most ardent and devoted attachment, expressed with all the fervor of his noble and manly heart. He said that, contrasting her with the fashionable worldlings around him, he felt impelled to write to her, and say what she had no doubt seen, in his manner, when they were together, that he loved her with his whole soul. He trusted she was not entirely indifferent to him; and he begged her, if she was not, to write to him instantly and cure the disquietude of mind which he could not but feel in the loss of her society. He said she was the only woman he had ever loved, and all he asked, was to devote his life to her.

Wildly Sarah pressed the letter to her lips, while tears of love and joy and pride fell thick and fast upon it. She read it again and again; and, when night closed around her, she placed it in her bosom, and forgot all else but that it was there, and that he who wrote it was still closer.

These emotions, which so few are capable of feeling in their intensity, were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who said that her uncle wished her to come down stairs. Without hesitating a moment Sarah complied.

As she entered the room where her uncle and Bronson sat together, timidity, which was her greatest

characteristic, seemed entirely to have left her. There was a dignity in her manner, and a something in her eye, that startled both of them.

Bronson rose with the evident intention of offering her his hand, but Sarah folded her arms, and, looking towards Elwood, said:

“Well, uncle?”

“Niece,” said Elwood, without the capability of lifting his eye from the carpet, “I have sent for you that we might all speak together of your marriage with our friend here.”

“That, uncle, can never be!”

“Never be!” ejaculated Elwood, glancing at Bronson, who eyed him like a beast of prey.

“Never be, uncle! When no one’s happiness but my own, as I thought, was to be involved in this connexion, I yielded for your sake, but with the conviction that I could not long survive it. I was willing to die to save you from the cupidity of this man. I will give him whatever title I may have to any property to be silent, but my hand—never.”

“I see it!” ejaculated Bronson, almost choked with rage; “that Pompey has brought some message from that fellow Fitzhurst.”

“Is that true, niece?”

“Uncle, you have a right to an answer: it is true.”

“I knew it, by God!” shouted Bronson, in the agony of his rage, forgetful of his violation of the commandment.

“Has he made love to you, Sarah?” A blush of the deepest crimson mantled, for a moment, the pale cheek and brow of Sarah Grattan ere she replied:

“He has, uncle. I knew not his regard for me until this hour, though I have loved him long. Not to save any one from the consequences of their rash impulses have I a right to do such irrevocable violence

to his confidence and affection as marry this man—for, O, God!" exclaimed Sarah, with an emotion which she could not control, "if he knew but half my love, no earthly consideration could induce him so to crush me in heart and hope forever and forever."

"I know it all—all—Sarah!" exclaimed Sidney Fitzhurst, springing into the room, and folding her to his heart. Sarah uttered a faint cry of joy, and fell lifeless in her lover's arms. Sidney bore his gentle burden to the sofa, and, while he was doing all he could to reinstate her, Bronson touched Elwood on the shoulder, and they stole out of the house together.

CHAPTER XX.

GORDON'S wife, Catharine, was, shortly after her visit to Miss Atherton, instituted as her maid. Miss Atherton had formed an attachment for her, which arose in some measure from some slight similarity of character which had once existed between them. Now it was no longer apparent, for Catharine's love for Gordon and long consequent suffering had entirely erased the spirit of coquetry and love of dominion which had once possessed her.

Happy in abundant spirits, and, in her situation near one she loved and respected, Catharine was wont to assist at her mistress's toilet, which she delighted to expatiate upon the number of the lady's triumphs to a not displeased ear. While Miss Atherton was not averse to the recital of her own conquests, it pleased her to draw forth her maid upon her own, and, in this way, she learned the depth of Catharine's affection for Gordon.

After Gordon married Catharine she left the service of Miss Atherton, and the narrative which she gave her of her leaving Europe and finding Gordon in the United States, is precisely as it occurred. Miss Atherton had not been forgetful of her promise to Catharine. She got Langdale to employ Mr. Mason in his case—that gentleman, however, remarking in the spirit of candour, that he did not believe

that any professional service, whatever, would be of any avail in rescuing him from what he could not but say would be merited punishment.

Miss Atherton told Catharine what Mason said, but it only increased her sadness of spirits, and she begged her mistress to suffer her to see Gordon. To this Miss Atherton reluctantly consented, and Catharine took a seat in a stage which went to Springdale every other day promising to return with it.

Catharine's feelings were so absorbed in her interest for Gordon that she noticed nothing on her way, except the lagging paces of the horses up the rough unpaved hills. She bore a letter from Mr. Mason to the sheriff, requesting him to admit her to the cell of Gordon. She found an immense concourse of people in Springdale who had convened for the purpose of holding a political meeting. With great difficulty, in the afternoon she gained the ear of the sheriff, who had given orders, on learning that Bronson had visited Gordon, to admit no one to him without his written permit. Bearing the mandate of the executive officer of the law, she repaired to the prison door whence she had been roughly driven by Pike, and on showing him the sheriff's order, was most graciously admitted.

Pike's domestic cares restrained his garrulity; and, opening the cell of Gordon just sufficiently for Catharine to enter, without saying a word he turned the keys on her, and hastened to the side of his wife.

Gordon lay upon his mattress on his prison floor in a state of partial intoxication. Through the window where Bobby had conversed with Pompey, as our readers may remember when his grandmother's funeral went by, an accomplice, Tom Fenton, who had secreted himself in the woods, and who had been met by Bronson on his visit to Elwood, and informed

of Gordon's situation, had conveyed to him brandy, and tools wherewith to effect his escape. Fenton was induced to do this at great risk to himself, from the fear that Gordon would inform upon them; and from the fact that he was without any of their booty himself and was entirely destitute, and with the hope that through Gordon he might be supplied. Bronson had given him a few dollars, pretending it was a charitable relief, though they both understood each other—and that the money was in aid of Gordon's escape.

Gordon's stillness since he had obtained the liquor had induced Pike to believe that he had become more reconciled to his situation, which made the jailor less wary. Instead, however, of instantly setting about preparing the means of escaping, Gordon, as soon as the brandy was given him, drank deeply, and had been partially intoxicated ever since.

As Gordon lay in drunken sensuality in a dark corner of his cell, his wife could not see him, owing to the contrast of the little light within to the glare without which she had just left. Several times she ejaculated: "John! dear John!" before she spoke to him.

He had observed her, however, from the first; and had his eye fixed on her in sullen anger.

"Come at last, have you?" he growled out, raising himself upon his arm, and frowning on her with a ferocious stare.

"John, I came as soon as I could. How are you, John—dear John, aint you well?"

"Well; by God! Do you expect a man to be well here? have you got any money?"

"Yes, John; here's five dollars."

"Is it counterfeit?"

"No, John; no."

"Then give it to me. I'll have no counterfeits; you've ruined me by counterfeits. That's the way Ross got me."

"John, Mr. Mason, the lawyer, will attend to your case. I've seen him and talked to him about you."

Ha! will he—that's right; ask him to come and see me."

"I think, John," she continued; "that I can interest Mr. Pinckney for you, too."

"Blast him!" exclaimed Gordon; "come closer—let me whisper to you."

Catharine submissively took a seat by Gordon on the edge of his mattress.

"He's the chap, if you must know it, who had my twin brother punished for robbing him—my twin brother—he just made him deliver in the streets one night—never touched a hair of his head—but, no matter, I'll do for him yet if I get out of this scrape."

"Yes, John; and was that the reason?" replied Catharine, "that you made me take his likeness from Miss Clara."

"No; I got that for that Italian woman who loved him; she paid me well for it, but what's it to you. What about the locket, hey?"

"Nothing, John, nothing; I thought I'd ask you. I think Miss Clara Atherton would do something for you, too, John."

"Would she, ah! do you think she would?" exclaimed the prisoner, eagerly catching at the thought. "Tell me—I know it, she's privately married to Mr. Ashley, she ran off to this country; she don't want it known, hey?"

"Never, John; never!" exclaimed Catharine.

"I heard so," rejoined Gordon; "I called to see her to sell a horse to her, and meant to talk round, but she seemed not to know what to make of me, and I left her. Think she will help me? There was something wrong there."

"Mr. Ashley fought with another gentleman on her account, and was killed, that's all, John; but,

John, I wish, O! I do wish, that you could get out of this. She says—”

“You’ve seen her?” said Gordon, in a low, compressed tone.

“I have, John.”

“What did she say?” he replied, in manner meant to be insinuating.

“Why, John—O God! but I’ll tell the truth—that Mr. Mason says there’s not much chance for you, John—but there is, there is; I’ll see them all, and beg for you—court, jury, all.”

“No chance! where do you live? you’re dressed well; see how I look. Where do you live?”

“I live with Miss Clara, John,” replied his wife, in a deprecating tone, alarmed at the angry earnestness with which he asked his questions.

“Live with her, and she my enemy; and I here!” he exclaimed, grasping her wrist with manacled hands, and maddened with drunkenness and rage.

“John,” she said, imploringly, in a low voice, “do me no wrong here, it will only injure you. John; they’ll know it, it will make your case worse.”

“Worse! you have betrayed me; you told your Miss Clara about the locket.”

“John, but it was for your sake.”

“Ha! for my sake, my sake!” he muttered, pressing her to the floor with his hand upon her throat.

“John, when, O God! don’t kill me, John. I—I! help—I—for the love of mercy.”

As Catharine ejaculated her mortal terror, Gordon pressed her throat the tighter; the fear that she would be overheard giving vigor to his revenge.

She gathered her whole strength, and succeeded in disengaging his hand from her throat:

“John, this is not hanging matter, this counterfeit-ing you may escape if you don’t murder me, John.”

As she spoke she half arose, and got her body from

the bed. He seized her at this instant by the arm, and jerked her down with such violence as to strike her head with stunning force upon the floor. Gnashing his teeth with demoniac hate, and with a momentary supernatural strength, arising from his fury and the brandy he had swallowed, he twisted the iron-bar which joined together the manacles on his wrists round her throat, and, palzied by the effort, fell prostrate by her side.

The scene of that horrible night, when, in his excited fancy, he sold himself to the evil one, now revived like a fearful reality in the brain of Gordon, and he heard Ross laugh, and the tempter claim him.

In accents almost inarticulate from intoxication and guilt, he called on his wife again and again to look at him and smile; and he tried to loosen the bar from her throat, and he begged her to pray for him; and he put his ear to her lips, and heard no voice, and felt no breath. Cursing her again, he twisted the bar closer, and sank senseless on her bosom; that bosom which had always cherished him, and where he lay her murderer.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE cry rang through the streets of Springdale just as the sun was setting—so different a setting sun to the two—that Gordon had murdered his unoffending and confiding wife.

The crowd forgot their excited talk of politics, and rushed in wild horror to the jail. The sea of heads around moved like the waves when the storm strikes them.

“Lynch him! Lynch him!” was the shout from a thousand turbulent voices.

The cry for summary justice reached the appalled prisoner in his cell. Pike, not without calling in assistance, had succeeded in freeing the throat of the woman from the twisted bar of the manacles which bound it closer than a halter; she was stone dead; for it was more than an hour after Pike locked her in that fatal apartment ere he returned. A coroner’s inquest had been instantly summoned, and the verdict was:—Wilful murder against Gordon.

Gordon begged Pike, who stood beside him as the crowd gathered, swarmed, and shouted without, to let him see the body of his wife.

“She’s not dead!” he exclaimed; “they can’t prove it on me; let me see her.”

“She’s as certainly dead as you are certain to be

damned," said Pike, "or hanged; an' that you'll be without judge or jury."

"They dare not; they dare not!" said Gordon, covering his head in his bed-clothes, to shut from his senses the loud cry of "Lynch him!" which now, in accumulated wildness and strengthening purpose, rung forth on the ear of night, and over the hitherto peaceful village, from the assembled multitude, who had gathered in dark masses round the jail."

"They're breaking in upon us!" exclaimed Pike, frightened at the thundering at the jail doors which now took place, and the stern demand to give up the murderer.

Door after door, with steady determination, was crushed in by the mob. The sheriff had endeavoured to curb them; but had been hustled off by them with threats against his life.

"I couldn't get out," said Gordon, lifting his head from the mattress, "how can they get in?"

"They've got in!" shouted Pike, hastily leaving the prisoner alone. "I must look after my family—place or no place." Gordon quailed beneath the frowning men, who had climbed up to his prison window, and were scowling at and cursing him.

He called on Pike not to leave him, but in vain. The crowd, with lighted candles and torches flashing to and fro over their heads and against the prison walls, had entered the passage, where they met Pike, and demanded him to show them the room of the murderer.

He pointed it out, and, unable to break through them, crouched in the recess of one of the cell doors. They pressed past him with the fierce fury of so many fiends, and entered the cell of the murderer. Gordon begged them, for mercy's sake, to spare him.

"You did not spare her!" cried several of them, seizing him.

"Ha, Hall! I know you!" cried Gordon to the tavern-keeper, at whose house Ross had arrested him, and who was trying to win a good name by lynching his former comrade; "I know you—you're a——"

"No murderer!" shouted Hall, leaping upon him. Gordon struggled with terrific energy; but, manacled as he was, he was soon overpowered, and dragged like a beast into the street.

Here Gordon made a stern struggle; and, notwithstanding his fetters, broke loose from the mob. He sprang at Hall, and with one blow felled him to the earth; the iron on his wrist fracturing the skull of his captor. The crowd stood back, frightened by his desperation. He here saw Robert Gammon, and putting his feet together, so as to leap with his prison incumbrances, he made at the boy, who stood looking at him in pity—not anger. Bobby stepped aside, and avoided the blow aimed at him. At this, Gordon turned on Hall, and again preparing himself for a leap, he jumped with all his might on his prostrate form. At this moment a large stone, thrown by one of the by-standers, felled Gordon to the earth; but he recovered himself.

The inflictors of summary justice, at this, gathered close to him; impelled rather by the crowd around them, than by their own desires, which, however blood-thirsty, were rendered for the moment, powerless, by the desperation of their prey. They seemed like so many hounds, shrinking from the fury of a stricken tiger. Another missile, hurled at Gordon, laid him speechless before them. They then seized him. Some cried out:

"Let's hang him on the hustings!"

"No;" exclaimed one of the candidates, who had made the last speech there, "that would degrade the freedom of elections;" and he was about making an

oration over Gordon, like that of Mark Antony over Cæsar, though, certainly, not with his intentions, when Gordon raised himself on his hands and knees, and the speaker retreated in affright.

"Let's burn him!" cried out another, a carpenter; "let's burn him on the common: there's plenty of shavings at my shop!"

"Unnecessary cruelty!" shouted a butcher, "knock him in the head at once, and end the matter."

"Gentlemen!" protested Squire Norris, who thought of the fee he should obtain for committing him, rather than of his offence on the violated majesty of justice, "let the law take it's course: bring him before me, and I'll commit him fully—there's no bail in these cases—and I'll commit him fully for the murder."

By this time Gordon recovered himself, somewhat, from the effects of the blow, and flung his hands wildly around him. Just as he lifted his hands to wipe away the dust and blood from his face, he was struck violently with a club. He sprung forward in the direction of the blow, and uttered so piercing a cry of mingled despair and rage, that the crowd recoiled from him for many feet; while their candles and torches waved rapidly, and many behind were prostrated by the recoilers. Gordon now stepped back, unable to keep his feet, from exhaustion, though still gazing round on the crowd in horror and hate, with his face bloody, and his hands raised to protect his head.

"You're doing the very act he has himself committed," cried out a humane individual, trying to press through the crowd, to the protection of the murderer. He was, however, jerked violently back by the more sanguinary.

"Don't kill him at once!" exclaimed Thompson, Pompey's old enemy, who had an amateur's love for the use of the horse-whip upon human flesh, with an

old stager's practice, as each and all of his slaves, male and female, could testify by the mean exhibition of their persons, and who was perhaps desirous of seeing the different effects of the lash upon a white and black skin—"Don't kill him at once! strip him naked, and tie him with his arms round a tree, and let me operate upon him; I'll whip quickly a full confession out of him, or he shall leave his hide behind him and climb the tree."

"Thompson, you'd better clear out!" exclaimed Bobby, to him with a kindling eye, stepping up to his side; "or you may catch what you don't like yourself."

"Gentlemen—my friends!" shouted Thompson; "this boy, Bob Gammon, wants to stay the course of justice—let's give him a taste of the horse-whip—O, Lord! let me operate—let's take him to my woods—I'll show you."

"Do you object?" said a man, taking Bobby by the collar.

"I do," said the boy firmly, releasing his gripe.

"Do you hear that!" exclaimed Thompson, exultingly, "he ought to have it—just say the word."

"Remember the woods yourself," said a voice near to him, while the rest were too intent upon their purposes to hear or heed the byplay. A friend of Bobby led him away.

"Hang the murderer upon the sign post," called out a friend of Hall's, pointing to that of a tavern which stood nearby.

"You shan't make a gallows of my sign," cried the publican, attempting to resist the determination of the crowd, who had assisted with a yell.

"Here's a rope!" shouted the friend of Hall, who had once professed friendship for Gordon, and who feared it might injure himself if he stood passive in the matter.

In an instant the rope was fastened round Gordon's neck. Several ineffectual attempts were made by many persons to throw it over the sign post. At last a negro boy of thirteen seized the end of it in his teeth and clambered up with it. He threw it over: hundreds below sprang to seize it. In a moment more the body of the murderer was jerked rapidly up, where it dangled in the night air not two feet from the likeness of Washington which formed the sign of the tavern!!!

THE CONCLUSION.

THE rest of our story is soon told. The awful death of Catharine produced a powerful effect upon the character of Miss Atherton. She postponed her marriage, and gave herself up to remorseful and sad reflections. It wrought a radical change in her heart. She abandoned her passion for coquetry, and wrote Pinckney, who had informed Langdale of his break with Fanny, the cause of that lady's conduct. True, however, to the last, to her own pride of character, she averred that Fanny's sight of his letters was entirely accidental. This Fanny believed herself; and as Pinckney and she were soon reconciled, and more devoted than ever, she so told him.

Pinckney, true again to his nature, never told Fanny of the depth of his first love—while she believed him irresistible; and had no doubt that Miss Atherton had loved him. That lady, whenever she alluded to Langdale, of her acquaintance with Pinckney abroad, always treated the matter as if Pinckney had entertained a boyish love for her, and that she honoured him in whim, until she found him serious. Though these parties were soon married, and live now intimate friends, the whole truth of the attachment which existed between Pinckney and Miss Atherton, has never been revealed to the lady of the one or the lord of the other. Langdale esteems himself the happiest of men, and holds himself entitled now to speak more knowingly of the sex than ever.

Bronson and Elwood were never heard of definitely after they left the latter's house together. It was reported, and believed, that a traveller in Kentucky, who knew Bronson well, had paid a visit to the peni-

tentiary where he recognised him as a convict, sentenced upon several indictments for a great number of years, for passing counterfeit money. A New Orleans paper contained the other day the description of a man who was found murdered on the levee of that city. The description answered to Elwood's. It was thought he had been successful at the gaming table, and had been followed out by a ruffian who murdered and rifled him. What confirmed the opinion that the corpse was his, was the fact that its linen bore his initials.

The whole gang of counterfeiters was entirely broken up by the sagacity of Ross, and the treachery of Hall's wife, who, by the connivance of her husband, had informed him of their manœuvres. Ross waited until liberal rewards were offered, before he explored the cave in the hills, which our readers may remember Gordon entered one night. There he detected most of the gang, who were visited by the law with a just punishment.

Deep and long was the consultation between Miss Rachellina and her brother, upon Sidney's determination to marry Sarah Grattan. At last they concluded that certain branches of her family were certainly highly respectable; and that they had better say not a word in opposition to Sidney's wishes. Sarah Grattan, therefore, with restored health, soon gave him her hand, with as noble and gentle a heart in it as ever throbbed in a woman's bosom.

Miss Rachellina and Miss Bentley were much perplexed with the case of Robert Gammon and his cousin. All others were for having them married immediately. Not so, thought these ladies. Just, however, as they had come to the decision that they could not certainly be married *now*, at the instigation of Sidney Fitzhurst they went before Squire Norris, attended by Aunt Agnes, and had the knot tied. Sidney Fitzhurst established them on a farm, where Bob-

by has become thrifty and industrious—Pompey, now too old to drive the carriage, spends much of his time there, where he loves to officiate as the especial protector of a fine boy, of whom Peggy soon made Bobby the father. He however never fails to make dutiful reverence to his master each day, and enquire after his gout, which we are glad to learn is getting better.

Colonel Bentley has been so fortunate as to obtain a handsome settlement from his aunt, Miss Amelia Bentley, which has placed him above her caprices.

As for Miss Bentley and her friend Miss Rachellina, they have become greater gossips than ever; and they still persist in declaring, notwithstanding the many love adventures of which they have latterly had cognizance, that the chivalry of the tender passion is not what it was even in their short memories.

Aunt Agnes is still living in her little cabin. Sarah used all her influence to induce her to move to Holly; but she refused, though she is almost a daily visitor there.

Thompson was killed by one of his slaves, who made his escape to Canada. Pinckney has built himself a splendid mansion near Langdale's, in the city. There he spends his winters with his bride when they are not on a visit to the South. His summers are spent at Holly. It is rumoured in the literary circles that a novel, founded upon adventures abroad, which is soon to appear, is from his pen. Critical gentlemen who have seen the MS. speak very highly of it. And now, gentle reader, which of our couples think you are the happiest? Langdale and Miss Atherton, Pinckney and Fanny, Sidney and Sarah, or Bobby and Peggy? Knew I your character I could tell—and this much I will say, that your life will be a bright one, though you were but as happy as the one you think the least happy—I hope it may be happier than the happiest. How part we—as friends? I have

known you but so slightly, and at such long intervals, that I fear you will not claim me as an acquaintance, except upon this passing self-introduction, which will be as soon forgotten by you, and yet, by the light of my life's hope, I would rather win your smile than own broad acres—particularly if you are of the sex called the gentler.

At long intervals, but perchance with more thought than you will give me credit for, I have penned these idle pages for your amusement. Sometimes, where the crescent city New Orleans sits near the great ocean, amid the things of the voluptuous and the gay in that glorious city; and, sometimes, where St. Louis lifts a head that will be the proudest in the west, and where I have known a hospitality no where more welcoming. Sometimes, where Louisville, with Kentucky chivalry, greets the stranger; and, sometimes, where queen city, Cincinnati, lords it over the beautiful Ohio, with law books round me; sometimes, in New York, the great mother of the empire state; and, sometimes here, in the city of Penn, which is neither last nor least in my affection, and where I write this now, where I have received a greeting so quiet and kind, that it seemed like a quaker birthright of which one cannot early dispossess themselves; amid all these places, with more cares upon my head than years—amidst much waywardness and as much gaiety, and more gloom and wildness than I'll tell of, though they're past, have I attempted to trace for thee a faint portraiture of the passions of our race, as we see them in our daily intercourse.

Hereafter, I trust we shall meet under different and, on my part, happier auspices. Until then, dear reader, from my heart of hearts, I bid you an affectionate adieu.

THE END.

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