NORMAN LESLIE.

A TALE OF THE PRESENT TIMES.

"You shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work."
Hamlet.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

COLONEL HERMAN THORN.

My dear Sir,

The warm hospitality and generous attention which, during my ramblings in Europe, in common with many of my countrymen, I have received from you; the numerous instances which have come to my knowledge of the benevolence and kindness of your heart; your liberal encouragement of the arts; and the high estimation in which you are held abroad, induce me to offer you this simple tribute of regard and friendship.

Permit me, therefore, to dedicate to you the following pages, with only a regret that they are not more worthy.

I am, my dear sir,

very sincerely and respectfully,

your obedient servant,

The Author.

Paris, March 26th, 1835.

PREFACE.

THE most improbable features of the following story, viz. the leading incident and the career of Clairmont, are founded on fact. The author has availed himself of the license allotted to writers of fiction, and transformed character at pleasure, particularly that of the young lady on whose most mysterious fate the story is founded. Neither has he bound himself to a delineation of society as it existed at the period of the real occurrence, which took place many years since in New-York; yet he does not profess to have grasped the more noble materials which the higher circles of his country at this moment offer to the novelist, but has rather sketched, perhaps with a somewhat mischievous hand, certain peculiarities adapted to his purpose. He frankly bespeaks the indulgence of all the sapient and solemn critics.

The art of novel-writing, however long associated with heart-broken boarding-school girls, and sentimental chambermaids, is now as dignified as that of Canova, Mozart, or Raphael. In learning to arrange a succession of heavenly sounds, to imbody sweet shapes in marble, to breathe fervid beauty on the easel, how many an inspired genius has

devoted all his hours. Is it not as exalted a study to copy from the great world those "infinite doings" of the mind and heart which make up the material of human existence?

That the writer has succeeded in accomplishing this, he dares not hope. As an humble student, and peradventure with a feeble hand, he has thrown his groupings upon the canvass, and now, like the boy-painter in the "Disowned," stands concealed behind the curtain, to hear, perhaps, some erudite Sir Joshua say—"He had better burn it!"

Paris, March 26, 1835.

NORMAN LESLIE.

CHAPTER I.

An American City—New-York Winter—Sleighing—Certain Characters whom the Reader will do well to remember—An Incident, which perhaps he will forget before the end of the book.

"'Twas in the flush of the summer's prime,
Two hundred years ago,
When a ship into an unknown bay
Came gliding—soft and slow.
* * * * * * *
All was still, on river and hill,
At the dawn of that summer's day;
There was not a sound, save the ripple around
The ship, as she cut her way.

Then the sails flapp'd back, for the wind was slack,
And the vessel lay sleeping there;
And even the Dutchmen exclaimed, 'Mein Got!'
As they gazed on a scene so fair."
A Vision of the Hudson: by William Cox.

A BRILLIANT January morning broke over the beautiful city of New-York. Her two magnificent rivers came sweeping and sparkling down into her immense bay, which, bound in like a lake on every side with circling shores, rolled and flashed in the unclouded sunshine. The town itself rose directly

from the bosom of the flood, presenting a scene of singular splendour, which, when the western continent shall be better known to European tourists, will be acknowledged to lose nothing by comparison with the picturesque views of Florence or Naples. Her tapering spires, her domes, cupolas, and house-tops, her forest of crowded masts, lay bristling and shining in the transparent atmosphere, and beneath a heaven of deep and unstained blue. The lovely waters which washed three sides of the city were covered with ships of all forms, sizes, and nations; delighting the eye with images of grace, animation, and grandeur. Huge vessels of merchandise lay at rest, in large numbers, all regularly swayed round from their anchors into a uniform position by the heavy tide setting from the rivers to the sea. Others, leaning to the wind, their swollen and snowy canvass broadly spread for their flight over the vast ocean, bounded forward, like youth, bright and confident against the future. Some, entering sea-beaten and weary from remote parts of the globe, might be likened, by the contemplative, to age and wisdom, pitying their bold compeers about to encounter the roar and storm from which they themselves were so glad to escape: and yet, to carry the simile further, even as the human mind, which experience does not always enlighten or adversity subdue, ready, after a brief interval of idleness and repose, to forget the past, and refit themselves for enterprise and danger. Hundreds, whose less perilous duties lay within the gates of the immense harbour, plied to and fro in every direction, crossing and recrossing each other, and enlivening with delightful animation the broad and busy scene. Of these small craft, indeed, the waves were for ever whitened with an incredible number, in the midst of which thundered heavily the splendid and enormous steamers, beautifully

formed to shoot through the flood with arrowy swiftness, their clean bright colours shining in the sun, bearing sometimes a thousand persons on excursions of business and pleasure, spouting forth fire and steam like monstrous dragons, and leaving long tracks of smoke on the blue heaven. Among other evidences of a great maritime power, reposed several giant vessels of war,—those stern, tremendous messengers of the deep, wafting, on the wings of heaven, the thunderbolt of death across the solemn world of waters; but now lying, like fortresses, motionless on the tide, and ready to bear over the globe the friendly pledges or the grave demands of a nation which, in the recollection of some of its surviving citizens, was a submissive colony, without power and without a name. You might deem the magnificent city, that lay thus extended upon the flood, Venice, when that wonderful republic held the commerce of the world. In a greater degree, indeed, than London, notwithstanding the superior amount of shipping possessed by the latter, New-York at first strikes the stranger entering into its harbour with signs of commercial prosperity and wealth. In the mighty British metropolis, the vessels lie locked in dockyards, or half-buried under fog and smoke. The narrow Thames presents little more than that portion actually in motion; and, in a sail from Margate to town, the vast number are seen only in succession: but here, the whole crowded, broad, and moving panorama breaks at once upon the eye; and through a perfectly pure and bright atmosphere nothing can be more striking and exquisite.

It was a frosty winter morning, and the general splendour of the scene was heightened by the fact that, for some days previous, a heavy fall of snow had come down silently and thickly from heaven, without wind and without rain. The whole pic-

ture was now glittering with tracts of stainless white. The roofs were hidden beneath fleecy masses. The trees were cased with brilliant lustre, and held out their naked branches sparkling in the sun. The shores, sloping down to the water's edge, leaned brightly to the beams of morning. Even the waves themselves bore on their bosoms, urged gently along, and dashed ever and anon against each other, thick cakes of snow-covered ice, which had drifted down from the rivers, but yet not in sufficient quantities to interrupt the navigation. The roar and thunder of the town could be heard from the bay, as the hundreds of thousands of her citizens awoke to their accustomed occupations. The shouts of artisans and tradesmen, the clink of hammers from the thronged and busy wharves and shipyards, the inspiring "heave-yoes" with which the brawny tars cheered their labours amid the mass of shipping (itself a city), the clanging of hoofs, the shuffling of feet, the ringing of bells, the clash of voices, and all the medley of sounds peculiar to the newly awakened concourse of a vast and growing population, rose cheerfully on the air. Wherever the eye wandered, it met only scenes of bustle, haste, gayety, and earnest occupation.

But if the exterior of the city presented so lively a picture, the interior was yet more inspiriting. Broadway, the principal street, was now the centre of one of those gay and giddy scenes known only to the inhabitants of cold countries, and which to many offer greater attractions than the odoriferous vales and plains of Italy or Asia. True, those romantic climes where the human race enjoy a temperature so wild and pleasant as to permit of their almost dwelling in the open air even in the coldest season, have, in their softer charms, something unspeakably sweet and alluring. Those luscious ever-green valleys, those luxuriant hills,

those rich slopes, clothed with the most gorgeous fruits and the tenderest and deepest verdure, and, more than all, those gentle and transparent skies, seem beneficently designed for man in his more uncivilized state, or for the poor. It must be delightful for the penniless, the aged, and the houseless, unable to procure clothing or fuel, to find the dawn ever diffusing a genial and balmy warmth over nature. The tenant of the rude and scantily furnished hut flings open his window and admits the fragrant sweets. Mere day is to them a gift and a blessing; the sun is their cloak and their fire. Those old Italian landscapes, with the warm yellow light gleaming deliciously in through an open casement, are finely characteristic. But are we not apt to magnify the advantages of this universal and perpetual blandness of heaven? True, the half-clad fisherman flings himself carelessly down, and sleeps upon the beach; the beggar lies stretched against a sunny wall, drying the night-dews from his tattered garments, and partaking in peace the slumbers which he could not enjoy beneath the less benignant influence of the stars; the wrinkled and time-stricken dames, "the spinsters and the knitters in the sun," bring their work in front of their cottages, and, to see them, the pilgrim from a northern clime fancies them happy as the children of Eden. But I doubt whether the vigorous and enlivening joys of winter are not more conducive to health and happiness. An Italian vale, breathing its sweetest odours, and sparkling under its pleasantest sunshine, is but a dull picture compared with Broadway on the bright morning after a heavy fall of snow. No scene can be more full of life and action. Every thing appears in a whirl of delight. A spirit of joy and impulse hangs in the air, pervades all the city, and pours its fires through the veins of every living creature. The exhilarating

atmosphere braces the limbs, quickens the step, flushes the cheek, fills the eye with lustre, puts aside care, thought, and dulness, and produces a high state of animal enjoyment. Those old snow-storms have unfortunately of later years made their merry visits less frequently. The fleecy world now descends in smaller quantities, and disappears in a shorter period. I can fancy the rising generation smiling when we, of the old school, lament the forms and fashions of the last century. The young rogues, peradventure, may be amused by wondering what value we can attach to a powdered queue or a platted wristband; but, by this hand! when the elements themselves alter and remould their usages—when seasons roll in different shapes; when honest old Winter, instead of striding forward, as was his wont, wrapped in cloak and fur, his cheek glowing with the cold, and the sparry icicle glittering around his cap and beard, steals forward with only a fashionable mantle and an umbrella—Heaven save the mark! we may well lament. I cannot write calmly of those glorious old snow-storms.

One of them had now descended upon New-York, and the inhabitants, as the day advanced, seemed conscious of no other earthly object than the enjoyment of sleighing. Countless throngs of the wealthiest and most fashionable were gathered into that broad and beautiful street, which extends three or four miles in a line straight as an arrow, its long vista of elegant houses remarkable for their uniform aspect of affluence and comfort, and presenting, in their extreme neatness, and, particularly in the beauty of their entrances, a striking contrast to the street views of Paris, with only two exceptions, and to those of other continental cities without any. Its world of lovely women were abroad. Such rosy cheeks, such melting eyes as passed up and down, that dazzling day! Hundreds of sleighs, drawn sometimes by one horse and sometimes by

four, darted by each other with the swiftness of a bird's sweep; the princely horses, fired with the air and the scene, neighing, tossing their heads, champing their bits, and leaping on their way, mad as Bucephalus, every mother's son of them—the bells around their necks ringing out a music as merry and soul-stirring as the blast of a trumpet. An amusement so heartily entered into by the wealthy classes soon assumes an artificial hue of taste. The choice of horses became a matter of the utmost ambition, and the sleighs were wrought into every form devisable by an elegant or a fantastic fancy. Now swept by a painted boat, and now a classic chariot: here darted a pearly shell, fit to bear Venus over the waves; and there, an ocean car, from which father Neptune might have appropriately guided the dolphins and winged horses of the sea. Nowhere are there more lovely women than in those American cities. They contribute largely to the fascination of this exciting sport; and neither at the ball, nor the theatre, nor the midnight revel do they appear more beautiful than here. Their graceful and glowing faces float by with a rapidity which prevents all criticism, if not all comparison. The gaze is bewildered with an endless succession of lovely lips and radiant smiles, and eyes which the young and sensitive of the other sex, with the fidelity characteristic of ardour and youth, might remember for ever, but that each succeeding glance heals the wound received from the last. In the midst of this gay and noisy scene, the pedestrians along the spacious side-walks found their interest so much excited by the vast number, variety, and beauty of the equipages, and their charming groups, that the pavements, in their long extent, were lined with animated spectators—some lounging slowly onward, as if reluctantly withdrawing from such a pleasing spectacle, while many

remained stationary, watching each bright car as it went ringing and flashing by, and commenting upon each passing company.

"See, Leslie—look yonder!" cried a fashionably dressed young man to his companion, whose finely proportioned figure and extremely handsome face had attracted more than one pair of those mischievous eyes we spoke of. "Do you not see her? There—behind the yellow sleigh—in that green sea-shell, with those superb horses! Do you not catch a glimpse of her now?—they have stopped to address that party."

"Yes," said the other, "you are right. What a queenly woman!"

"How she glows in this bracing air, and seems to exult in the mere act of living! Her cheeks put poetry to shame! I wish I were a painter, Leslie."

"There are painters a plenty," rejoined Leslie, "who would despair by the face of Mrs. Temple. You must be a cunning artist indeed to catch that smile—that air—that expression. To-day she looks actually radiant. Those eyes must have made hearts ache in their time."

"They make mine ache yet," said Howard.

"Is not that Flora, with her head turned away?"

"'Tis her sweet self!" replied Howard, with a theatrical enthusiasm.

The sleigh which they had been observing now swiftly approached, and dashed by over the hard-pressed snow, discovering a nearer view of a gentleman and two ladies: the former a man of style and *ton*, though somewhat advanced in years—the ladies, an extremely fine-looking woman, magnificently dressed, whose age one might scarcely venture to suppose, so brilliantly did the charms of youth and gayety linger around her person; the other, a fair girl of exceeding beauty—her rich

complexion heightened by air and exercise—whose bewitching smile and laughing blue eyes, having already intoxicated half the Broadway exquisites, boded no good to the susceptibilities of our young loungers. Greetings were graciously interchanged as they flew by; and the two friends uncovered their heads, with that air of heartfelt homage with which gay and ardent young men return the smile and salutation of the loveliest of the reigning belles.

"I am a lost man!" exclaimed Howard.

"Which one now?" asked Leslie, smiling.

"I would I had lived in the days of good old Greece, when the chisel of Praxiteles made marble breathe, and almost blush."

"I had rather live in the good old town of Manahatta, after a merry snow-storm like this," replied Leslie. "But why your wish?"

"That I might have Flora Temple wrought in Parian for my gallery. To have that exquisite Psyche face in marble—immutable—immortal marble—never to be changed by sickness—by care—by time. I would spend hours by it daily, worshipping."

"Do you know, Howard," said Leslie, "I think that '*Psyche face*' of yours a very expressive phrase?"

"What! more expressive than Mr. Henry Howard's phrases usually are? And, pray, the why and the wherefore?"

"Because it illustrates the *soul*," returned Leslie, warmly, "which peculiarly marks the expression of Miss Temple's face."

"But, look, yonder comes another!" said Howard.

"Old Mr. Romain and his daughter," added Leslie; "another subject for your Parian. But no *Psyche* there."

A stately creature, with a face that might have been Cleopatra's in her girlhood, bowed smilingly

to the two young men, and directed to them the attention of her father.

"After all," exclaimed Howard, as they disappeared amid the throng of sleighs, "I do not know but those large eyes of Rosalie Romain's eclipse them all."

"She is one of your bewildering girls," said Leslie, "whom it would be prudent for such young gentlemen as you to beware of."

"Too late, my friend; your caution, as good advice very often does, comes quite too late. Her first smile is as fatal as Kate Kearney's. But, by-the-way, Leslie, they say that *you*—"

"Nonsense—'tis not true," interrupted Leslie; "so they give *you* to Flora Temple—"

"Ha!" said Howard, affectedly, with a volume of egotistical implication in the motion of his chin (nothing more eloquent than your chin)—"as improbable things *might* happen! But where is my rascal? I bade him drive up and meet me as soon as possible. The loitering scoundrel! I hope those mettlesome fellows of mine have played him no trick."

"What is doing yonder?" said Leslie; "is some one holding a levee in the open air this cold morning?"

"I wager my life," cried Howard, "that the sleigh around which the others are all crowding so eagerly contains that d——d French count."

"His lordship, true enough, at full length," added Leslie, "coated like a Russian emperor, and showing off those four fiery animals to everybody's admiration."

"And envy," said Howard. "That fop, now, could marry any of those blooming belles at ten minutes' notice."

"You do your countrywomen injustice," replied his friend, dryly.

"But here comes the pretty Helen Mellerie, all fur and feathers!" resumed Howard. "Truth to say," he continued, with that discriminating consistency with which he seemed to judge of women, always submitting to the eyes which attacked him last, as men swear allegiance to the reigning monarch, "truth to say, Helen Mellerie *is* beauty's own."

"And behind," added Leslie, "how right gallantly come up our old friends the Mortons!"

"And that pretty bird Maria Morton—she, too, has a pair of eyes," said Howard, sagaciously striking his colours in advance, "not to be encountered rashly."

"Too insipid," answered Leslie; "beauty without at least some sparkle of sense or heart, is such a silly doll."

"And yet," said Howard, "wise men fall in love with and marry it. Well, a fine fall of snow," continued he, "*is* a glorious thing—is it not?"

"Yes, even in the homely monotony of the country it has something solemn and pleasing," replied Leslie.

"But a *fashionable* snow-storm!" said Howard. "Ah! look—there comes your own peerless sister, with your father, Leslie; and what a magnificent pair of horses! I thought mine passable, but *really!*"

"I bought them only yesterday," remarked Leslie. "They are chosen from every thing this side the water; and, with all their fire and mettle, are as kind in the harness as lambs,—Julia could drive them. If I am extravagant in any thing, it is in the love of that noble animal. There is nothing on earth so beautiful as a beautiful horse."

"Except a beautiful woman!" interrupted Howard, with his eyes fixed full on the face of a lady, who, on foot, and leading by the hand an uncom-

monly handsome child, was attempting to cross the street.

At the sight of Leslie, his father had ordered the glossy and steaming steeds to the sidewalk. The young foreigner Clairmont, who had been pointed out by Leslie, drove his horses up at the moment, and the lady crossing with the child stopped in the middle of the street, at the great peril of her life, and followed the equipage with her eyes. At that instant a sharp cry of terror burst suddenly from all quarters. A pair of horses appeared approaching at full speed, dragging the fragments of a broken and untenanted sleigh, their manes streaming on the air, their ears back, their heads stretched forward, with open mouth and dilated nostril—the half-loosened traces flying about their heels, dashing first to one side of the street, then to the other—ungovernable, desperate, and abandoned to all the wild madness of flight. Each bound threatened the extinction of some human life, or that the affrighted creatures themselves would be dashed to pieces. As they passed, a sympathetic fury ran through all the startled horses around, which were with difficulty reined in by their drivers. The foot-passengers rushed precipitately to the wall. Men shouted, children cried, women screamed, and all the gay mirth was suddenly transformed to shrieking fear and pale horror. Scarcely a moment had elapsed from their first appearance till their arrival at the spot where stood Leslie and his friend. All seemed to have escaped from their perilous career but the lady with the child, who had attracted the attention of Howard. Whether unconscious of her imminent danger, or rendered by it unable to move, she remained completely exposed; and the crowd, at a glance, and with a burst of new interest, saw the fiery and furious animals plunging with headlong speed directly towards her. Cries

of "Stop them! stop them! Save the woman and the child!" rung on the air; but, as is generally the case in such emergencies, there were found many more to suggest this counsel than to execute it. Their destruction appeared inevitable; and that stir, shudder, and hum with which men look on some bloody and terrible accident broke from the crowd, when Leslie sprang hastily forward, grasping unsuccessfully at the reins of the fugitive beasts, but dragging the mother and child almost from beneath their hoofs. The lady, thus suddenly rescued from the jaws of death, immediately swooned, and was conveyed with the child into an adjoining mansion. Attention to them would have been more undivided but for the catastrophe of one of the animals from whose fury they were saved. Starting aside from the grasp of Leslie, the finer of the two leaped forward with an almost supernatural effort, and the shaft of a gig entered into his body directly through the ample chest, as a sword plunged and buried to the hilt in a human bosom. The noble creature uttered a scream painfully expressive of agony and fear; and, bleeding, sweating, foaming, trembling, and panting, came heavily to the ground. A rush of people now closed in upon them. The dying steed was at once disentangled from his harness, the purple tide poured forth in a dark red flood, crimsoning the pure snow, and with each gush the pain of the superb animal appeared more insupportable, while the vapour curled from his reeking flanks. He struggled, and snorted, and strove to rise and resume his winged and fiery flight, and his immense and flashing eyes turned gleaming upon the faces of the spectators, as if soliciting aid, or, at least, compassion. But presently his panting breast heaved with a feebler motion. Weaker, and yet more weak, grew his convulsive shudders, and his vain attempts to

regain his feet; till—drenched, quivering, and gory—foam on his lip—terror and despair in his eyes—he stretched himself upon the ground in the last throes of that dark crisis that must come alike to man and beast. His fleet limbs stiffened, his asthmatic breathings were silent, his broad and majestic chest moved no more, the damp lips curled from the large ivory teeth, the eyes stared, started, and grew fixed and glassy, and that mighty form which but a moment before had carried terror through the crowd, lay now transmuted to a senseless clod. A silence, as if a human soul had passed away, remained on the circle of compassionate spectators.

Leslie had inquired after the lady whose life he had saved. She was yet invisible, but, the physician informed him, had sustained no serious injury. He caressed a few moments the exceedingly beautiful little boy, who had been severely but not dangerously cut upon the forehead, and in whose eyes he found something singularly sweet and expressive. Escaping from the scene which might have awaited him had the lady been recovered, he entered his father's sleigh, accompanied by Howard, relieved John of the reins, and, handling the long whip with the air of one not unaccustomed to its use, he laughed away the apprehensions of his father and sister, and dashed in among the idle racers in the gay arena of pleasure.

CHAPTER II.

A Lion, and an Accusation.

"Believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society, and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see." *Hamlet.*

Ring—ring—ring.

"Is Count Clairmont of the French army at home?" inquired a footman at one of the most fashionable hotels in Broadway, while the horses of an elegant barouche stood tossing their heads, and stamping impatiently against the pavement at the door; for city sleighing is brief as the "posy of a ring" or "woman's love" (though this last is a slander).

"No, sir, he is not," replied the consequential black servant.

"Please hand the count this note, with the respects of Mrs. Temple."

Ring—ring—ring.

"Does not Count Clairmont of the French army lodge here?" asked a second visiter.

"He does."

"Can I see him?"

"You cannot—he is not in."

"My card—I shall see him at the opera."

Ring—ring—ring.

A tall, pale-faced gentleman in black, with a hooked nose and no teeth. "Can you direct me where to find Count Clairmont?"

"This is his hotel, sir."

"Is he to be seen?"

"Not till the afternoon."

"Has Count Clairmont come in yet?" inquired a breathless messenger in livery, in a profuse perspiration, and who had been seven times before during the last half-hour.

"He will not be *visible*, I have already told you, this morning."

"Miss Morley's compliments, and returns the volume."

Several carriages drove up in the course of the morning, a score of domestics, and friends without number, among whom were many of the most distinguished inhabitants of the city, all inquiring and leaving cards, notes, or some nameless message or package for Count Clairmont of the French army. One or two young female servants entered timidly, and closely veiled, presenting small *billets-doux*, ingeniously folded in triangles and other expressive figures (the boyish eyes of love, the young dog! peeping from under the big wig of mathematics), and each leaving her tribute of rose-coloured or pale blue gold-edged note-paper (containing heaven knows what), to be most particularly delivered into the hands *only* of Count Clairmont of the French army.

"I wish to see Count Clairmont," said a dark-complexioned and very handsome girl, with a silvery voice and a foreign accent, her veil drawn aside from her close bonnet to address the servant, which she did in a tone of eagerness, and almost of command.

"It is not possible," said the servant. "He aint *visible* to no one whatsomever."

"He will see Mr. Frederick Morton," interrupted a very foppishly dressed young man, who had been leisurely surveying the remarkable face of the female: "say *Mr. Morton*—he will see *me*, I am sure."

"Not by no manner of means," said the negro. "He aint in; because, you see, he aint up. Consequently, no gentleman can't never be *in* when he aint *up*."

The truth of this syllogism was indisputable, and Mr. Frederick Morton, after another lingering gaze at the fair stranger, took his departure.

There was now a furious ringing at the bell which communicated with the *suites* of private apartments.

"John!" bawled the bar-keeper.

"Coming, coming, sir!"

"Count Clairmont's bell!"

"D—n this Count Clairmont of the French army!" muttered the man. "He has nothing to do but turn women's heads, and men's too, for that matter, and to keep us poor devils all day trooping up and down-stairs. Legs aint made of iron, I guess."

He was met by Count Clairmont's servant from the stairs.

"Here, John! you black scoundrel, what the devil is the reason Count Clairmont's breakfast has not been brought up? Bring it up instantly. His lordship has rung twice."

"I wish his lordship was—"

John scratched his head, and left the sentence unfinished. The valet suddenly caught a view of the young girl, at whom he gazed with strong and increasing astonishment.

"What!—no!" muttered he. "Yes—surely—it can't be; but—"

"Raffaello!" said the girl vehemently, and walking

up close to him. "*It is!*"—and she suddenly broke into a rapid flow of Italian, though uttered in a low voice.

"*Per Dio!*" said the valet, "I dare not."

"He will break my heart!" said the girl.

"He will break my head!" said Raffaello.

"If you displease me you will repent of it hereafter," answered she.

"If I offend my master I shall repent of it at once," said the man.

"It is in vain to deny me—I *will* see him at once."

"Signora Louise!" replied the valet, after a moment's hesitation, in which surprise and perplexity seemed struggling with a desire to oblige —"enter into this apartment, and I will return to you directly."

There was something striking in the appearance of the stranger. Her figure was tall, round, and beautifully formed, and her face well repaid a second glance. The complexion, though brown to the last borders of a brunette, was clear and transparent. Her hair of the colour of a raven; and much there was in her countenance of sweetness, and in her manner of dignity, although her dress did not denote affluence. But the principal feature was her eyes. They were remarkable for their largeness, their intense blackness, the light which shot from them with every rolling thought and sudden feeling, the firm full gaze with which they expressed seriousness or anger, and the suffusion of softness and tenderness which sometimes quenched their fiercer beams.

The valet presently returned, and beckoned her to follow; and the plebeian world below went on for a time without further molestation from the agents or affairs of Count Clairmont of the French army.

There is no keener wine-lover than your Turk. Nowhere are there found wilder democrats than in the ranks of a despot; and nowhere are the badges of nobility more reverently and indiscriminately hailed than by the gay votaries of fashion in a republic, where all men are "born equal," and where titles are excluded by the constitution.

A count—a real count—had made his appearance in New-York. Rumour preceded, enthusiasm welcomed, and admiration followed him. He was young, handsome, rich, and a foreigner. The two former would have been much, the latter were every thing. It was whispered that, notwithstanding his high title and princely fortune, he would write a book on America. Books on America were even then the vogue. The opinion of the count was looked for with intense eagerness; for it is a characteristic of my countrymen, while they assume a settled confidence in their merit, to shrink from the lash of every nameless satirist. Then, perhaps, he might marry! The very men went crazy—and the women!

Although in the French service, the Count Clairmont had spent much of his youth in England, and the language was said to be more familiar to him than his own; others he spoke too with irresistible grace; but that of love more freely than all. Then he had travelled over the world, danced with duchesses and princesses, feasted with dukes and kings, fought in a score of indefinite battles, and triumphed in victories which nations had owed to his arm. He had been wounded by a retreating foe (ah! what was that wound to those he daily inflicted!)—had sighed on the banks of the Ilissus, and mused amid the ruins of Rome; had beheld Vesuvius spout his fires, and Olympus rear his head. His motion was grace, his voice music, his eyes bliss, his touch rapture: then he was fascinating;

then he was foreign; then—he was single; then—he was a *count*. It is certain that he was a modest man—that is, modest for a count in the French army—modest for a man that had half the lovely women of New-York at his feet. Relieved for a time, in consequence of a wound, from the claims of his own country, he no longer fleshed his sword in war; but he had seized a nobler weapon, and wreathed his brows with more graceful laurels. This nobler weapon was a goose-quill. Blood he could not now shed, but his ink flowed freely in the cause of innocence and beauty—and midnight oil he wasted like water. Dull were the eyes that might not strike a rhyme from the soul of Count Clairmont of the French army. Every smile was caught and imprisoned in a verse; every blush brightened again in a sonnet. Many a slender foot had been celebrated—many a tender glance embalmed—many a passion nursed—and many a cigar smoked, in all the raptures of sentiment, and in all the reveries of champaign, by Count Clairmont of the French army. Envy, jealousy, even love, could frame only one accusation against him. It was a charge that moistened the eyes and heaved the bosom of many a charming belle. It shaded his triumph at the ball, and dimmed his joy at the banquet. The tall and lovely Henrietta Bellville actually broke away from a *tête-à-tete*, the only one envious fate ever granted, at the very thought; and that glowing creature Helen Mellerie was seen to withdraw her hand from his—in the little summer-house—by the river—at her father's country-seat—in August—the moon *quite* above the trees—immediately—that is, *almost* immediately—at the recollection of its truth:—

Count Clairmont of the French army was—a flirt!

CHAPTER III.

A Trifle, and a Spark—But on Trifles hang the Destinies of Men, and a Spark is sometimes sufficient to burn a City.

"What! does the pestilent coxcomb turn his shoulder on me? Can a butterfly be saucy?"

"Oh, Mr. Howard!" said Miss Morton; "good heavens! take care how you tread. I have dropped—though how I cannot conceive—a diamond ring of very uncommon value. Papa's New-year present. It is one of the largest stones I ever saw."

The company good-humouredly proceeded to assist the fair unfortunate in the search; when a pretty young maid-servant entered the room to address her mistress, and again disappeared. The precious trinket was sought in vain.

"I had it," said Miss Morton, turning quite pale—"I really had it ten minutes since, and examined it particularly. It *must* be somewhere here."

One of the gentlemen suggested the impropriety of having admitted the servant.

"She certainly might have picked it up; and if so, discovery is altogether beyond the limit of possibility."

"Dear me!" exclaimed one, "how unlucky!"

"Bless me!" cried another, "it is extraordinary!"

Miss Morton's alarm at length grew painful, and tears stood on her cheeks.

"Oh!" said the disconsolate girl, "I would not have lost it for all the world."

Leslie and Howard endeavoured in vain to console her.

"Hush, pretty trembler," whispered Count Clairmont; "I have seen one equally brilliant. I will procure it at once; and, oh! how happy I should be, if Miss Morton would allow me to replace it."

It soon appeared that the costly bauble was lost. Many anathemas were denounced against the pretty maid, who had certainly picked it up amid the general confusion as she passed through the apartment.

"Papa will have her put in prison," sobbed Miss Morton, in an anguish of disappointment and rage; "and I hope he will."

"Prison!" cried one; "it is too good for her."

"Yes, indeed," echoed another; "to be sure it is."

"She should be hanged," said a third.

"But are you sure she is guilty?" asked Leslie.

"Sure!" answered the whole company; "quite sure."

As we may not in the future progress of our story, find leisure to pause over the fate of the person suspected, it may be appropriate to state here that she was arrested and imprisoned, and subsequently indicted for the theft. For want of sufficient decisive proof, she was found not guilty, but her discharge did not take place till some months afterward, and then she was released only with an impaired constitution and a blighted character, which eventually led her to real crime and extreme misery.

Count Clairmont entered. Perhaps of all the places which he was accustomed to honour with his presence, he came to none where the civility of

good-breeding was less alloyed with silly flattery and unmeaning admiration than at Mr. Leslie's.

"When I was at St. Petersburg," said the count, "there *was* snow."

"Well, I never heard any thing said against that of America before," observed Leslie, smiling.

"Of course," rejoined Miss Leslie, "republican snow cannot compete with imperial."

The count arched his eyebrows.

"Satirical Miss Leslie!"

"No, only conscious of our imperfections," said she, demurely. "But I am sure I heard you the other day praise our thunder and lightning."

"No," answered the count, "strange as it may seem, that of Europe *is* superior. Crossing the Alps, I have witnessed such thunder and lightning as could not take place in the United States, in consequence of the inferior height of your mountains."

"The highest only *seventeen* thousand feet," interrupted Leslie, "and your highest *fifteen* thousand."

"'Tis the most amusing thing on earth," said his sister, "to hear people of different countries pride themselves, individually, upon what they have had no share in producing. See the triumph, now, of Norman, on account of a mountain two or three thousand feet higher than his neighbours'. And confess, count, that you are, at heart, rather ashamed of your *little Mount Blanc*."

"I doubt," said the count, coolly, "the *accuracy* of Mr. Leslie's statement."

"I can convince you," replied Leslie, "by a reference to—"

"Pray, Miss Leslie," interrupted the count, turning his shoulder to Norman—"pray, Miss Leslie, how is your papa?"

Leslie's eyes flashed fire.

CHAPTER IV.

A dutiful Daughter.

"Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters,
By what you see them act."

Othello.

"DEAR, dear!" exclaimed Rosalie Romain, looking up after a brown study of a minute, "it is *horrid!*"

"Explain, my pretty *penserosa*," said the count, laughing.

"The evidences are strong as proof of holy writ," she sighed, fixing her tender eyes on his, just sufficiently moistened to be uncommonly bright.

"Evidences of *what?*" asked the count.

"You know as well as I," said Rosalie, winding a rose-coloured riband round the end of her finger, and looking down.

"No, on my life!"

"That you are a flirt."

"As I live," exclaimed the count, remonstratingly.

The beautiful girl turned partly away, half-pouting.

"Nay, more," said he, in a softer tone, "as—as I—"

He took her hand. He was certainly on his knees, or rather on one knee; he pressed it, as,

faintly, and only at intervals, she struggled to escape.

"As you *what?*" cried she, impatiently, and slightly stamping her foot.

But a smile which had been lurking all the time around her lips broke over her features like sunshine through a sudden cloud.

"As I *love*," said the count, after a brief pause, and in his lowest tone.

Notwithstanding the smile, a tear had been slowly filling in her eyes. It stirred—it fell. It dropped upon his hand. He kissed it off.

The *tableau* was picturesque. They lingered in it a moment, as if they knew it became them.

"Dear! dear! there's pa!" exclaimed Rosalie, in a sudden fright—and she threw open a large portfolio of plates.

"An extraordinary taste, count," said the old gentleman, "my daughter has for the fine arts."

"Oh, pa!"

"I never knew such an ear; and as for *drawing*—"

"Oh dear, pa; how *can* you!"

"Then for the plain sweet old English ballad, my lord—"

"Good gracious, pa! don't you see the count wants to go?"

"What, are you off, count? Bless me! we must keep you for dinner."

"Necessity, Mr. Romain. You know the tyranny of appointments."

"Break them, count; they are not with the bank. My love, can't you persuade him to remain?"

"I have not tried, pa."

"Heydey! heydey! these saucy girls! But we must not let you off. Besides, the sky looks showery."

"But showers sometimes," said Clairmont, with

a slight glance at Miss Romain, "are more beautiful than sunshine."

"Let him go, pa; I am sure it will not rain again to-day."

"Why, you jade," cried the old gentleman, "you will drive him away in earnest. Impudent minx!"—he drew her towards him as he spoke, and printed a kiss on her full red lips—"she is getting incorrigible."

"Lock her up, Romain; she is mischievous," said the count, shaking his finger playfully at the laughing girl as he withdrew.

"The sky has cleared," said Mr. Romain.

"Yes, pa."

"What an elegant young man Count Clairmont is!"

"Yes, pa."

"You are going to Mrs. Temple's to-night, Rosalie?"

"Yes, if you please, dear pa."

"You will see the count there."

"I hope not, pa; I think him rather disagreeable."

"The women are pulling caps for him, notwithstanding, they say, in all directions. He is very rich; he appears quite fond of us; perhaps—"

"Oh no, pa; only polite."

"Well, every thing is for the best."

"Yes, pa."

"I think Temple's girl will manage to—"

"To what, pa?" said Rosalie, with sudden eagerness.

"Go and get ready for dinner, child," said the musing father, recollecting himself; "it is no affair of ours."

"Yes, pa—no, pa," replied the dutiful daughter, with innocent simplicity, and retired to dress.

CHAPTER V.

A Dream—and, as Dreams sometimes are, broken.

"And thus from Fancy's realms
Fall'n back to Earth."

THERE is nothing like a rout. Those given by Mrs. Temple were the most brilliant in America. But we must know Mrs. Temple before we attend her parties.

You have seen a sweet, quiet, unambitious woman, formed for the wife of a poet, whose life would glide happily away amid the green shades of the country—a woman to read to during the long winter nights—to converse with, when the overworked mind and heart are wearied and exhausted in the brawling world—to look at with inward delight, while she teaches the children their evening lessons—their innocent prayers,—kisses them—blesses them—and packs them off to bed. Her hair may be parted on her forehead with a simple grace, that touches by a total absence of all attempts to touch, and surprises the heart at once into respect and admiration. Even in the early morning you find such a one ready to receive you with a fresh glow on her cheek, as if she had been already abroad worshipping nature; and then you feel rebuked in soul that you have been losing, in swinish sleep, the golden hours of the opening day. Her home is her world; her existence is in the love and happiness of her husband and children. In the dazzling sphere of fashion,

she may win admiration, but she seeks it not; for she knows it is often the meed of the superficial and the false,—that the noblest qualities which adorn character and dignify human life there often pass unregarded, or become the themes of ridicule. Her principal charm is mind and feeling; but there are moments when purity and love lend her a beauty that illumines her presence like sunshine. There is nothing like the loveliness of a woman with a spring of satisfied affection flowing freshly at her heart. Sunshine is too dim for a comparison.

Such a woman we have all seen; but such a woman was not Mrs. Temple. Her portrait might be appropriately hung opposite to this,—as you see pendants of sunrise and moonlight—calm and storm—gleaming, side by side, from the walls of an academy. Mrs. Temple was a city wife, formed to dazzle and triumph in companies. She had trodden the flowery path of an admired belle; had early married a wild good-hearted fellow, very much like herself,—some said for love, some for money. They were affluent beyond measure; loved each other well enough to be perfectly happy when together, or when apart. The blooming girl had scarcely changed, as the beautiful wife and the still glowing and graceful mother, till time, the destroyer of others' charms, but shedding only a deeper richness upon hers, matured her into the stately and magnificent woman, who reigned in the New-York circles fashion's chief minion, and proud as Egypt's queen. One daughter crowned her affections; and Flora Temple rose by the side of her brilliant mother, lovelier, but not so gay; and winning all hearts with a less striking but far deeper power. Men hesitated upon which to bestow their worship. So sometimes lingers the summer day, drawing all eyes to the encrimsoned

west, even when the moon has long filled, with her holier radiance, the ascending heaven. The singularity of this association could not escape the notice of the yet ambitious woman of fashion; and Mrs. Temple regarded Flora with a curiously mixed feeling, wavering between the enthusiastic fondness of the mother and the lingering rivalry of the belle. There was, perhaps, a certain conscious magnanimity in the delight with which she gazed upon her daughter's expanding charms—fond, passionately, devotedly fond as she herself was of admiration, and accustomed to be its centre. But yet, though they charmed alike, they could scarcely interfere with each other. The one was always sure to overcome, when she desired to do so, by the long-practised energies of her highly-gifted nature; the other always won love without wishing, and even without knowing it. The daughter valued not what she had never striven to obtain, and beheld with pleasure the triumphs of her queenly mother; who in her turn yielded the path with a sigh and a smile to the more unpretending excellences of Flora. Some sharp and unfavourable features there were in Mrs. Temple's disposition, for she was haughty when excited, and aristocratic to a folly. But if she had particular enemies, her general kindness and her fascinating manners rendered the world at large her friend. The life of her family, the object of her husband's love and pride—after his dogs and horses—left to her own control, in the possession of boundless wealth, with a constitution unimpaired, a beauty mellowed, a wit sharpened, and a mind enriched,—she was a giddy, sweet, proud, high-tempered, happy, fashionable woman, who never seriously conceived a more severe wish against those among her neighbours whom she had the least reason to like, than that the routs

which she gave two or three times a year might make them positively die of admiration and envy.

"What! nine o'clock!" cried the count, looking at his watch; "I must actually go this instant."

Mrs. Hamilton sighed, and turned towards him a pair of hazel eyes which had done mischief in their day, and were yet dangerous, though they were now, or at least ought to have been, sheathed in the scabbard of matrimony.

"Why do you sigh?" said the count.

"Because I hate solitude; and when you go I shall be alone."

"But this," said the count, "is Mrs. Temple's night, and I have positively promised."

"You are too early," said Mrs. Hamilton. "Twelve will be quite time enough for that proud and giddy Mrs. Temple."

"But I have two or three other imperative engagements before Mrs. Temple's. There is the young Mrs. Wilson."

"And you leave me for *her!*"

"Then there are the Evertons."

Mrs. Hamilton sighed again.

"Is my sweet coz so pensive?"

"I do not know; I am very unhappy."

"Can *you* be unhappy?"

The handsome young nobleman took her hand.

There was not a purer woman on earth than Mrs. Hamilton. Her very purity made her careless. A school-girl could not be more artless. Her lips opened to every thing that stirred in her heart as naturally as rosebuds unfold when they are ripe.

"Ah! Lucy, what a happy man is your husband!"

"Not so happy as you think."

"How! Hamilton not happy! Why, he is the gayest dog among us."

"Yes, away at his club with *you*."

"My lovely friend, you wrong him."

"Ah! you little know." A tear glittered in her eye.

"By heavens! dear girl, you terrify me!—the mere suspicion that *you* were not happy would for ever prevent *my* being so."

"Oh, my lord! I must not hear—you must not dare."

"And why should you not possess a friend in me as well as in another? I sympathize in your sorrows as I would in those of a friend of my own sex. This dear hand has, I fear, been wasted."

"Count, I beg—I entreat—do not make me angry."

"Loveliest of lovely creatures!" said the count, "you have not the heart to reward admiration and sympathy with anger. What, weeping!"

"My lord, if you have any friendship for me, leave me."

"Friendship! can you doubt it?"

He dropped on one knee. This seemed a favourite position, when there was a woman in the case. His homage, doubtless, would have met with a severe rebuke, but a step was heard in the hall.

"There—there's James, my lord!"

The entrance of the domestic restrained the ardours of the noble foreigner, who was upon his feet, and several yards off, with an adroitness that argued considerable practice.

"Pray, tell my dear Hamilton," he cried, "that I waited for him an hour. I *must* bid you adieu!" and he bowed himself out.

"Take away the tea-things, James," said Mrs. Hamilton.

The man obeyed, and disappeared.

His lovely young mistress remained a moment in an attitude of thought. Suddenly rising, she gazed at herself in the mirror; and as she gazed her feelings appeared to assume a new mood. She adjusted the blonde and curls around a very charming face. A soft colour suffused her countenance. Her eyes emitted a lustre which had not brightened there for many a day. She sighed; but as she sighed a smile beamed upon her features, and she seemed lost in the mazes of some sad but pleasurable thought.

"Yes," at length she said to herself; "happy, happy woman! What would life have been to me then? What a contrast! I should have had my portrait taken—just so. There! with that ringlet hanging—so—and the lace brought down a little in the front—*à la Marie Stuart*—so. There—the *Countess Clairmont!* with the drapery over the arm, and the eyes lifted—thus."

The reflection of another figure in the glass caused her to start with a slight scream.

"Good heavens, Edward, how you frightened me! Is that you?"

"Why, who the devil should it be?" replied the husband; "and what are you at there, parading before the glass, like a tragedy queen?"

"I was—I was trying on my cap; but you startled me so! You are always so rough, Edward."

"I am not," replied he.

"You are. I am not. Get me some tea," flinging himself heavily down on the sofa; "I'm tired."

"Yes, dear Edward, instantly," said the affectionate wife, passing her arm tenderly around his shoulder.

"Then why the devil don't you go?"

"I have already rung for it. You always come home as cross as—"

The husband swore. The wife sighed. James brought the tea.

Oh, matrimony! thou—abode of all evil

But they are waiting for us at the Temples'.

CHAPTER VI.

A New-York Rout—And a nearer View of several Characters.

"For my mind misgives,
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels."

Romeo and Juliet.

THE company were assembled by ten; not all, but nearly twice as many as could press at one time into the ample and splendid apartments.

A fashionable New-York mansion is not surpassed anywhere in graceful elegance and complete comfort. There were many rooms blazing with light. The opening hall was carpeted with oil-cloth, of such rich figures and glossy smoothness as resembled the pictured marble floors of Italian palaces; but the stairs and drawing-rooms, instead of being, like those of many European nobles, of cold marble or naked granite, were thickly covered with the most gorgeous carpets. But few paintings and statues graced the walls. There was, however, a profusion of immense mirrors,

marble tables, curtains of crimson velvet studded with gold, vases, urns, and jars of rare flowers; exquisitely wrought lamps, dispensing a soft and veiled radiance, like moonlight, from large globes, sometimes stained with deeply-coloured pictures, and sometimes of a frosty white; couches, ottomans, and sofas of embroidered satin; and a variety of such other costly objects as could be obtained by wealth from any part of the world for the indulgence of pride or the gratification of luxury. The ballustrades of the steps which led to the upper apartments were of beautifully carved mahogany, stained with the rich colour of a ripe chestnut; and, by means of secret apertures, invisible fires diffused through the corridors a mild warmth, permitting all the interior doors of the house to stand open, without afflicting even the sensitive victims of rheumatism or toothache with the horrors of a draught.

Immediately on their arrival, the guests were ushered into separate apartments above, where, according to their sex, they re-arranged their toilet, which even the motion of a carriage might have disturbed. Here, previous to their entrance, floated groups of sylphs and syrens, to reclaim a wandering curl or replant a drooping rose. Then the gentlemen's apartment—the extraordinary preparations to be elegant—the collars bent to the precise angle—the cravats tied in the exquisite knot—the shining feet—the curled heads—the crooked elbows—the audacious whiskers. Cupid, hast thou no pity? There is nothing so merciless as a fop.

The two principal saloons were thrown into one, by means of the immense double doors of glassy mahogany. A band of musicians, stationed in an adjoining hall, ever and anon breathed a low air that banished care and gravity, inspired wit and

pleasure, and animated rather than interrupted conversation.

At the lower end of the apartment stood Mrs. Temple; her majestic figure multiplied in the mirrors,—her face, always a radiant one, now glowing with pride and conscious beauty. A coronet of diamonds on her queenly brow flashed, burned, and trembled with every motion in the light; and above nodded a snowy plume. She looked thus, in her glory, like the rising sun.

By her side stood Flora; not so tall as her mother, nor so commanding, but yet invested by the charm of youthful loveliness with more direct power over the feelings. For her style of beauty, she was admirably dressed in simple white; her hair parted plainly on her forehead, and a rose, fresh culled from nature, the only ornament of her strikingly beautiful head. Venus might have so stood by Juno.

It was a study to see Mrs. Temple "receive:" that stately air—that gracious recognition and graceful acknowledgment—the ready word—the quick repartee—the brilliant smile—the beaming look.

Then Flora—without any of that dramatic effect—more reserved—more natural—more lovely—growing like a Guido on the contemplation—more difficult to imitate and—to forget.

Had the proud dame known her true moral glory that night, she would have attached no value to the splendour which surrounded her, but triumphed alone, conspicuous and envied as the mother of Flora Temple.

The rooms were filled—the halls—the steps before the door. Family after family of the very highest *ton* (and are there not the loftiest exclusives in a republic?) came pouring up. Wealthy merchants—eminent counsellors, just from profound

tomes, gladly escaped to this scene of light and joy—astute judges, who had perhaps recently sealed the fate of wretched criminals, chatted with the bright-eyed girls, and sipped their coffee to dulcet music—physicians, from the death-bed of the dying or the dead—distinguished members of Congress—ex-governors and bank-directors—popular authors (for even America began to have popular authors) —*elégants—beaux-esprits*—and "young men of talent" by the score—and lions in such plenty that they were in each other's way;—all mingled in the enchanting tide of sparkling pleasure and radiant beauty. The waltz—that airy child of fashion and caprice—even here, where the pioneer had scarcely flung his axe, floated like a zephyr, though, truth to say, within a sadly circumscribed compass—music breathed—champaign exploded. The pressure for pleasure grew greater and more insupportable—the sides of the obese were penetrated by the elbows of the enthusiastic. The gentlemen were wedged in closely, with one hand and an opera-hat above their head—imperial carpets were soaked with wasted wine—each charming mouth dropped words of wit and mirth—those who were out pressed to get in—those who were in pressed to get out—the roar of new carriages thundered at the door, and—what is there after all like a rout?

But, heavens! what a voice! what loveliness! what execution! A young girl, of peculiar grace and beauty, ran her slender fingers rapidly over the keys of a piano, and sang with such tones of sweetness that the auditors almost ceased to breathe. A difficult and brilliant bravura elicited from every lip repeated and irrepressible exclamations of delight and pleasure. They had not yet died away, when a plaintive ballad, simple as the murmurs of a running brook, and soft as the voice of the dove mourning her mate in the forest, once more hushed

every sound and touched every heart, till the last sweet note, melting away, left a general pause—the truest tribute of praise.

"Who *is* she?" cried one.

"Who *can* she be?" exclaimed another.

It was old Mr. Romain's daughter. Every one knew old Mr. Romain.

If any thing can heighten the spell of good wine, it is music a little while after. If any thing can extract from music its last alloy of earth, and leave it purely an ethereal rapture, it is good wine a little while before.

"By heavens," said Albert Moreland, "this is wonderful!—Norman, did you ever hear such sounds?"

"Many a time and oft," replied Leslie, with indifference.

Rosalie Romain was the centre of all eyes; even Flora stood by almost unobserved. Never was collected a fairer array than shone here to-night, and none so marked as Rosalie Romain. Her beauty was indeed of a kind to bewilder the unwary. Her person was graceful and majestic, and somewhat above the ordinary stature. A warm and passionate languor was felt in her manner and expression; except at times, when suddenly excited to peculiarly winning loveliness and *naïveté*. Eyes large and dark—a set of pearly teeth—a bewitching smile—the most engaging air—and a voice that might sound the alarm to the heart of a cynic, invested her with uncommon powers of allurement. She was peculiarly favoured, too, with a complexion of such transparent brightness, lips so red and pouting, and cheeks so fresh and rosy, as would have imparted a character of beauty to features much less intrinsically perfect.

"What, Norman, silent!" cried Moreland again to the young man whom he had previously ad-

dressed, who was rather gravely regarding Miss Romain, while others could not find words to praise her sufficiently; "and, now I remember, this enchantress the world has given to *you*. Is it not so, Miss Temple?"

"Even so, Mr. Moreland," answered Flora, with a smile; "and a more elegant girl Mr. Leslie could scarcely desire."

Leslie coloured in some confusion.

"See," exclaimed Moreland, "the guilty wretch!"

"Upon my soul," said Leslie, "you do me too much honour."

"Nay, but I *saw*," said Moreland, "even this minute—the language of Miss Romain's eyes is not easily to be mistaken; and Mr. Norman Leslie himself, for all his present gravity, has a pair of orbs which converse indifferently well. Look at them, Miss Temple."

"Nonsense, it is untrue," said Norman. "I solemnly assure you it is untrue. Miss Temple, protect me from the raillery of this sarcastic lawyer."

"I must reserve my forces, Mr. Leslie, for a juster cause," replied Miss Temple, smiling.

"There, I told you so, Leslie; Miss Temple knows it—I know it—everybody knows it."

"Albert, upon my honour—"

"What," interrupted Moreland, "Norman Leslie not love Rosalie Romain! Why, now I remember me, I have myself seen a copy of verses, addressed by N. L. to R. R., enough to make stones weep. I hereby formally accuse you of the black and dreadful, and *very* uncommon, crime of *love*."

"What shall be the penalty?" asked Norman.

"We shall be obliged to procure one by special act of Congress," replied the lawyer quickly; "for the offence is so heinous, that, like parricide, the

legislator might well forget to include it in his code."

"Whatever it may be," said Norman, "the indictment is false."

"You will plead guilty, then, to *flirtation?*—remember *Congress Hall.*"

"Of flirtation," said the youth, blushing perceptibly, "perhaps; but if that is a crime, I have repented and done penance—I hold myself absolved."

"Jealousy!" said Moreland: "the dear creatures have quarrelled; I vow I will bring them together. Miss Temple knows—"

But Miss Temple had disappeared.

"Albert," said Norman, in a low voice, "never again jest with me on that subject. I *hate* that girl—I actually hate her. She is the wiliest coquette that ever breathed. I did think once I loved her; her beauty and winning allurement of manner fired my boyish feelings. But I needed only a slight experience in the capacity of a lover, to read in her actions a cold heart and a shallow understanding. She is vain, proud, and silly; though brilliant, accomplished, and lovely. She is a show—a dazzle—a bright but hollow and useless mask, without either head or heart. She has taught me a lesson in woman which I shall not lightly forget."

"But I see you with her often, and in friendship," said Moreland.

"Certainly," replied Norman, laughing; "you would not have me challenge her? When I say *hate*, I mean I dislike the class of characters to which she belongs. Individually, I would not injure her either in reputation or feelings. She is a gay, and can be a fascinating, woman; and perhaps I am somewhat severe upon female character. Besides, the world has placed me among her rejected lovers. I would do away the impression, as I do

not deserve the honour. I meet her often in society. We have had no definite misunderstanding. This change in my sentiments has been the work of silent observation. I found a glittering toy, thought it diamond—examined it, and discovered it to be but common glass. Yet I do not wish, and indeed have no right, to withhold from her the civilities due to a lady."

"Come, come," said Moreland, "I think I see through all this. You are a little jealous. That French count, who has set the whole town crazy—"

"What! that Clairmont!" interrupted Norman, with an expression of contempt—"that idle fop! that vain and forward coxcomb!"

"Ah!" cried Moreland, "*that* is the very language of the green-eyed monster."

"I tell you," said Norman, "I would attend his union with Rosalie Romain as cheerfully as you."

"But you will not have an opportunity," returned Moreland; "I have myself, to be sure, remarked his admiration for Miss Romain."

"And hers for him?"

"What could she do, Norman? You know, in your heart, that he is the most elegant dog in the world, and turns every woman's head he looks at; his address—his person—his accomplishments—his fortune—the exceeding propriety and elegance with which he speaks the English—his high rank—and that *guitar!* and he has nothing on earth to do but to idle and make love. The girls are flattered—men envious—husbands look on him obliquely—and lovers (the Lord help them!) are jealous,—Mr. Norman Leslie among the rest. But hear me to the close. As for that beautiful creature Miss Romain—why, we are not Turks—the formidable rival can marry *but* one—and this *one* cannot be

Miss Romain; for, to my certain knowledge, he is paying particular attention to—"

"And so, *I* am to take the lady if *he* will not!"

"Well, well, well, Norman! you need not flash your eyes so sternly on *me; I* am not a count in the French army."

"Nor he either," said Leslie, quickly, and in a low tone, "I'll wager my life. The strongest suspicions have crossed me. You know how he appeared here—under what odd circumstances; his baggage lost—his boat overturned—and the devil to pay: so that he might or he might *not* be what he professes. Count or no count, I have an instinctive and an unconquerable aversion to that man. I have noted trifles in him which argue dark things."

"Oh ho!" said Moreland, laughing; "what havoc love can make in the brain of a sensible fellow! Here you are, crammed with sentiment and romance, and as full of quarrel 'as my young mistress's dog!' You doubt the honour of a noble whom no one else could dream of doubting, and you scornfully dismiss the character of a young girl whom all the rest of the company are dying in love for. 'Good Heaven! the souls of all my tribe defend from jealousy.'"

"Love or hate," said Norman, thoughtfully, "I do not like this sprig of foreign nobility. If this be the stuff of European nobles, Heaven send that they keep hereafter the other side of the Atlantic. I half fancy sometimes that my aversion is reciprocated; and I have a gloomy presentiment that we shall one day cross each other."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Moreland; "you must be wary how you approach him, for his anger is no jest. He is, as perhaps you know, the most deadly shot in the country: this is the most conspicuous among his accomplishments. He plants a pistol-bullet at the farthest distance, ten times out

of twelve, upon a silver sixpence. I have seen him do it; and they *do say* that he has no desire whatever to keep this remarkable skill a secret."

"Doubtless," replied Norman; "he fancies, I suppose, that such a power will awe the plebeian crowd whose dinners he eats—whose wives and daughters he makes love to—"

"And whose matches he breaks off," interrupted Moreland. "He has already, as you know, killed a man at the South; and, 'fore Heaven, I believe that is one reason the women love him so."

"Is there a character on earth," said Norman, "so base and execrable as a professed shot? It would be no bad deed to send back this malapert poppinjay with a broken wing. One looks without horror at the worst calamity of a professed duellist in a duel."

"What a husband he will make!" said Moreland; "and how many of these women are dying for him because only of his nickname—those five cabalistic letters which compose the word count! Yet, truth to say, he is an elegant fellow."

"I wish Miss Romain no worse fate," answered Norman, "than success in her evident designs to entrap him."

"And you are really off there, then?"

"I tell you, Albert, if this bright-lipped girl who enchants these people here so to-night, with the wealth of Crœsus, were to be had for the asking, and Flora Temple without friend or fortune were to be wooed and won by perseverance, I could rather choose the latter, and live with her in a desert, than trust my happiness with yonder unfeeling flirt. As for the Frenchman, I wish him success—they are fit for each other; and the Lord help them, say I, by their winter fireside."

"Phoo! phoo!" said Moreland, "such people have no winter fireside; they live in the world and

for it, and not for each other, nor with each other: and, between you and me, dear Norman, I am glad, and so will Mary be, that you have escaped from this syren; but then, as I live, it's Flora Temple."

"No, Albert—no!" replied Norman, rather hastily; and then falling into a more contemplative manner—"Flora Temple is not for me neither. She is one of your intellectual women—a passionless, self-possessed, unloving nature—soft and winning, I grant, but without warmth. She has a heart, doubtless, but it is not formed for love. No gentle thought-wanderings—no fond wishes or alarms; you never saw a cloud or a flush upon *her* brow. I am sure she would ridicule a lover to death. I like a woman with a *soul*. Some rich automaton, with all the external trappings of dignity and fashion, will marry her, just when mamma says, ere the bloom of bellehood has passed utterly away. She will not resist; she will have no reason for resistance, for she will adapt herself to the caprices of one man as well as of another. There will be a wedding-company—calls—cards—and jams; ices will be eaten—champaign spilt—compliments paid; there will be blushes, smiles, wishes, witticisms, and congratulations; years will roll on, and Mistress Flora, whatever her name may be, will bud and bloom, fade and fall—a good wife, an exemplary mother, and—I heartily hope—an indulgent and contented grandmamma. She will live and die—be mourned and forgotten, all in the forms and fashions prescribed by propriety and custom; and there will be the end of her. I *hate* cold women, and Miss Temple is cold as ice."

Poor Flora! How he slandered her!

The two friends parted; and Norman followed the tide as it flowed around the room, sometimes pausing to address an acquaintance, sometimes to exchange a word with a belle.

"Ah! Mr. Leslie," cried Miss Romain, "you come opportunely. Here are Miss Morton and myself actually deserted, wandering about like two princesses of romance. You are a true knight-errant, and shall be our champion."

"Happy chance!" replied Leslie, extending his arms; and they accompanied him on his rounds.

"Dear me!" cried Miss Morton, "I thought Count Clairmont was to be here. It is now twelve o'clock."

"He never comes till late when he means to remain," said Miss Romain; "but, favoured as *we* are, I had quite forgotten him," added she, looking expressively at Norman. "Come, Mr. Leslie, for mercy's sake say something; you are as dull as a philosopher."

"I *am* a philosopher, Miss Romain," said Norman, gravely.

"Since when, pray? and wherefore, my noble knight?" asked Miss Romain, again looking up familiarly in his face, and hanging on his arm as a happy wife might lean on the support of a loving husband.

"All men—that is, all wise men," pursued the youth, "grow philosophical as they grow old; and one surely needs philosophy when danger hangs on either arm, and looks him in the face."

"Meaning *us!* well, that is about as inappropriate a speech for a philosopher," said Miss Romain, "as I ever heard. Did you hear, Maria, his pretty speech?"

"Yes, often. To-day, when he called at our house—"

"Called—who called?"

"Why, the count. Dear me! you were speaking of Count Clairmont, were you not?"

"There must be *two* philosophers in our circle," said Miss Romain to Leslie, with a significant

smile, and in a whisper, which again brought her mouth almost against his own. Her languishing eyes were lifted to his; he felt her breath on his cheek. At this moment his glance encountered that of Miss Temple; her gaze was calm as a sister's. Why did a feeling of disquietude—of confusion—shoot through his heart?

A few moments after, his gay companions were called away to the dance, and he was left again alone. As he stood, his eye, involuntarily passing over the varied assembly of countenances, sought out and reposed on the face of Miss Temple.

"After all, how much more truly beautiful she is!"—thus the youth thought, as he stole his unobserved study of her features—"how much more noble and *wife-like* than Rosalie!" As he gazed, the rose which ornamented her hair fell unnoticed; he picked it up.

"Miss Temple, you have dropped your rose; allow me." She reached forth her hand, received it with a graceful acknowledgment, and was about placing it in her hair. What would he not have given to place it there himself! He never saw her look so serenely, so perfectly lovely.

"Why, Leslie!" exclaimed the brother of Miss Morton—a handsome young fop, with his hair curled profusely around his forehead—and bowing low with the conscious elegance of a compliment, "your heart must be marble! Had that fair tribute fallen to *me*, I should have cherished it as a relic out of Holy Land."

How often it happens that the bosom struggling with pure feeling is denied the power of expressing it; while nature gives the envied eloquence to the careless and the gay, who neither know how to value nor how to use it.

"If you esteem the poor rose so highly, Mr.

Morton," said Flora, "pray take it. Perhaps it will be as potent as other relics."

Morton bowed; received the flower—kissed it—and placed it in his bosom. That careless act of Flora's cost him a heartache. Norman knew the simple youth, and smiled.

"What a fine creature, Leslie—hey?" said Morton, affectedly, a few moments afterward. "But don't deduce any false conclusions from this kindness of hers to me. It is mere civility on her part; nothing more, upon honour. But she *is* a splendid article, I declare—isn't she? Halloo! who is that dashing fellow with her?"

"Count Clairmont," said his sister. "Now, just as if you did not know the count, and he at our house every day of his life!"

"Why, so it is!" exclaimed Morton. "Well, I never—I did not know him with his back turned, I declare. He's a fine-looking fellow, though—isn't he! And how he does dress. Did you ever! How he talks and laughs to Flora—don't he! Why, he'll get her for the next cotillon—won't he? and I have very particular reasons for wishing to dance with her myself. Excuse me, ladies; by-by, Leslie. Why, only look! 'Pon my soul, I declare, I never—"

He broke away abruptly through the press. Leslie saw him reach the spot where Flora stood, and bow with a violent and rather determined attempt at grace. Flora's slight responsive bend of the head implied assent; and whatever were the "very particular reasons" for Mr. Morton's wish to dance with her, they were now to be gratified.

"Come, your hand for this cotillon," cried Howard to Miss Romain.

"With all my heart," answered she.

"That is saying a great deal," said Miss Temple, with an arch smile, as she was passing.

Miss Romain blushed, or seemed to blush.

"Gentlemen will please take their partners," cried the manager of the ball, clapping his hands.

The field was now much clearer. Some had gone off into the card-rooms, and some were at the *bufet.* A space had been gradually occupied by the dancers sufficiently large to enable them to walk through the figures; and a group of girls ranged themselves in their places: Howard with Miss Romain, Morton with Miss Temple, and the count with a tall young lady newly out from boarding-school—full of sentiment, blushes, and delight. It was evident, from her frequent repetition of "my lord," that the phrase was a favourite one, and redolent of recollections of Lord Mortimer and other heroes of circulating libraries.

"How uncommonly lovely the American women are," said the count.

"Oh! my lord," with a slight courtesy.

"When I was in Greece—"

"Have you *really* been in Greece, my lord?"

"Why, I almost lived in the Parthenon."

"The what, my lord?"

"The Parthenon. I worshipped—I was fairly in love with it."

"In *love?* oh, my lord!" and the blooming young lady cast down her eyes, and blushed decidedly.

"And, as I was saying, there was a young Greek girl—"

"A young Greek girl, my lord?"

"A most lovely and glowing creature—"

"Oh! my lord."

"And she was very, *very* like you."

"Dear me, my lord! like *me?*"

"You have the same expression about the eyes; and the mouth has the same—"

"Forward two, and cross over," cried Miss Romain: "why, Miss Thomson, are you not in the cotillon?"

Miss Thomson was so lost in conjecturing what sort of an *expression* the count could mean, that she missed her turn.

"We have such delightful weather, Miss Temple," cried Morton.

"Truly charming, Mr. Morton. Broadway was brilliant this morning."

"Indeed!"

"I never saw a gayer scene."

"Ah! really."

"There is a new—"

"Miss Temple," stammered Morton, apparently unconscious that he interrupted her.

"Mr. Morton!" she replied, in some surprise at the extreme embarrassment which had suddenly come over him.

"I—I—I was going—to beg—Miss Temple—I was going—I was going—"

"Well, why don't you go," said Miss Temple, unable to repress a smile; "the whole cotillon waits for you."

And the young man skipped forward and hopped back awkwardly, blundering through the figure with a burning face. The count, eying through his glass, whispered Miss Thomson, who suddenly laughed outright; but covered her mouth in girlish confusion with her folded handkerchief.

When Morton had accomplished his manœuvres with a secret curse upon the inventor of dancing, he returned with redoubled determination to strike the blow. Miss Temple, with a large fortune settled separately upon her, and with yet higher expectations from parents, uncles, and scores of

wealthy relatives, so young, so gentle, and so beautiful withal, was a prize indeed.

"I was about to say, or rather to ask," resumed Morton—"to ask whether your affections—"

"My *what!*" cried Flora, aloud, and really thrown off her guard by this sudden sentimental turn in the conversation.

"Hush, for heaven's sake!" cried Morton, in a vehement whisper; and he was then compelled to jump forward again.

Miss Temple opened her large blue eyes in astonishment and some alarm. But the last thing a modest woman thinks of a man is, that he loves her—especially when such a sentiment has never entered into her own bosom. She continued the dance therefore frankly, not fully trusting to the evidence of her ears, with an inward prayer that the palpable squeeze which Morton bestowed on her hand might be the result of awkwardness rather than of intention. She saw, however, the full necessity of being on her guard; for though no one could ever be farther removed from her "affections" than Mr. Frederick Morton, yet she was aware that mistakes on such subjects had happened before, and might again. The youth, half-desperate, but resolving not to be repulsed by what he deemed the coquetries and caprices of her sex—building largely upon the rose which he had ostentatiously stuck into his button-hole, and at heart as assured as Malvolio that his mistress regarded him with favouring eyes—approached her again, and with a decisive resolution in his manner said, in a low tone,—

"To be short with you, Miss Temple (for it will be time to forward two again presently), I wish to inquire—for very particular reasons—whether—you are engaged?"

"I am," said Flora.

"Miss Temple!" exclaimed Morton; "I declare —upon my soul—the deepest regret—"

"If you had only spoken before, Mr. Morton," said Flora.

"Oh, Miss Temple! may I ask—so far—as to inquire—to whom?"

"Indeed, I do not think I can remember their names; but I am engaged to several."

"Oh, Miss Flora! I declare," said Morton, "my heart is relieved from a whole mountain."

"Heavens! Mr. Morton, a whole mountain! That must be a very great relief."

"Very," said Morton; "but the engagement *I* meant—" he laid his hand upon his breast.

"Why, Morton!" said the count, "what can be the matter with you? forward, my good sir—forward."

And the disappointed lover *sachezed* forward with a rueful countenance, inwardly vowing vengeance against the count, and scarcely knowing whether he was on his head or his heels. He cut a pigeon-wing at the end of the figure, and again approached his mistress with a more collected and bolder mind.

"Miss Temple," he cried, "my feelings—"

The sudden cessation of the music here rendered the two last words rather more distinctly audible than the susceptible speaker intended. Flora actually blushed; for it was evident that so pathetic an exclamation could scarcely be the beginning of a conversation, and, by the surprise manifested in their countenances, it was clear that many of the bystanders had heard it. Howard, who was standing near, seized the unfortunate Morton with his thumb and finger by the lappel of his coat, gazed into his face with a look of burlesque sympathy, and exclaimed,—

"Your *feelings*, Mr. Morton? you *don't* say so!"

"I do believe, my lord," said Miss Thomson, with the air of one who has just discovered and is considerably astounded by an extraordinary secret —"I do believe, my lord, that Mr. Morton has been *making love*."

"You are with me for the next cotillon, Miss Temple?" cried the count.

"It is of no use," muttered Morton; "I declare —I never—that infernal count in the French army! But *I'll* teach him—" and his passions were really inflamed by beholding his rival basking in the smile of the delightful girl whom, in the language of the novelists, he wished one day to "make his."

After the cotillon, the count resigned Flora and took her mother. Mr. Temple was in another room at the whist-table. What those husbands' hearts are made of!

"Count!" said Mrs. Temple.

"Dear madam?"

"You have been dancing with Flora."

"An angel!"

"Is she not? and just as pure and amiable as she is lovely."

"When I was in Vienna," said the count, with his hand on his cravat, "I knew a young duchess—"

"Like Flora?"

"Not half so *distinguée*, but still like her."

"Well!"

"I knew her—I admired—and—"

"And you loved—"

"No, I could not love; because—although the lady herself was kind enough—yet she had not that sense—that soul—that radiance of mind, if I may say so, which Flora has."

"Would they admire Flora at Vienna?"

"She would turn their heads."

"And they hers."

"What a sensation she would produce at court!"

"I have half a mind to let her go."

"Do! Let me take her."

"But what should I do without her?"

"Come you with us, and see the great world."

"One never knows when you are in earnest, count."

"You are looking splendidly to-night," said he, half-whispering in her ear.

"Nonsense," said she, tapping him on the shoulder with her fan.

"With you two, your country would be well represented at any court in Europe."

"Ah! you men! What can silly girls do, when we women let you talk so!"

"I could worship Flora to-night," he said, in a yet lower tone; "only—"

"Only what?"

Again he half-whispered in her ear.

"Go," she exclaimed, tapping him once more with her fan—"go; you are positively dangerous."

She left him as she spoke, and the last words were uttered looking back.

"But where is Flora?" said Mrs. Temple.

Flora had disappeared.

In the midst of the gayety and flash of the revel, a servant entered with a note for Mr. Leslie.

"By your leave, fair wax," said the youth.

A few lines were scrawled in evident haste—"Urgent affair—without a moment's delay—at the B. Hotel—room No. 39—up-stairs—wait with impatience—particulars when we meet—Yours till death—Frederick Morton."

CHAPTER VII.

A ludicrous Incident, which, as ludicrous Incidents often do, grows more serious towards the close.

"He is a devil in a private brawl: souls and bodies hath he divorced three." *Twelfth Night.*

When Leslie reached the B. Hotel, which was about one minute's walk from Mrs. Temple's, he was ushered by a man in waiting to "No. 39, up-stairs;" where he found Morton, with his hands thrust into his pantaloons pocket, pacing, with long strides, to and fro across the floor, half beside himself with passion.

"Thank you, thank you, Leslie," he cried, grasping his hand with strong emotion—"thank you, my dear fellow. I declare I you are a brave man and a true friend."

"You have not called me, I trust, to the B. Hotel, 'room No. 39, up-stairs,' merely to tell me that?" said Leslie, smiling.

"No, my dear boy; that puppy—that coward—that insolent—impudent—impertinent—"

Tears of rage spoke what simple adjectives could not express.

"Who?"

"Why, that d——d French count."

"What, Clairmont?"

"You know the scoundrel makes love to all the women in town, without reference to age, size, or

situation. For the last week he has taken my sister—"

"Well."

"She is already crazy about him, and puts on airs as if she were a countess. We *did* think he was going to marry her *quite*, but—(by heavens! *if I* had him here—)"

"Well, well, my good fellow, go on."

"This night his lordship (*I'll lordship him!*) has paid such marked attention to Flora Temple, that, as a brother, I was compelled to resent it." He raised his chin a little in the air, and, lowering his voice, added, "Besides other very particular reasons concerning Flora herself."

"Other reasons! why, what is Miss Temple to you?"

"*That*," very emphatic, "you will know presently."

"And how did you resent it?"

"In the first place," said Morton, "I gave him a look—you should have seen me—*such* a look! Even that alone, if he has the soul of a hare, he must notice. Besides—"

"But he has not the soul of a hare. He is a very brave man. He is a lion. He is a perfect devil," said Norman.

"I'll have satisfaction, notwithstanding," cried Morton.

"Satisfaction!" echoed Leslie; "I do not know what you call satisfaction, but are you aware that he is a dead shot?"

"You don't say so!" said Morton, turning slightly pale, and his boisterous fury undergoing a sensible abatement.

"He can snuff a candle ten times in succession," said Norman, dryly.

"You don't say so!"

"He can shoot a bullet out of one pistol into the muzzle of another."

"Good God! Now, Leslie, you are joking; you are, I declare."

"Not joking in the least," replied Norman; "did you never hear of the French general whom he killed one morning, before breakfast, for looking under the veil of a Veronese lady he was in love with?"

"Never, as I am alive, I do declare."

"But you are not alive—you are a dead man—you might as well leap into the crater of a volcano as go a step farther in this business. Then there's the duel at the South—have you forgotten that?"

"He shot his man there, too, didn't he?"

"Directly through the heart," said Norman. "I trust in heaven, Morton, you have not done any thing worse than look at him."

"Yes, but I have, though," answered Morton, now actually frightened at the recollection of his own audacity; "I brushed against him particularly as I came out, in the presence of Flora."

"You are a dead man," said Norman.

"Well, now, I declare that is exceedingly disagreeable."

"You will receive a challenge before morning."

"And here it comes," cried the astounded young man; again turning pale, as a servant entered, and handed him a note.

"Take it, Leslie."

"What!" exclaimed Leslie; "he is elegant in his indignation,—rose paper—a cameo seal—'Mr. Frederick Morton—B. Hotel, room No. 39.' Why, this is a female hand; and if I could credit my own eyes I should pronounce it—"

"It is no challenge," said the relieved lover, blushing, and brightening up. "Give it me. A challenge, indeed! I should like to catch him at it. I knew it was not. It is from Flora."

"Flora, again! Flora Temple—and to *you!*"

"Why, certainly, Mr. Norman Leslie. Is there any thing so *very* extraordinary in that? We men, you know! Hey, my boy? Now mum, and you shall hear. There is more in this world than is dreamed of in your philosophy."

"There is, indeed," said Norman, lifting his eyes in astonishment.

"Be mute, then," rejoined Morton, "and be instructed."

"Is it possible!" thought Norman, musing, while Morton threw his eyes over the letter. "What, Flora—Flora Temple! the high, the accomplished, the gifted! Who shall read woman!"

"Fire and thunder!" cried Morton. "Death and fury! Leslie, a flirt, by heavens! You yourself saw—" and the agitated and enraged youth crushed the letter in his hand, stamped his foot, and leaned his forehead upon his clenched fist.

"What is it, Morton? what is it, my good fellow?" asked Norman, really pitying his dilemma, but with the greatest difficulty repressing a smile; for, however severe may be the pang inflicted, a rejected lover has but a slender chance of sympathy.

"Leslie," said Morton, apparently swallowing, or rather gulping down, his disappointment with a ludicrous effort, and one or two bitter contortions of countenance—"Leslie, my dear fellow, it is a—that is—in short—it is nothing—a mere joke;" he forced an unhappy laugh; "but—it all comes," and he set his teeth, "I know it all comes from that d——d French count—"

"Don't swear," said a third voice.

"Halloo! who the devil's that?" cried Morton.

"The d——d French count, at your service, Mr. Frederick Morton," said Clairmont, who had entered unperceived, and now stood, his arms folded, a cool sneer on his lip, and his eyes sternly fixed upon Morton.

"Well, sir," demanded Morton, starting up, and assuming a blustering air and attitude, "by what authority, sir, do you intrude yourself into my room, sir?—this is my room, sir, while I am in it. I command you to leave it, sir—this instant, sir!" he made a motion of his head to Norman, as if calling upon his attestation to his courage, which, in fact, seemed not a little to surprise himself.

"I will leave the room, Master Morton," replied the count, coldly, "when I have accomplished the purpose which brought me into it." At the same moment he discovered a riding-whip, which he held in his hand. "You owe your life to Miss Temple."

"Leave the room, sir!"

"She observed your rudeness to me as you came out, and laid me under an obligation not to pursue it, as I should deem myself bound to do were you a gentleman."

"Leave the room, I tell you!" roared Morton, stamping his foot furiously.

"I do not, however, pass your insult altogether without notice. You are an impertinent rascal—"

"Leave the room, sir! or I will call the watch."

"You are an insignificant scoundrel and coward—"

"If you don't leave the room this very instant, sir—" shouted Morton, frantic with rage, and placing himself, with many pugilistic flourishes, in an attitude sometimes of attack and sometimes of defence.

"And I shall inflict upon you," continued Clairmont, with the most perfect composure, "the *chastisement* which your vulgarity deserves." He raised his whip, and followed the retreating Morton to the farthest corner of the room.

"Ask my pardon instantly, sir, or I flog you like a dog."

"I shall not ask your pardon, sir," bawled Morton, in a tone between the threat of a bully and the whine of a whipped schoolboy. "If you touch me, sir, I'll have the satisfaction of a gentleman. shall ask nobody's pardon, d———n, sir! Leave the room—don't strike me, sir—don't strike—Leslie, take off this blood-hound—waiter!—waiter!—here—watch!—watch!—Leslie, for God's sake!—you are a d——d scoundrel, sir!"

"If Mr. Leslie interferes," said the count, calmly proceeding in his design, and raising the whip, "Mr. *Leslie* will share your fate."

"Count Clairmont," said Leslie, who had already walked to his side, and in a voice so deep that the count turned and remained motionless to hear his words. "Count Clairmont, however reluctant I may be to interfere in the quarrels of another, I shall not be backward in assuming my own. Your remark is a personal insult. I have already remained too long inactive by the side of my friend. Permit *me* to inform you that this apartment is private."

"Mr. Leslie," replied the count, "your sneers and your threats are equally below my regard. This person I shall punish by the whip. *Your* claims upon my attention, sir, will be answered in a different way. *You* may not be so fortunate as to have a lady for a protector." Again he turned to Morton, and raised the whip.

"Count Clairmont," cried Leslie, "if you indeed be a count, hear me. I think you a scoundrel."

A blow of the whip was the only reply, and in an instant the young nobleman lay at his length upon the floor.

"Norman Leslie," cried he, rising, his face white as death, yet speaking with a low and altered voice, and regarding him with the fiendish fixedness of a

serpent about to dart his death-fang—"Norman Leslie, you have disgraced me, and I will have your heart's blood!"

"As you please, sir," replied Norman, sternly; "but now begone!" and, flashing back glance for glance, he stepped two strides towards his foe.

The discomfited noble paused a moment upon the threshold, and looked once more into Leslie's face, with a gaze which, in spite of himself, chilled even the boiling blood in the youth's veins. It was the black scowl of a demon. His features then relaxed slowly into a still smile—if possible, yet more malignant and inhuman.

"Remember, Norman Leslie," he said, "*I will have your heart's blood!* I am a Catholic. Here is a cross. Look—*I swear it!*"

He pressed the jewelled relic convulsively to his lips, and disappeared.

CHAPTER VIII.

In which the Reader will note the Difference between a young Gentleman's Thoughts of a Night and his Actions of a Morning.

"God bless me from a challenge!"
Much Ado about Nothing.

"WATCHMAN, what light burns yonder in the sky?" asked Leslie, as he walked home, alone, from Mrs. Temple's; "can it be a fire?"

"Why, it's the morning!" growled the surly guardian of the night.

"And so it is!" exclaimed Norman, looking at his watch.

The young man walked on; there was a fever on his cheek and in his heart. There is a singular power in the calmness of night, and in the holy silence and order of nature, upon the imagination of one suddenly freed from the giddy throng and glare of a revel. How it hushes the ordinary passions! The mind, which has been like a stream disturbed, settles into a wonderful clearness; and you see defined thoughts and minute feelings far down in its transparent depths. But night is nowhere so impressive and solemn as in the worn haunts of a mighty city. You behold the abandoned paths with something of the feelings with which you pause among the ruins of an ancient town. True, in the one case ages have rolled away since the solitude was broken by eager and thoughtless steps; and in the other, only hours: yet the effect upon the observer is strangely alike. The human sea has washed from its shores, and left the marked and naked channels exposed to the eye. The clash and roar of worldly interests have died away: you tread the solemn aisles, half-disengaged from earthly anxieties and excitations, with the cold and passionless loneliness of a spectre. Are there those sleeping around who have awakened your hatred? how its secret fires seem dimmed and burned out! Can you look upon the heavens, strown with mysterious and eternal worlds, lying in their same bright places for ever!—on which all the great of history, Homer, Socrates, and Alexander, Sylla, Cæsar, and Pompey, Mohammed and Jesus, have fixed their eyes—upon which, the startled imagination cannot conjecture for how many thousand years to come, other immortal heroes and poets may gaze,—can you look upon them, and *hate* one of the myriads who are floating away with you, beneath their calm faces, like the specks that hang

in their beams? Can you—exalted, purified as your mind then is—hate any less object than those evil principles, those tremendous passions and vices, which have clouded the paths of human beings with darkness and wo?

But if you have been guilty of a rash action, if you have been the yielding victim of some momentary impulse or local interest, how wondering and abashed are you in those holy moments! How noble, then, does virtue appear! How vast and high seems love! How unutterably insignificant and mean those motives and influences which tempt the energies and guide the destinies of the human race!

The waning moon was high in heaven; and her faint light yet touched the surrounding objects with edges of silver. The long vistas of densely-built streets, with their silent and deserted pavements and closed shutters, stretched away from Leslie's eyes. No one was to be seen, but a dog that stole up timidly, crouching, and placed his head under the hand of the night-wanderer, as if with a human weariness of the death-like solitude; and here and there a watchman leaning in the shadow, and ever and anon striking his club sharply against the stones—a signal answered by others in a similar way, and faintly heard through the distance of the echoing streets. Above, the stars had faded in the opening light, all but a few large and lustrous orbs, which lay scattered about the pearly void, kindling and burning like lumps of soft fire. Norman paused, and bent his eyes upward; one bright planet, the largest in heaven, hung before him.

"How apt the emblem is!" he thought. "And the great poet in this, as in all things, how wonderfully he has written! Yon 'bright particular star'—in one exquisite phrase, what eloquence!

what power! How it images the beauty, and fervour, and worship of love! Thus *she* glides on—ever calm, bright, and pure—above the earth, though shining on it. Who will reach her! Who will win confiding looks from those laughing eyes, and veil their young mirth in the tenderness of love! Whose hand will put back, unreproved, the hair from that brow! Whose bosom will beat beneath that graceful head! Whose rich blessed lips will print on that sweet mouth the kiss of an adored, a happy husband! What! Clairmont! Can her dreams be of *him?* Can *he* comprehend her angelic nature? What if she love him? What have I done? Rather my hand should wither than injure one sanctified by her affections. My worship for her cannot pause upon her own matchless person. It would protect all she loves. Yet what must I now do? A duel! I—who have pretended to *think*—who have professed principle and morality; I—who have thought myself the independent master and controller of my own actions; I am now plunged into a duel! I have chosen murder, or self-murder, for a companion. Reason, religion, bid me withdraw; but yet I cannot: I have gone too far; I must proceed. My father—my sister—should I fall, what will be their feelings? Should I triumph, what will be my own? In death all will despise, and in life all will execrate me: she, perhaps, of all, the most. This Clairmont—why do I hate him? Why should I seek his blood? Why should I blacken and sear my soul for ever with a deed inhuman, abhorrent, ghastly, against man, against nature, against God? What goads me to this?—the finger of the scorner! the laugh of the fool! Clairmont falls beneath my aim; and with Clairmont, how many others fall? If Flora loves him, her young heart is crushed. How many others

are connected with him by human sympathies? —perhaps a mother, a sister, a friend. My own hand will be smeared with human blood—vast classes of society mark me for a murderer—the domestic circle, now so happy, of my own bright home overshadowed with the gloom of death! But what do I say? *My* blood must flow. *He* is a sure and deadly enemy. The grave is then for me—a sudden, a gory, a youthful grave! Startling—tremendous—sublime thought! Earth, ever burning sky, light, sound, morning, the realm of the human race—beings that I have known, and loved—farewell! I quit you—I quit myself. This breathing form struck to nothing! this ranging and mysterious soul hurled into the dim realm of spectres! Broad and magnificent nature! high and fairy dream of existence! ere to-morrow night I plunge from you, headlong, into the presence of God. A horrid vision!"

Bitterly, bitterly did the youth lament his dilemma at that still and lonely hour. The crisis in which he stood, and its possible consequences, rose upon him in all their vast and naked horror; for the fumes of passion had vanished from his mind, and left it intensely alive to the reaction of reason.

The stars paled, the moon dissolved in a flood of new light, and the fiery beams of morning darted up the sky as he reached his home.

With the elasticity of youth, however, as the day broadened, his mind recovered a more cheerful tone, and he began to take brighter views of his situation. Unable to sleep, he found the refreshment of a warm-bath a tolerable substitute; and after a substantial breakfast, and renewing his toilet with even more than ordinary care, awaited in a more agreeable mood the expected message. Singular inconsistency of human nature, which per-

mits trifles so unimportant to share our minds with events of such fearful interest! A man carefully arranging his cravat-knot upon the brink of eternity!

At twelve, Captain Forbes of the army inquired for Mr. Leslie. He was shown into a private apartment.

"You are Mr. Norman Leslie?"

"I am, sir."

"You are aware—"

"I am."

"You understand that—"

"I do."

"This note my friend Count Clairmont begged me to deliver, with express injunctions to receive no apologies."

"Your friend's injunctions were as insolent, sir, as they were unnecessary," said Leslie, sternly and loftily.

"He apprehends—"

"His apprehensions are groundless."

"My friend Count Clairmont requests me to see this little matter brought immediately to a close."

"To-night, if you please. This morning—this instant!"

"No, no," said the captain; "*that* is 'immediately' with a vengeance. I am engaged to-night at the theatre; but to-morrow morning, at daybreak, if you can conveniently; for just now I am overwhelmed with occupations."

"Any accommodation of that kind which I can offer, either to Count Clairmont or to Count Clairmont's friend, will afford me infinite satisfaction."

"You will send me then a friend?"

"With the necessary instructions."

"Mr. Leslie, I have the honour—"

"Captain Forbes, your most obedient."

They exchanged the parting salutations stiffly, but courteously. As the officer withdrew, his retreating bow brought his body into contact with that of a new comer, whose precipitate haste rendered his momentum considerable.

"I do declare," cried Morton; "my dearest sir, I beg ten thousand million pardons."

"Not in the least," cried the captain, with military brevity, and made his exit.

"So-ho!" said Morton, regarding the note; "it has come then."

"My dear Morton," exclaimed Norman, "at present you must excuse me—"

"'Not in the least,' Leslie, as the captain says; not for the world," answered Morton. "You must not, you shall not fight that Clairmont. I have made some inquiries respecting his skill at pistol firing. I thought you were joking, last night, all the while. I declare I had no idea. I took it all for one of your solemn jests—"

"My good Morton—this afternoon—to-morrow morning—"

"But it is true. It is more than true. There are no two ways about it. Whew! Why, he is a devil incarnate! You are a dead man! He can snuff a candle! Remember the Veronese lady, hey?—the duel at the South—shoot a bullet out of the muzzle of—"

"Morton, let go my button, my good fellow—"

"But, seriously, Leslie, I have something to say to you. Here, help me wheel around this big chair; and I'll tell you what you must let me do. You see, *I*, being—"

But he was alone; Leslie having vanished the instant his back was turned.

"Well, I declare!" said the surprised young gentleman, after a full examination of the room, from the ceiling to the floor, the interior of the book-

cases, and under the tables—"well, I declare—I never—that's polite, anyhow! If he meet that infernal French count, there's an end of Norman Leslie!"

CHAPTER IX.

A Resolution, which will be condemned by some, applauded by others, and imitated by none.

> "'Fore God! man, do it. 'Tis a perilous strait:
> But being the only one—dragon or not,
> Forth your good sword, and on!"

DUELLING has not wanted many grave and able defenders. I do not allude to the victims of passion on the field. I speak of cool observers in the closet; advocates who, without denying its partial absurdity and its inadequate local effects, without contending that it is either a redress for private grievances, or a test of individual courage—in short, fully granting it to be an evil, yet assert that it is a necessary one, and that as an institution of society it produces a public benefit more than sufficient to counterbalance its particular disadvantages. But, say its opposers, are we to admit an evil for the sake of a consequent good? This, it is replied, is the pervading principle of human communities, and of nature herself. Evil, in working out good through the realms of both, is perhaps more efficacious than good itself. What is it that has left the heavens a vault of stainless azure? It is the same tempest which shattered the oak and swept away the harvest. What, at the present most remarkable period of human his-

tory, has sent abroad among mankind light, knowledge, and power—has lowered the audacious pride and weakened the monstrous sway of the few—has broken the fetters of the many—and raised the people to that broad and rightful possession of the globe plainly indicated as the intention of their Creator; what has effected this? an appeal to arms—the shock of bloody battles. War is an evil; but without war all mankind would now be slaves. What are the good effects of duelling? Its champions declare that it raises the tone of society, and polishes the manners. The consciousness of this standard of appeal is a check upon insolence and passion. Law punishes; duelling prevents. There are many species of assault upon a man's reputation or his person which either cannot be brought within the reach of law, or which, being brought within its reach, are but inadequately noticed. The law makes distinctions which gentlemen would not, and ought not, to make. The law looks to dollars and cents—not to feelings and sentiments: yet which, the former or the latter, exert the greater influence over human happiness? The law is a selfish creature. Infringe its own rights, however slightly, nay, however accidentally, and it crushes you with an unexamining, inexorable cruelty. The law is also an uncouth and gigantic animal. He stalks onward over the broad highways of life. He has to watch the whole country. He cannot always penetrate into the quiet by-paths and recesses of love and peace. Call a man a bad lawyer, or an unskilful physician, and the law awards damages, because the terms are injurious to the means by which he gains his livelihood. But post him as a paltry scoundrel, or a mean shuffling fellow, and the law holds forth no redress. If one, however unjustly, stigmatize you

as a liar in the face of the world—if he slander you to your mistress, or insult the lady who depends upon you for protection—the door of the legal tribunal is closed against you: but should you, with a manly indignation, or a chivalric impulse to defend woman, level the assailant to the earth—you are yourself the victim, and the law, which refused to defend you, punishes you for having defended yourself. The law was made to regulate the traffic of merchants, not the intercourse of gentlemen. Again, say the advocates of duelling, all men have not equal personal strength: something is requisite to place the weak upon a level with the strong. It is true that this ordeal is as likely to eventuate in the ruin of the innocent as the guilty; or even that the quarrelsome and brutal, by making pistol-firing a study, may acquire precision and skill not likely to be possessed by the peaceful, unaccustomed to unlace their reputations in brawls. But it is answered to this, that the more perilous the conflict of men is made, the less frequent will be those conflicts; and that what is lost by the individual parties engaged in a duel is gained by society at large in the general caution against quarrels, inasmuch as men will more care what they say and do when they know that an indiscretion may forfeit their lives.

These were the thoughts that revolved through the mind of Leslie as he walked forth with the purpose of seeking a friend. He was not one to sink before approaching danger; but notwithstanding the hackneyed sophistries with which he endeavoured to hush the voice of his reason, upon the folly and guilt of staking his life upon the impulses of a brawl and the passion of a moment, yet his constitutional sensitiveness, his imaginative and warm disposition, and his plain

common sense, combined to make him quail ever and anon at the stunning prospect of death or murder, which now seemed to block up and conclude his earthly career. I am not drawing the character of a coward, though I am aware that there are many gentlemen whom such a dilemma would agitate with fewer scruples of conscience,—those who follow war as a profession, and whose moral sense is blunted by habit; or the mere *élégant* of the *ton*, whose intellect and feelings are long ago usurped by the heartless dogmas of fashionable life. Much less courageous and elevated men may find themselves in the situation of Leslie, without shuddering. What they dignify as courage does not merit the name. In some it is want of reflection; in some, a savage habit; in some, brute obtusity, and an inability to reason on high and broad grounds. Many narrow and mediocre minds find in it a hope of importance which they can never obtain by other means, and are willing to risk an existence of which they have never learned to appreciate the value—or to commit a crime of which they have not the sensibility or reflection to perceive the horror—that they may enjoy the temporary triumph of newspaper notoriety, or strut the hero of a bar-room, insolent with impunity, among braggarts and bullies less bloody and renowned. Bodily courage is one of the lowest qualities which pass among the virtues. It is least connected with the nobler and more useful attributes of humanity, is shared by a greater number, and is more linked with the bestial portion of our nature. I am speaking only of that mere bodily courage which makes soldiers brave in war; or which induces a man to station himself deliberately, on some delicious summer morning, upon a piece of greensward, and let another leisurely aim and fire a pistol at his heart.

This brute courage, in which, after all, bulls and bears (amiable rivalship!) equal or excel us, gained its high reputation among the ancient nations who lived to grasp the possessions of their weaker neighbours; who had no other name for *virtue;* who were ignorant of that mighty *sense of right* which now, century by century, is entering more deeply into the human mind; and who fancied that the Superior Powers attended each contest, and took care that the honest party should have fair play. These opinions have been exploded, but the custom remains—a dark, unchristian wreck, like some time-worn pagan altar, where, strange to think, even to-day the high-priest officiates and the human victim bleeds.

As Leslie ran over in his mind the common arguments in support of the step he was about to take, his clear reason detected their fallacy. He acknowledged as a rational being their absurdity, their cold cruelty, and their monstrous guilt. He recoiled instinctively from pouring forth the blood of a fellow-creature, or his own. He doubted, with great propriety, too, whether the public could be a gainer by such a practice. He knew that, eventuate as it might, his own peace must be shattered for ever. He was about to rush on a crisis which reason and religion alike condemned. It was an act which neither Heaven nor earth would deem noble. None would even approve it, but those whose approbation he despised. The world's applause and future fame were denied him. He had not even a high and honourable motive in his own bosom to support him in this deep and secret despondency. Life was doubly dear to him now, for it began to be interwoven with the thought of Flora Temple; and in his heart he felt no stronger sentiment against Clairmont than simple contempt. He had not a friend on earth whom this measure

would not distress and shock; and he was driven to it neither by his interests nor his inclinations. Had *he* been the deadly marksman instead of his antagonist, he would have refused a meeting. He could not apologize; nor would apology have been accepted. If not, there would be a new degradation, a new insult—and both useless. Besides, even had he been wrong, would he be excusable in tendering an apology? It had been expressly declared that "no apology" would be received. But he was not prepared to confess himself wrong.

"No," he said at length to himself, with the deep determination natural in a high-tempered young man as society is organized; "this meeting *must* take place. It must—it shall. I am the blind victim of a dire, a fatal necessity. If there be *guilt*, let it rest on the community who countenance this atrocious custom. Let it rest on the *women* who smile upon the duellist, and among whom Clairmont ranks higher because he has killed a human being, and to whose laurel my death may add another leaf. I am myself without skill. He is a cool, a practised, a professed duellist. As such he is received and honoured in my own circle. Mrs. Temple avowedly admires him for his *courage*. Even Flora hangs on his arm, and smiles, and jests; even Flora touches that hand in the dance scarcely yet washed from the stain of a brave man's blood. They all know he glories in taking human life; and that he particularly piques himself upon an aim never known to miss its mark. That very peril which renders my destruction inevitable, renders my retreat impossible; for that would now seem cowardice which in less dangerous circumstances might be acknowledged as principle. Yet it is not *courage* which impels me. No—I will not deceive myself. What will pass for courage in me is only

hypocrisy. My heart sickens—my soul recoils—I shudder. It is *fear* which whips me on, and which startles me back. Not the fear of *death.* Were that death to be encountered for Flora—were I to meet a lion on the arena for her—were I to brave pestilence—chains—torture—how calm—how high—how *brave* I should be! But here I tremble at the sin—the ignominy—the deep wound I must inflict upon the heart of a father and a sister. I tremble to have all my glittering dreams and broad proud plans crushed by a cool, vile, heartless villain. But"—and he stepped with a higher and more solemn emotion—"my struggles are over. This 'terrible feat' *must* be done. My agonies and my doubts are alike useless and idle."

And with the power of mind which perhaps more accomplished duellists could not have commanded, he dismissed, at least for a period, the reflections which unnerved him. Indeed, after the first recoil, his strong nerves and manly heart grew stronger and manlier. Enthusiastic men—those at first most startled—are apt to meet sudden and extraordinary dangers, when once shown to be inevitable, with a mounting spirit, and a concentrated faculty of thinking and acting which breaks thrillingly in upon the common monotony of existence, and stirs up their souls like the blast of a trumpet. As he proceeded on his way, however, he could not banish the thought of Flora Temple. This charming and lovely girl had already gained strangely upon his affections, and her image was now received into his mind with new and inexpressible tenderness. It seemed that the very seriousness of his danger quickened and brought to the surface of his heart all those latent and powerful fires which had hitherto lurked in its most secret recesses. It was the dawning of a

new and powerful passion in a young and ardent character. It was a *second* love—which (the poets to the contrary notwithstanding) may be infinitely stronger than the first. The sentiment rests more upon the results of observation and comparison; and, by being better defined, is deepened and concentrated. It was but a few hours since he had left her—the fairest in the brilliant circle. How exquisitely her loveliness recurred to him as he had last beheld her: that perfect form, full of feminine grace and poetic character—that bright, sweet head—the tender, blue, speaking eyes—the smile, the parting smile which he had exchanged with her—perhaps a parting for ever! Then rose the other shifting images of the night. The glittering and remarkable beauty of Rosalie Romain—now cold to him—the ludicrous fury and perplexity of poor Morton—the cutting insult and sarcastic insolence of the count, which struck on his veins like lightning—the retort—the flash—the blow—the fray—Clairmont's demoniac look—and the hushed and starry heavens in his lonely walk home—all recurred to him, not with the sense of reality, but as the incidents of some melo-drama, or idle romance, or yet more idle dream. As he hastened on amid all the noontide splendour of the gay Broadway, he found it almost impossible to believe that he was in reality standing at last upon the edge of that fearful brink which appals alike the king, the philosopher, and the beggar—where they all must meet in the equal nakedness and weakness of mortal impotence and apprehension; that while around him glittered so much elegance, gayety, and commonplace bustle—while many a sweet, familiar face smiled on him as he proceeded, and many a friend of his own sex gave him, in careless haste, the passing nod of salutation—that he was stealing on-

ward like a thing of death, lent for a few hours to roam the earth, and destined ere to-morrow's sunset to be the tenant of a hasty and dishonoured grave.

A few moments (for we think much faster than we write) brought him to the house of Howard. He was not at home. Near the residence of Howard was that of Kreutzner, a brave and gallant young German student from one of those celebrated universities famed for romantic occurrences. He was a bold and attractive character, and one of Leslie's intimates. To Kreutzner, therefore, he went, and, beyond his hopes, found him in. They walked forth together, and Leslie had no sooner related the whole incident than Kreutzner remarked,—

"It is as I suspected. I meet Clairmont often at B——'s. I heard him, this morning, with a most singular expression of countenance, say to Forbes—'That Leslie is a man I have always hated. I *would wing* him, and so let him off; but, by G—, I will make an end of him!' Not to Philip's right eye, but to Philip's heart, he is to send his arrow."

"And shall I, then," cried Norman, flushing with indignation, and speaking, as he generally both spoke and acted, from impulse, while in one instant all his fine moral principles melted to air —"shall I throw away my life tamely? shall he live hereafter the gay Adonis of the ball, and extend to the touch of fawning girls the hand which has consigned me to a bloody grave?"

"What can you do?" asked Kreutzner; "are you an adept at the pistol?"

"No—and that Clairmont well knows."

"He will kill you dead as sure as he fires," rejoined Kreutzner.

"And I cannot for ten thousand lives," added

Leslie, "make the slightest move to retreat or explain."

"He has sworn to have your heart's blood. He will keep his oath."

"Kreutzner," said Leslie, after a long pause, and without any other alteration of countenance and manner than a slight paleness, a scarce perceptible tremour of the voice, which, however, vanished as he continued, and a calm and almost fearful determination in his eye—"Kreutzner, I have examined this subject, you will readily believe, with the greatest attention. Since this Clairmont last night fell prostrate beneath my arm, I have viewed my situation in all its bearings. Cruelty forms no part of my character. I cannot plant my foot upon a spider without a thrill and a shudder of painful compassion. I think *life* of all things the most mysterious and sacred; and to quench it, or lose it, of all calamities the most undefinably and tremendously awful. I know all this—all you will say—all the world will say; yet I see that I must die—and I will *not die alone.*"

"Leslie, for Heaven's sake—"

"Hear me: do not attempt to reason with me—do not attempt to change my resolution. You cannot do it. I never felt so perfectly, so strangely, so unutterably calm and fixed as I do now. I hate duelling. I know it is immoral. I know the penalty; but I now find in my soul what I never found there before—that concentrated principle of fierce and desperate self-defence which excludes every consideration except itself. I die, Kreutzner, my friend—I die, young, unhonoured; but he who has pushed me to this extremity does not know me. My mind is completely settled. Clairmont and myself to-morrow night sleep in the same red grave—make your arrangements—foot to foot—breast to breast.

God, Kreutzner, it is awful! but it is soul-stirring and sublime."

Kreutzner looked at his friend—his lofty step, his flashing eyes, his noble countenance, and stately form; and he thought, with almost a feeling of woman's tenderness, of the approaching moment which would lay them low in the dust.

"I have written letters to my father and to Julia," continued Leslie. "You will find them on my table in a large volume of Josephus. I will leave there also a note for Howard. He is a good fellow. Tell him I called on him first to support me in this somewhat serious affair, and that I love him. God bless him! with all my heart. And also, Kreutzner, I will—but no—why should I? No—I will not! Yet—should you ever see in the conduct of our friend Miss Temple—Miss Temple—any thing to make you believe she really regrets my death—"

"You are getting devilish sentimental," interrupted Kreutzner, hastily passing his hand over his eyes.

"Yes, Kreutzner, my dear friend," said Norman, "you deserve my confidence. Indeed, at this moment, I could not if I would withhold it from you. I do not wish to do so. I love Miss Temple, Kreutzner—I love her—dearly—deeply—tenderly; her image will be the last, the very last in my memory. Tell her so, Kreutzner—not at once—hereafter—on some mild and mellow afternoon in summer, when you shall be alone—with her—and when I—"

"Norman Leslie!" cried Kreutzner; "d—n it, man, who'd have thought this of me;" and, taking out his handkerchief—hemming and clearing his throat—he blew his nose sonorously, and availed himself of the opportunity to dry his eyes once

more. "Can I alter your determination to meet Clairmont as you propose?"

"No!" replied Norman.

"Then, d—n me, if I don't think you'll frighten him out of it. For if Count Clairmont of the French army be not at heart a complete coward, then John Kreutzner is no judge of cowards. Walk up Broadway with me: I'll tell you a story —a devilish good one, by-the-way; and, d—n it," he added, *par parenthese*, blowing his nose again, "I can finish it long before I get to Forbes's!"

CHAPTER X.

The German Student's Story.

"If this were played upon a stage, now, I would condemn it as an improbable fiction." *Twelfth Night.*

"I HAVE myself," said Kreutzner, "witnessed many duels; but we are not so blood-thirsty, generally speaking, as you moral Americans. We usually settled these matters with a sword, a better method, by-the-way, and more worthy of a soldier than your cold murderous pistol-firing. Any poltron may pull a trigger, but it requires the firm hand and steady eye of a *man* to manage the steel. However, as I was saying, when I was at *Jena* they called each other out as merrily as beaux and belles to a dance. It was but the treading on a toe—the brushing of an elbow; nay, an accidental look that fell on them when they wished not observation, and the next day, or, by St. Andrew, the

next hour, there was the clash of steel, and the stamping of feet on the greensward; and the kindling and flashing of fiery eyes—and plunge and parry, and cut and thrust, till one or both lay stretched at length—a pass through the body—a gash open in the cheek—the scull cleft down, or a hand off, and the blood bubbling and gushing forth like a rill of mountain-water. There were more than one of those fellows—devils I must say, who, when they found among them some strange student, timid or retired, whose character they were unacquainted with, or whose courage they doubted, would pass the hint out of mere sport—brush his skirt—charge the offence upon him—demand an apology too humble for a hare, and dismiss him from the adventure only with an opened shoulder, or daylight through his body."

"The ruffians!" cried Norman.

"Not in the least," returned Kreutzner, laughing; "you would have loved them, like brothers, had you known their hearts. It is all education and custom."

"But to the story, Kreutzner."

"There was among us one fellow named Mentz, who assumed, and wore with impunity, the character of head bully. He was foremost in all the deviltry. His pistol was death, and his broadsword cut like the scissors of fate. It was curious to see the fellow fire—one, two, three, and good-by to his antagonist. His friendship was courted by all; for to be his enemy was to lie in a bloody grave. At length, grown fearless of being called to account, he took pride in insulting strangers—and even women. His appearance was formidable: a great burly giant, with shaggy black hair, huge whiskers, and grim mustaches, three inches long, twirled under his nose. A sort of beauty he had too: and among the women—Lord

help us—wherever those mustaches showed themselves every opponent abandoned the ground. It was, at last, really dangerous to have a sweetheart; for out of pure bravado Mentz would push forward, make love to the lady, frighten her swain, and either terrify or fascinate herself. Should the doomed lover offer resistance, he had no more to do but call a surgeon; and happy enough he considered himself if he escaped with the loss of his teeth or an eye. He had killed four men who never injured him—wounded seventeen, and fought twenty duels. He once challenged a whole club, who had black-balled him anonymously; and was pacified only by being re-admitted, though all the members immediately resigned, and the club was broken up. I dwell on this character because—"

"Because you think he resembles Clairmont," said Norman; "go on, I am interested."

"At last there came a youth into the university—slender, quiet, and boyish-looking, with a handsome face, though somewhat pale. His demeanour, though generally shy, was noble and self-possessed. He had been but a short time among us, however, before he was set down as a cowardly creature, and prime game for the 'devils broke loose,' as the gang of Mentz termed themselves. The coy youth shunned all the riots and revels of the university—insulted no one; and if his mantle brushed against that of another, apologized so immediately, so gracefully, and so gently, that the devil himself could not have fixed a quarrel upon him. It soon appeared, too, that Gertrude, the lovely daughter of the *Baron de Saale*—the toast of all the country—upon whom the most of us had gazed as on something quite above us—it soon appeared that the girl loved this youthful stranger. Now Mentz had singled Gertrude out for himself, and avowed his preference publicly. Arnold, for thus was the

new student called, was rarely, if ever, tempted to our feasts; but once he came unexpectedly on a casual invitation. To the great surprise and interest of the company Mentz himself was there, and seated himself, unabashed, at the table, though an unbidden guest. The strongest curiosity at once arose to witness the result; for Mentz had sworn that he would compel Arnold, on their first meeting, to beg pardon on his knees for the audacity of having addressed his mistress. It had not appeared that Arnold knew any thing of Mentz's character, for he sat cheerfully and gayly at the board, with so much the manners of a high-born gentleman, that every one admitted at once his goodness, his intelligence, his grace, and his beauty; and regretted the abyss on the brink of which he unconsciously stood.

"'What, ho!' at length shouted Mentz, as the evening had a little advanced, and the wine began to mount: 'a toast! Come—drink it all; and he who refuses is a poltron and a coward. I quaff this goblet—fill to the brim—to the health and happiness of Gertrude de Saale—the fairest of the fair! Who says he knows a fairer is a black liar, and I will write the word on his forehead with a red hot brand.'

"Never before had even Mentz betrayed his brutal soul so grossly in words; but the guests, who knew that he was heated with wine, passed over his coarse insult with shouts of laughter, and drank, with riotous confusion, to Gertrude, fairest of the fair. As the gleaming goblets were emptied, and dashed rattling down again upon the table, Mentz arose, and, with the bloated importance of a despot, gazed around to see that all present had fulfilled his orders. Every goblet was emptied but one, which stood untasted—untouched. On perceiving this, the ruffian, leaning forward, fixed his eyes on

the cup, struck his brawny hand down fiercely on the table, which returned a thundering clash and rattle, and then repeated, in a voice husky with rage—

"'There is a cup full: by St. Anthony! I will make the owner swallow its measure of molten lead, if it remain thus one instant longer!'

"'Drink it, Arnold—drink it, boy; keep thy hand out of useless broils,' whispered a student near him, rather advanced in age.

"'Drink, friend!' muttered another, dryly, 'or he will not be slow in doing his threat. I promise thee—'

"'Empty the cup, man!' cried a third; 'never frown and turn pale, or thy young head will lie lower than thy feet ere to-morrow's sunset.'

"'It is Mentz the duellist,' said a fourth. 'Dost thou not know his wondrous skill. He will kill thee as if thou wert a deer, if thou oppose him in his wine. He is more merciless than a wild boar. Drink, man, drink!'

"These good-natured suggestions were uttered in hasty and vehement whispers; and, while the students were thus endeavouring to palliate the bloody catastrophe, the furious beast again struck his giant hand down violently on the table, without speaking, as if words were too feeble for his rage.

"During this interesting scene, the youth had remained motionless, cool, and silent. A slight pallour, but evidently more of indignation than fear, came over his handsome features; and his eyes dilated with emotion, resting full and firm upon Mentz.

"'By the mass, gentlemen!' he said at length, 'I am a stranger here, and ignorant of the manners prevalent in universities; but if yonder person be *sane*, and this no joke—'

"'Joke!' thundered Mentz, foaming at the lip.

"'I must tell you that I come from a part of the

country where we neither give nor take such jokes, or such insults.'

"'Hast thou taken leave of thy friends?' said Mentz, partly hushed by astonishment; 'and art thou tired of life, that thou hurriest on so blindly to a bloody pillow! Boy! drink, as I have told thee, to Gertrude, fairest of the fair!' And his huge round eyes opened, like those of a bull, upon a daring victim.

"'That Gertrude de Saale is fair and lovely,' cried the youth, rising, 'may not be denied by me. But—I demand by what mischance I find her name this night common at a board of rioters, and polluted by the lips of a drunkard and a ruffian?'

"'By the bones of my father,' said Mentz, in a tone of deep and dire anger, which had eer then appalled many a stout heart—'by the bones of my father, your doom is sealed! Be your blood on your own head. But,' said he, observing that the youth, instead of cowering, bore himself more loftily, 'what folly is this! Drink, lad, drink! and I hurt thee not! I love thy gallant bearing, and my game is not such as thou.'

"He added this with a wavering of manner which had never before been witnessed in him, for never before had he been opposed so calmly and so fiercely; and, for a moment, he quailed beneath the fiery glances darted at him from one whom he supposed meeker than the dove. But, ashamed of his transient fear, he added:—

"'Come to me, poor child! Bring with thee thy goblet—bend at my foot—quaff it as I have said, and—out of pity, I spare thy young head.'

"What was the astonishment of the company on beholding Arnold, as if effectually awed by a moment's reflection, and the ferocious enmity of so celebrated and deadly a foe, actually do as he was commanded. He rose, took the cup, slowly ap-

proached the seat of his insulter—knelt and raised the rim to his lips. Murmurs of 'shame, shame, poltron, coward!' came hot and thick from the group of spectators, who had arisen in the excitement of their curiosity, and stood eagerly bending forward, with every eye fixed upon the object of their contempt. A grim smile of savage triumph distorted the features of Mentz, who shouted, with a hoarse and drunken laugh—

"'Drink deep—down with it—to the dregs!'

"Arnold, however, only touched the rim to his lips, and waited a moment's silence, with an expression so scornful and composed that the hisses and exclamations were again quelled; when every sound had ceased to a dead silence:—

"'Never,' he said, 'shall I refuse to drink to the glory of a name I once loved and honoured—Gertrude, fairest of the fair! But,' he added, suddenly rising and drawing up his figure, with a dignity that silenced every breath, 'for *thee*, thou drunken, bragging, foolish beast! I scorn—I spit upon—I defy thee! and—thus be punished thy base, brutal insolence, and thy stupid presumption.'

"As he spoke he dashed the contents of the ample goblet full into the face of Mentz; and then, with all his strength, hurled the massy goblet itself at the same mark. The giant reeled and staggered a few paces back; and amid the shining liquor on his drenched clothes and dripping features, a stream of blood was observed to trickle down his forehead.

"Never before was popular feeling more suddenly and violently reversed. The object of their vilest execrations flashed upon them with the immediate brightness of a superior being. A loud and irrepressible burst of applause broke from every lip, till the broad and heavy rafters above their heads, and the very foundations of the floor,

shook and trembled. But the peal of joy and approbation soon ceased; for although this inspiring drama had so nobly commenced, it was uncertain how it might terminate. Before the tyrant recovered from the stunned and bewildered trance into which the blow, combined with shame, grief, astonishment, and drunkness, had thrown him, several voices, after the obstreperous calls for silence usual on such occasions, addressed the youth, who stood cool and erect, with folded arms, waiting the course of events.

"'Brave Arnold! Noble Arnold! A gallant deed! The blood of a true gentleman in his veins!'

"'But, canst thou fight?' cried one.

"'I am only a simple student, and an artist by profession. I have devoted myself to the pencil—not the sword.'

"'But thou canst use it a little—canst not?' asked another.

"'But indifferently,' answered the youth.

"'And how art thou with the pistol?' demanded a third.

"'My hand is unpractised,' replied Arnold. 'I have no skill in shedding human blood.'

"''Fore God! then, rash boy, what has tempted thee to this fatal extremity?'

"'Hatred of oppression,' replied the youth, 'in all its forms; and a willingness to die rather than submit to insult.'

"'Die then thou shalt! and that ere to-morrow's sun shall set!' thundered Mentz, starting up in a phrensy, and with a hoarse and broken voice that made the hearts of the hearers shudder as if at the howl of a dog or a demon. 'I challenge thee to mortal combat.'

"'And I accept the challenge.'

"'It is for thee to name time, place, and weapon; but, as thou lovest me, let it not be longer than to-

morrow night, or I shall burst with rage and impatience.'

"'I love thee not, base dog!' replied Arnold; 'but thou shall not die so inglorious a death. I will fight with thee, therefore, to-night.'

"'By the mother of Heaven, boy!' cried Mentz, more and more surprised, 'thou art in haste to sup in hell!' and the ruffian lowered his voice. 'Art thou mad?'

"'Be that *my* chance,' answered Arnold; 'I shall not be likely to meet, even in hell, a companion so brutal as thou—unless, which I mean shall be the case, thou bear me company.'

"'To-night then be it,' said Mentz; 'though to-night my hand is not steady; for wine and anger are no friends to the nerves.'

"'Dost thou refuse me, then?' demanded the youth, with a sneer.

"'By the mass, no! but to-night is dark; the moon is down; the stars are clouded; and the wind goes by in heavy puffs and gusts. Hear it even now.'

"'Therefore,' said the youth, apparently more coldly composed as his fierce rival grew more perceptibly agitated—'therefore will we lay down our lives here—in this hall—on this spot—on this instant—even as thou standest now.'

"'There is no one here who will be my friend,' said Mentz; so evidently sobered and subdued by the singular composure and self-possession of his antagonist, that all present held him in contempt, and no one stirred.

"'No matter,' cried Arnold; 'I will myself forego the same privilege.'

"'And your weapons?' said Mentz.

"'Are here,' cried Arnold, drawing them from his bosom; 'a surer pair never drew blood. The choice is yours.'

"The company began now to fancy that Arnold had equivocated in disclaiming skill as a duellist; and from his invincible composure thought him a more fatal master of the weapon than the bully himself. The latter also partook of this opinion.

"'Young man,' he cried, in a voice clouded and low; but stopped, and said no further.

"'Your choice!' said Arnold, presenting the pistols.

"Mentz seized one desperately, and said—

"'Now name your distance.'

"'Blood-thirsty wolf!' said Arnold, 'there shall be no distance!' He then turned and addressed the company.

"'Gentlemen,' he said, 'deem me not either savage or insane, that I sacrifice myself and this brutal wretch thus before your eyes, and to certain and instant destruction. For me, I confess I have no value in life. Her whom I loved I have sworn to forget; and if I existed a thousand years, should probably never see again. This ruffian is a coward, and fears to die; though he does not fear daily to merit death. I have long heard of his baseness, and regard him as an assassin—the enemy of the human race and of God—a dangerous beast—whom it will be a mercy and a virtue to destroy. My own life I would well be rid of, but would not fling it away idly when its loss may be made subservient to the destruction of vice and the relief of humanity. Here, then, I yield my breath; and here too this trembling and shrinking craven shall close his course of debauchery and murder. My companions, farewell: should any one of you hereafter chance to meet Gertrude de Saale, tell her I nobly flung away a life which her falsehood had made me despise. And now, recreant,' he said, in a fierce tone, turning suddenly towards Mentz, 'plant thy pistol to my bosom, as

I will plant mine to thine. Let one of the company cry three, and the third number be the signal to fire.'

"With an increased paleness in his countenance, but with even more ferocity and firmness, Arnold threw off his cap, displaying his high brow and glossy ringlets. His lips were closed and firm; and his eyes, which glistened with a deadly glare, were fixed on Mentz. He then placed himself in an attitude of firing; broadened his exposed chest full before his foe; and with a stamp of fury and impatience raised the weapon. The brow-beaten bully attempted to do the same; but the pistol, held loosely in his grasp, whether by accident or intention, went off before the signal. Its contents passed through the garments of Arnold, who, levelling the muzzle of his own, cried calmly—'On your knees, base slave! vile dog!—down! or you die!'

"Unable any longer to support his frame, the unmasked coward sunk on both knees and prayed for life with right-earnest vehemence. Again wild shouts of applause and delight, and peals of riotous laughter, stunned his ears. As he rose from his humiliating posture, Arnold touched him contemptuously with his foot. Groans and hisses now began to be mingled with several missives. Mentz covered his face with his hands and rushed from the room. He was never subsequently seen among us."

"And Arnold?" inquired Norman.

"Had been jilted, like many a good fellow before him, and as most men are who have to do with women. He was but a poor artist, after all; and though my pretty mistress encouraged him at first, taken by his person and manners, yet he was not high enough for the daughter even of a *baron*."

"And what became of Mentz?"

"That I know not. He, too, soon afterward vanished. Thus we meet and part in this world. But I shall never forget the shout when Mentz's knees touched the floor. It seems to me that the echoes may scarcely yet be quiet in the woods of Saxony."

"I understand the import of your story, Kreutzner," said Norman, after a moment's pause; "and am glad to find you coincide with my own views. It is my only chance, though a slender one. Fall one, fall both. I will not be shot down with impunity by this professed, cold-blooded duellist."

Kreutzner received his instructions accordingly.

CHAPTER XI.

In which the extremes of Happiness and Misery meet.

"Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure—
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure."

BURNS.

After Kreutzner left him Norman hastened home, and employed an hour in writing several brief letters, and making notes of certain arrangements which he desired to have attended to, in case of the event he anticipated. Having finished these duties, he resolved to call on Miss Temple; a melancholy satisfaction which, while the party of the preceding evening rendered necessary, was peculiarly in consonance with his own feelings.

Accordingly he once more bent his steps up Broadway, and almost the first persons he met were Mr. Romain and his daughter, in their carriage. The beautiful girl bowed her nodding plumes to him with that same dangerous smile to which, if report spoke truth, he, in common with many an unwary swain, had ventured too near. At a word from Mr. Romain, the coachman drew in his horses near the sidewalk, and a motion from Rosalie arrested his step.

"Well, Mr. Philosopher," she said, gayly and familiarly, "how does your wisdom hold out after such a night of worldly pleasure?"

"Failing—vanished and gone," he said, with animation.

"Come, Leslie," exclaimed the old gentleman, "we are about, after one or two turns, calling on the Temples, and—"

"And as pa is no 'philosopher,' and *I* am a sad hand at the business, we beg Mr. Leslie's company."

"With pleasure," cried Leslie; and in a few minutes he was rolling rapidly along towards the mansion.

"Mr. Leslie," said Miss Romain, after a brief silence, "do you know that you are very dull today, and very—"

"Stupid," said Leslie, rousing himself from his revery. "Guilty—guilty," he continued, gayly, "and I put myself upon your mercy."

"These women, Mr. Leslie," said Mr. Romain, "imagine all who talk nonsense fluently to be men of parts, and all who *think* more than they speak to be stupid—"

"No, pa—no," said Rosalie, "I *am* fully aware," and her eyes crossed those of Leslie, "that a gentleman may be a stupid companion to ladies without being actually a stupid gentleman."

"True," added Norman; "Miss Romain is right. All mankind, and womankind too, value things according to their power upon their own happiness. A Newton or a Galileo, listless, and wrapped up in the solitude of his own meditations, would meet, and would merit, less favour and cooler welcome from a lady than the youth who joined her in music, who sat by her side while she drew, who spoke to her in a language congenial to her taste, and who awoke in her feelings more interesting than the stars or mathematics."

"That is right," Mr. Leslie; "I would rather have a sweet bird for a companion than a philosopher;" she glanced her eyes again, half-archly, half-reproachfully, at Norman; "for a bird comes at my call—feeds from my hand—sings for me the warbles I have taught him—loves me only, and nestles in my bosom."

"Phoo, child, nonsense," said Mr. Romain; "men cannot always be chatting to girls. They have other matters in hand. They are involved in reflections upon business, or science."

"Old men, pa, like you, who have already wives and daughters; but the young gentlemen are not—or, at least," with another slight look and emphasis, "*ought* not to be so forgetful."

"Stuff, girl, stuff," answered the old gentleman, bluntly; "aged men or young, in these times, have enough else to do than to flutter and chirp about women. The wisest do not most excel in the parrot-talk of fashionable life."

"Parrot-talk, parrot-talk—why, pa!—Why, Mr. Leslie! how can you sit there, like an owl, and hear such calumnies on yourself, and me, and all our friends! As soon as gentlemen are married, and settled in life, they think all talk 'parrot-talk' that is not about commerce and politics."

"You are both right and both wrong," replied

Norman: "you, Miss Romain, to judge so harshly of all men who are not versed in the easy elegance of the drawing-room, and your father in too great lenity towards men of sense, who, in the pride of influence and learning, and in the importance of their various avocations, forget what is due to woman, even though she be not wife, mother, or sister; for, after all, we must acknowledge that, although she does nothing at our elections, and can neither build nor command our ships, yet she exerts a greater influence upon our happiness than they who can—"

The young lady clapped her hands in affected delight.

"There, pa! Do you hear that? Now you see a little severity upon these sensible men is very useful. See what a pretty piece of eloquence I have lashed out of Mr. Leslie."

The young lady went on with her usual liveliness. Sometimes she found in the huge omnibuses, of which large numbers traversed the town in all directions, loaded often with ten, fifteen, or twenty people, an object of merriment. Never had Norman known her to rattle on more unceasingly and more gayly. There was Miss L——, who had rejected thirty gentlemen actually already, at Washington, during the present session: her character was dissected in ten words. There was Mr. R——, the author, turning the corner, whose new poem she had just been reading, and which she criticised with wit and judgment. Her father, a plain and blunt man, rarely said much, and suffered her to run on from topic to topic as wildly as she pleased. In truth, she never appeared to Norman more like the singular girl she really was than on this day. She combined the most diametrically opposite features of character. At one time appearing contemptible and disagreeable; at another,

amiable, elegant, and delightful. With great intelligence, she was eccentric, and at times shallow; with much sensibility and temporary feeling, she was capable of committing the most deliberately cruel and heartless actions where the impulse seized her. No one, in theory, was more alive to the sense of right, and all the distinctions and shades of moral character. No one could deliver more fine sentiments; yet, in practice, she forgot all the rules which embellished her conversation. She was afflicted, too, with the mania for display. That passion weakened, hid, and, at last, nearly swallowed up all the rest. But for that, her character was not without much to excite esteem. But esteem was too homely a reward for her taste: she must create a sensation; she must hear the murmur of applause; behold the gaze of admiration; and detect the glance of envy. She was ambitious, by her personal charms and the allurements of her address, to attract attention from all about her; particularly from those the "daily beauty" of whose lives rebuked her meretricious accomplishments. From violations of strict propriety she advanced to those of delicacy, though none could more sincerely shudder at the approach of vice. Alas! she had yet to learn that the path from the road of virtue does not boldly strike out at once, but that its early deviations are scarcely perceptible: that it conducts the unsuspecting traveller many times aside through the most enchanting prospects, and returns her again safely to the right road, before it stretches away at last to the fatal precipice, from whose brink retreat is vain. She was sufficiently artful, too, to trespass, both in dress and manners, over the boundary line of modest decorum; but in a degree so imperceptible, as to pass well enough among her indulgent flatterers for commendable grace and innocent unconsciousness. She thus

succeeded in securing the admiration of a host of lovers, but she had long since forfeited the respect of Norman Leslie. Her evident hints to him, and her rather open compliments, even at this solemn crisis of his life struck him very unfavourably.

"The syren," he thought, as she leaned familiarly over towards him, with more than the unrestrained carelessness of a favoured sister: "these are the women who lower the sex. *Can* they be all thus? The sweet unconsciousness and irrepressible spirits of Flora, that careless, happy girl —can *they* be affected?"

He remembered Julia. *Her* he knew—her he loved; and her image re-established that confidence in woman which such as Miss Romain are too apt to undermine.

Miss Romain appeared conscious of the unfavourable effect which her usual artifices had produced on Norman, and gradually elevated the tone of her manner and conversation. When she pleased, she could be really a charming companion.

"Pray, Mr. Leslie," said she, "did you ever see such weather?"

"It is extraordinary, indeed. It is almost spring. Scarcely a trace of the snow left."

"What has softened the heart of the grim old winter so, I cannot conceive," she continued, "unless the account be received as orthodox, and these atmospheric phenomena imply another of her brawls with her jealous Oberon," and she recited, with exquisite taste, those celebrated lines—

——————"We see
The seasons alter; hoary headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hyem's chin, and icy crown,
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The chilling autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the 'mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which."

"How seductive, really, is this bland and balmy air!" said Leslie, a few moments afterward. "What breezes to welcome in the New-year, which generally strides to his throne amid all the glow of elemental war!"

"But when January and December thus forget themselves," rejoined Miss Romain," "their sunny smiles are sadly fleeting; like the civilities of ill-tempered people, soon amply counteracted by boisterous suddenness, or chilling ill-humour."

"Yet," added Leslie, "even like those civilities, they appear more agreeable and remarkable for their infrequency and contrast."

"Yes," returned his companion, "how heartily one *does* love a downright cross person when he smiles!"

"Warm-hearted summer and lordly generous autumn could scarcely be more smiling and friendly," said Leslie; "but it is an arrant piece of flirtation, for which we will doubtless have to pay by-and-by."

"But did you ever see Broadway so full and fashionable?" said she, as they returned several bows; "and the folks are getting affected, and begin to put on as many airs and graces as might become the beautiful June herself. See, the cloaks and thick shoes are left at home; the boa (pun accidental, Mr. Leslie) is a bore. Yonder is a gentleman actually wiping his forehead; and here, a fat lady, with a capacious parasol, shielding herself (forsooth!) from the fervour of the sun. Ah, wait a bit, good people. I should like to see that lady's nose a few days hence."

The carriage stopped at Mrs. Temple's, and the party were ushered into the presence of the ladies. Norman was surprised to find the count there; and apparently interested in conversation with Flora; who looked, at least in Norman's eyes, beautiful be-

yond herself. A slight colour overspread her cheeks. Miss Romain thought it sprung from the sudden sight of Leslie. Norman presumed it had been called up by the previous conversation of the count. The customary formalities were performed. Norman bowed loftily to his now deadly foe, when the latter stepped forward with an easy air, and, extending his own, shook the hand of Leslie with the careless ease of friendship. Never had he appeared more gay and self-possessed. Indeed, all the party were unusually animated; while Norman, with a heart of lead, strove in vain to throw off his gloom.

It was now that, with the unrestrained license of his imagination, he acknowledged, and painted in the most lively colours, his love for Flora; nor could he help, once or twice when their eyes met, betraying, with all their wordless language, the affection of his soul. After one of these looks, hastily withdrawn, as if the heart feared the treachery of the eyes, Count Clairmont casually uttered a sentiment evidently directed to Flora, and implying, by his air and manner, perhaps more than by his words, that he was on familiar terms with her as a favoured lover. It shot through Norman's ear and heart; and, forgetful of his restraint, with a cloud of melancholy on his brow, and a thought that a few hours would relieve him from a proud and unrequited love, he looked towards her again, and once more fully and unequivocally caught her glance. If ever woman's eyes had meaning, that glance said, "Dear Norman, believe it not! I love only you." For one instant their gaze rested and clung together, the delicious sense of vision entering with a heavenly power into each other's hearts and minds—an embrace of souls, perfectly returned, perfectly understood, and steeped in the confidence, the bliss, the enchantment of mutual

love. The blood leaped to the cheek and temple of the before desponding youth; his heart ached, his soul trembled with the shock of delight. "She loves me!" he inwardly exclaimed, with such exquisite happiness as he had never before known; and as much changed as if suddenly relieved from the malign influence of a vile enchanter, and lifted into the protection of some blessed spirit, he entered at once into the conversation with more than his usual ardour. But such ethereal gleams of joy shine on mortals only with a transient brightness.

"Norman," cried Miss Romain, coming suddenly round to him, and putting her arm unconsciously across his chair, so as to bring it nearly around his shoulder. This was the first time she had ever called him "Norman." He would have withdrawn, but she whispered in his ear—

"I have just heard a most profound secret."

"What?"

"Flora Temple—"

"What of her?" he asked eagerly, off his guard, and forgetting his distant manner.

"She is engaged to be married in two months" —and again, according to her frequent custom, she placed her lips to his face, so close as nearly to touch his cheek—"to Count Clairmont."

What a vast fabric of bliss dissolved in a moment! What a mighty world of gayety and splendour quenched in the blackest night!

"Pray, what is all this whispering about?" said Flora; but her manner was changed, and ill at ease. "Miss Romain, I have to beg the pleasure of your company to-morrow evening to a little musical party."

"Oh, delightful, delightful!" answered the gay girl, with a secret triumph at the havoc which she felt instinctively she had made.

"And Mr. Leslie," said Flora, "will do us the favour—"

"I cannot promise," replied Norman, coolly. "To-morrow evening I shall be necessarily absent."

"Well, sir, just as you please; if you can find leisure from more agreeable occupations, we shall bid you welcome. Come, gentlemen," she continued, "you are all to contribute something, as well as the ladies, towards the entertainment. Count, you shall sing those beautiful airs of yours; Miss Romain, the harp; and—Mr. Leslie, do you not sing?"

"Why, you have heard him frequently," said Miss Romain: "how forgetful!"

"True, true; I beg his pardon—I had forgotten."

"Let me tell you, in a duet," resumed Miss Romain, "he has few competitors."

"Are you practised in any with him?"

"Oh, a whole host!" cried Miss Romain. "There's 'Dear maid, by every hope of bliss'—'By Love's first pledge, the virgin kiss,' your favourite, you know, Norman—"

They were interrupted by the count, who, seating himself at the piano, ran his fingers over the chords, and sung with great taste a French air—directly at Miss Temple. It was expressive of successful love, and called forth 'a beautiful' from every lip. Flora received it with a gracious admiration; that, while in reality it might spring from wounded pride or love, and that retaliating propensity which, perhaps, not only woman, but all the victims of either sex, have experienced under the operation of the capricious little deity, who transforms character as he does all other wordly circumstances, still went to the heart of Norman.

"Iam, as the French say, quite *desolé* about this," said Flora, holding in her hand a small manuscript

piece of music. "It is the most touching and plaintive air I ever heard; but is without words. It has the melancholy pathos of a last adieu. I should fancy, now, that some lover—some passionate, faithful, chivalric lover—full of distant pride and timid delicacy, and doubtful of his mistress's favour, had sung it to her in the great hall, with his minstrel harp—with 'sandal shoon and scallop shell.' I will bestow my thanks upon any one who will supply appropriate words. Come, count, your pen has been idle too long."

"Why, Norman," cried Miss Romain, "*you* know this little air. It is the sweet *morceau* from Rosini, which you admire so much."

"But is Mr. Leslie an *improvisitore?*" asked Flora.

"I assure you," answered Miss Romain, with an ostentatious blush, "I know it by many evidences; and I am certain he will not refuse me *one* more."

"I fear," cried Norman, "the subject is beyond my comprehension."

"If I dare ask, after Miss Romain has pleaded unsuccessfully," said Miss Temple, with a sarcasm foreign from her nature, and very unusual in her; but she perceived instantly she had given pain, and, with another of those looks which, from such eyes, vibrate along the nerves of the lover with tremours of heaven, she added, "Come, Mr. Leslie, it is my *first* request."

"Give it me," said Norman; "I will—I will try; and it shall be my last effort at poetry."

Impulse, which so often betrays into dilemmas, sometimes conducts to points which sober dulness would never think of reaching. In a few moments Norman availed himself of a pause in the conversation, and addressed Flora:—

"Miss Temple, at your request, and on the hint of your imagination, I have thrown together a few

lines, superficial and imperfect of course; but, as the last effort, they may be pardoned any fault. You are to suppose, then, exactly the circumstances suggested by yourself. A fair lady is beloved by a knight, who doubts, perhaps with too much cause, whether his mistress approves, or even knows his attachment. On the eve of a fierce battle, in which he feels a certain presentiment that he must fall, he ventures, what before he had never by word or look ventured, to express a part of his feelings to the lady. She listens coldly—applauds without understanding; for she knows not that the humble minstrel is a knight who loves her, and who stands on the brink of danger. Thus eluding his purpose, she suffers him to depart from her presence, quite unconscious of their import and their application, till the subsequent day, when she hears that the gentle minstrel was a true knight, and that the lips which breathed music and love to her averted ear now lie cold in the earth."

"And what then?" cried Flora, unconsciously betraying her interest in the fiction.

"I do but jest, Miss Temple," said Norman. "Such events have often occurred, and will again. How ladies feel when too late aware of faithful love, cherished for them against hope by the unhappy, must depend upon them."

He raised his glance to her once more, and once more their eyes met. Miss Romain, uneasy at this communion, whether intentional or accidental, exclaimed—

"I dare pronounce that the false creature smiled just over his grave, as she had done on his living love, and wedded, peradventure, the warrior who slew him."

"And I," said Flora, "that she had loved him all the while in secret; and plunged in sudden anguish at his fate, withdrew from the world, and devoted

herself to Heaven. That is the way," she added, with a smile, "in all those old stories."

What passing shadow is too light for the aliment of love? As in the visions of the sleeper the most improbable and opposite fragments of adventures sweep on and mingle together, changing and shifting with a facility that renders all probable and real; now leading the spirit along skyish cliffs and endless oceans, through storms, deserts, battles, and death; and now melting into gardens, bowers, music, and bliss: so the victim of Cupid, however sober and sensible his mind may be in sanity, now finds the surrounding world breaking apart, and blending together with mighty and incredible revolutions—the vastest impossibilities at once within his grasp, the most trivial common places grown vast and impossible.

Norman, who one moment before saw the bolt of destruction fall on his hope, now—by the tone of a voice, the beam of a pair of tender eyes, by some half-unrepressed meaning in a word or an attitude—saw piles of gorgeous hopes, heaven-kissing mountains of joy, peer up before him, as he listened to the simple and sweet conjectures of the lovely girl. Without further preface, he begged her to accompany him; for though quite without the rapid execution of Rosalie, as often happens in similar persons, she was infinitely her superior in the intuitive power, taste, and feeling of an accompaniment. All felt curiosity to hear the lines; and as Flora ran over a sweet and plaintive prelude, her countenance, half flung back over her shoulder as she played, was raised towards his face, and in a rich sweet voice he sang the following lines:—

I.

"Farewell! farewell! some happier breast
Will beat beneath that lovely cheek;
Some worthier hand to thine be press'd,
Requited love to speak.
Oh, never more within thy smile,
Who thrills to feel it now shall dwell;
But, mouldering in his grave the while,
Forget this sad farewell!

II.

"The die is cast—the fate is sealed—
The dark, the fatal doom is spoken!
Oh! never be my heart revealed,
Until that heart be broken.
How much I loved, how low I knelt,
No ear shall hear—no tongue shall tell:
Such love as this, oh! who hath felt,
Or such a sad farewell!

III.

"Too true they prove thou lov'st me not—
Those sunny eyes, that tranquil brow;
Too soon will be my name forgot—
Alas! forgotten now.
And thou wilt own no fond regret,
No bursting pang thy breast will swell:
But, when to-morrow's sun is set,
Remember this farewell!"

There was something in Norman's manner and appearance at all times high and commanding; but, at the moment of his pronouncing the last line, his tall form and noble features were so strongly expressive of melancholy, yet lofty emotion, so regardless of all disguise and all propriety, that every one present, except the gentle girl herself, felt instinctively that he loved her devotedly. Even she, as he thanked her for the sweetness with which she had accompanied him, saw in his eyes a humid brightness, and betrayed embarrassment and softness unusual to her. The colour on her cheek, higher and warmer than he had ever seen

it before, told a tale that made each glance of Norman's a sweet and giddy rapture. Miss Romain again hastened to interrupt an interview which, although enjoyed in the presence of so many, was thus, by the natural freemasonry of love, invested with half the dear charm and confidence of a *tête-à-tête*. The count, in turn, sat down at the piano, with a jest and a compliment to Rosalie, and struck the keys to a merry and brilliant French air, as if to break the train into which the thoughts and feelings of all seemed to have fallen.

Old Mr. Romain had kept Mrs. Temple busily conversing in a distant corner of the adjoining room. As they entered, Norman remembered the necessity of his departure, took his leave, and with a swelling heart regarded Flora, into whose sweet blue eyes he might never look again.

But Fortune, who in some moods refuses what mortals deem their simple rights, and in others grants far beyond their expectations, now bestowed upon the youth the precise blessing which, of all others, at this moment, he most earnestly desired. A servant entered and informed Miss Temple that her father wished to speak with her in the library. Scarcely believing his own eyes, and while the rest were absorbed in conversation together, Leslie saw Flora rise, disentangle herself from the group, and follow him into the hall. Some accident closed the door behind her. They stood together—*alone*.

CHAPTER XII.

A Quarrel with an Object of Love at the Moment of Reconciliation with one of Hate; and wherein is shown, for the forty-seven thousandth Time, what a Foot-ball Man is to Fortune.

"She's fair and fause that causes my smart;
I lo'ed her meikle and lang:
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may e'en gae hang.
A coof cam in wi' rowth o' gear,
And I hae tint my dearest dear;
But woman is but warld's gear,
Sae let the bonnie lass gang."

BURNS.

THE romantic heart of Norman Leslie could but inadequately bid Flora an adieu that might be eternal before a crowd of gazing spectators. He had, therefore, in the fulness of his triumph and his anguish, veiled all agitation; and bowed at a distance, and with scarcely a look.

"She will remember me," he thought; "she will understand me—to-morrow."

When he found himself alone, for the first time in his life, with the idol of his secret thoughts and dreams—who swayed his feelings as the moon swells the tides, and leaves them again to their retiring ebbs—now that he had half-expressed his love, and half-believed the expression returned, he knew not what to say. Had he known, it is doubtful whether he could have said it, his heart beat so violently in his bosom. Women have naturally

more presence of mind than men in such matters: those little emergencies which silently checker the existence of the quiet student in peaceful modern times—to him all as striking and memorable as breaking a lance or storming a town to a knight of other days. Flora broke the silence; but, even through her graceful and becoming self-possession, a certain agitation and embarrassment exhibited themselves, enchanting to the young lover beyond expression.

"I have to thank you, Mr. Leslie, for the song."

He blushed. He could not well speak. Love is a great taker away of the voice. He found, however, sufficient self-possession to reach forth his hand, and gently to enclose in it that of Flora. She cast down her eyes. Norman's very heart trembled; but at this moment he remembered Morton, and contented himself with pressing the hand he held, as if he had taken it in the ordinary kindness of a farewell. He could not, however, wholly command his manner, as he said,—

"Dear Miss Temple, it may be very long before I see you again."

"Are you leaving town, Mr. Leslie?"

"No, not immediately," he replied, and with less embarrassment; "but a painful duty may exclude me, perhaps, from the pleasures of society."

"Mr. Leslie!"—her eyes rested full on him.

"And from *yours*," he added.

"And that beautiful song," she said, as if conscious that propriety would permit her to press him no further, "is it a present for me?"

"If you deem it worthy—"

"I shall value it," she answered, "as your gift."

For all his manhood, a moisture gathered in his eye. She looked up again. He forgot every

thing but that look. He once more seized her hand. She turned away her face. "Dear, dear Flora! how I love you!" had nearly escaped his lips, when the front-door suddenly opened, and Morton burst furiously in. Flora vanished in an instant.

"Well, I do declare," exclaimed Morton, coming suddenly to a stop at the demure group which he had broken up in the hall—"who was that? Oh ho! Master Gravity—mums the word—spoiled sport, eh? Well, I never—my dear, dear Norman—if I had *only* known; if I had only *suspected*—"

"Nonsense," cried Norman, blushing; for he was one of those men who inherit that woman's virtue.

"That's it, my fine fellow," cried Morton, his finger on his nose—"I am up to all that sort of thing. What, three! One too many, hey? Well, I declare—"

"I tell you—" cried Norman, quickly and sternly; for he loved not jesting on such points.

"Oh," interrupted Morton, "you need not tell me. There's no necessity for it at all. Fy! you cunning dog—you—but, *mon Dieu!*—I forget. Is not Miss Temple here?" and in he went with little ceremony.

Norman waited a moment anxiously in hope that Flora might return. He was at once the happiest and most miserable of human beings. He was on the eve of the wildest bliss he ever knew; and he was also rushing madly into the grave. He loved Flora Temple now more devotedly than ever. He owned it. He felt it. That which had before dwelt in his heart a half-buried spark, was now fanned into a blaze. What singular fatality connected him with the silly and good-humoured Morton, that by his agency he should be frustrated in the happiest moment of his existence, and his

existence itself be brought to a fearful termination. Now, too, the conviction rushed on his soul, that Flora Temple loved him. He believed and hailed it in the face of reason, of probability, and of the express authority of Miss Romain. But what are reason, probability, or authority to a lover, against the plain and sweet eloquence of the eyes, which should know best of all? What was he now to do? Wait? see Flora once more, reveal his love frankly, and bid her farewell for ever? or should he—thus in doubt whether his passion was requited—fly at once from her dear and dangerous presence, and, yielding his throat to the slaughter of a fierce, bloody, and certain hand, die just at the gates of paradise? "Oh! were I escaped from this fatal duel," he thought, "I would ask no more of fortune. May Providence interfere now, and rescue me from this awful dilemma, and my cup of bliss will be full to overflowing. Never again will I complain of destiny!"

As he lingered one moment, at a loss what to do, he was startled by the sudden appearance of a female figure.

"Flora?" he said.

It was not Flora. The tall form of Mrs. Temple rose before him with a step more than usually stately, and an expression in her face severe and repelling.

"Bless me," she said, "Mr. Leslie!"

If the youth had blushed before, he now crimsoned with tenfold embarrassment.

"Well met, Mr. Leslie," resumed Mrs. Temple, in a tone of sarcasm; "I have been about to request the honour of a personal interview, and now fate favours me beyond my deserts, though *you*, perhaps, will not share in the pleasure of my surprise."

"Madam," replied Norman, bowing, "why

should I feel other than pleasure at the sight of Mrs. Temple?"

"Because, by the name on your lips, I presume your thoughts were upon a different and more welcome person. I understand you; but I regret the painful necessity of putting you right. A dangerous disorder, Mr. Leslie, must be cured, although, in the operation, the patient shrink, and the surgeon holds the knife with reluctance. You are not at a loss for my meaning."

"Indeed, madam, but I am most profoundly," replied Norman; feeling, however, that her proud and haughty character was bearing her beyond the pale of delicacy and good-breeding.

"In plain terms, then, Mr. Leslie, Mr. Temple has requested me to express our high appreciation of your character; but to say, that we have observed with regret your marked attentions to Flora. We appeal to your generosity, Mr. Leslie" (Leslie bowed); "we confide in your honour. Flora's hand is already pledged to another. To save yourself future pain, and her unnecessary embarrassment, I seize the earliest opportunity to explain this to you frankly. Flora will, I am certain, always be most happy to see Mr. Leslie *as a friend.* Good-morning, sir."

Again Norman bowed low; nor lifted his face till he was alone. To him this appeared an insult. The supercilious condescension, the haughty dismissal of Mrs. Temple, showed her impetuous character in its least favourable light. Flora was, then, in truth, the affianced bride of another. Her softness towards him was either imaginary, or assumed out of pity or sport. Stung by the thought, he was in the act of flying for ever from the inauspicious mansion, when a slight shriek arrested his step. Was it fancy? or was it the voice of Flora? He re-entered the apartment, alarmed

and surprised by the confusion which prevailed. The ladies were standing, and apparently agitated with the most sudden and lively apprehension. The count appeared erect, proudly listening to entreaties directed to him with the utmost fervour by all present; and, as if a sight of death or pestilence had blasted his eyes, Norman beheld Flora, pale and frightened, foremost in her earnest solicitations, with her hand on the count's arm, in the ardour of her exclamations.

"Oh, Mr. Leslie!" cried Mrs. Temple, "could we have expected this from you!"

"A pretty fright, indeed," said Miss Romain. "Oh, Norman, dear Norman! abandon this horrid affair."

"For me, count, for me," cried Flora, "spare his blood!"

"I perceive," said Norman, who always rose in energy and ease in proportion to the emergency, and whose present manner was cold and freezing—"I perceive, by some mischance, that which should have been concealed is betrayed; but let me entreat Miss Temple, when she solicits my lord count there, to place her request on any other ground than my safety."

A reproachful and surprised look from Flora, shot at his heart, broke harmless as an arrow against a steel corslet. He felt his soul fully armed against her fascinations.

"Oh, Mr. Leslie!" said Mrs. Temple, "for our sake forbear from this fatal, this dreadful meeting!"

"You must allow me to assure you," rejoined Norman, "that no other power rests in my hand than that of obstinate acquiescence in the Count Clairmont's invitation. In this affair he has been quite the aggressor, and I can request nothing at his hands."

"Mr. Leslie," said Flora, "you will surely listen to our request."

"Much as it would flatter me to have an opportunity of obliging Miss Temple, I have neither the power nor the wish to do so here."

"But for *me*, dear Norman," cried Miss Romain, sobbing aloud, and approaching him with a familiarity which might be excused by the general agitation.

"For *you*, Miss Romain," said he, still burning with resentment against Flora, "I wish to do much; but you address yourself to one who has no more power than yourself over the circumstances."

Mr. Romain, who had stood a silent spectator of this scene, at length said, in his blunt way,—

"Come, come, young gentlemen—this matter *must* be settled, or we shall be compelled to seek aid from the authorities."

"Mr. Leslie," said the count, "you have done me wrong. You think me unforgiving; I am not so. As a proof—partly at the command of these ladies, whom I am bound to obey, and partly because I am convinced that I might myself last night have furnished more cause of offence than I intended—I wave all other considerations, and withdraw my invitation. My warmth last evening was premature. I apologize for the hasty expression. I shall receive your acknowledgments in return as an ample seal of reconciliation. Come, Leslie, let us think of this idle matter no more."

He extended his hand with ease and frankness. Leslie stepped forward, and exchanged the proffered salutation. "I should hold myself," he said, "greatly your inferior, Count Clairmont, both in good sense and candour, if I did not cheerfully improve such an opportunity to avoid bloodshed."

"You will find," said the count, in a more confi-

dential voice, "that I had already thought better of it, and had communicated such instructions to my friend Captain Forbes as would probably have effected this same event, and prevented a deed so fatal," in a still lower tone, "as *you*, Mr. Leslie, intended to perpetrate."

The magnanimity of the count was applauded in the liveliest terms. Flora cast on him a look, in the opinion of Norman, full of speechless tenderness; and the young nobleman appeared to the most graceful advantage even in the eyes of Leslie himself.

"He is too deep for me," he thought; "or I have wronged him most shamefully."

He remained a few minutes a moody spectator of the close of a scene in which he had not borne the most becoming part. Withdrawing a last gaze from Flora's beautiful face, he accidentally detected the count in a distant part of the room watching him, as he thought, unobserved. He was struck with a glance of malignant meaning which, like the rattle of the dreadful snake, bade him beware.

At length, after an awkward adieu to the ladies, whose salutations in return, particularly Flora's, he thought cold and stiff, with a mountain-load from his mind, yet a coal of fire at his heart, he withdrew, and sought his own home.

"Strange world!" he thought: "brief and wild vicissitudes! What a sport—what an idle chance—what a reckless, valueless, wanton confusion is the destiny of mortals! Yesterday I was well, safe, tranquil, and happy. This morning I was suddenly transformed into a beast, bound and dragged to the altar for sacrifice. A few moments ago I prayed to be released and set free, as the highest boon Heaven could bestow. Lo! I *am* loose; the chain *is* broken; the knife sheathed;

the fire extinguished; and yet, while the bright blade glittered before my eyes, *one thought* made me happier in danger than I am now in freedom. That look of the count's too—will he play me false?—a malignant devil lurks in his glances. As for Flora," a tear stood on his eyelash, he dashed it away—"pshaw! boy that I am! let me tear her sweet image for ever from my heart."

At eleven Kreutzner entered by appointment.

"There are to be two more breathing folks in the world, Leslie, than you intended. The noble count and the noble captain put their noses together at your close terms, and request another interview."

"It will be useless," said Norman, and related the occurrence of the morning.

"Now, is that magnanimity," said Kreutzner, when he had done speaking, "or love for the fair girl, or sheer cowardice?"

"Alas for poor human nature!" answered Leslie. "The world may well be topsy-turvy, when, even by such observers as you, Kreutzner, the purest virtues and the meanest vices cannot be distinguished from each other: but, come, a truce to moralizing. I propose we shall sup together."

"And the prospect," said Kreutzner, "of a comfortable breakfast in the morning instead of a bullet will not lessen your appetite, I assure you."

The two friends linked arms, and calling for Morton, who, with all his folly, had the pleasing faculty of rendering himself more agreeable in most companies than he had managed to do in that of Miss Temple, they adjourned to one of the numerous saloons which in New-York tolerably supply the place of the *Parisian café*.

"What! made up," said Morton, "at Temple's! fal, dal, diddle, diddle, val, dal, dal. Now, that's all *my* doings. I let out the whole affair, though I

durst not stay to see the consequences. Faith, I felt like a fellow who lights a train of gunpowder, and runs, without stopping to make observations upon the explosion."

"Morton!" said Norman, "you did not dare to commit such a piece of stupidity?"

"Yes, but I did, though. I had no notion of seeing a fellow like you, Leslie, shot down like a wild pigeon in my quarrel."

"Then you are, Morton, I must say, a greater fool than I took you for!"

"Well, now, Leslie—now—my dear fellow—really—that's a poor return for saving you from a dead shot—a fellow who can put a bullet, you know, out of the muzzle of one pistol into that of another! You would have been snuffed out! you know you would! What chance would such a strapping surface as yours present against a power of aim that always touches a silver sixpence? Remember the Veronese lady! And now—this is my thanks!—Well, I declare—I never—"

CHAPTER XIII.

A disagreeable way of spending the Evening, and a change from bad to worse.

"That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman."
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

"THAT Norman Leslie is a strange being," said Mrs. Temple, one evening as he left their circle, after a visit of a half-hour, during which he had appeared peculiarly reserved.

"He is dying of love for Miss Romain," said the count; "he is very eccentric, also, and exceedingly flippant."

"Flippant!" exclaimed Flora, in unfeigned surprise, "Mr. Leslie *flippant!*"

"I fear he is much worse, my love," said Mrs. Temple; "he is deceitful and treacherous."

"Deceitful and treacherous!" echoed Flora again; "Mr. *Leslie!*"

"Yes, my dear, Mr. Leslie," rejoined Mrs. Temple; "we cannot judge of men's characters by seeing them in the drawing-room. Mr. Leslie in company is very demure; but I am credibly informed among men he is altogether a different person; and it is among men that a man's character is most correctly estimated. What was it, count, that story about him?"

"No," said the count, "my dear madam, excuse me. Scandal is my abhorrence, and I am not

prepared to say *that* is any thing but scandal; indeed, I scarcely believe it at all. Besides, after what took place between Mr. Leslie and myself some weeks since, my motive for repeating it might be misconstrued."

Flora looked up, but said nothing.

"Respecting Mr. Leslie's integrity," continued Clairmont, with marked emphasis, "I shall not therefore speak; but of his flippancy I can easily cite an example. He is in the habit of boasting that he is obliged to decline the affections, nay, advances is his word, of more than one among the fairest of the New-York ladies."

"The wretch!" cried Mrs. Temple. "Flora, my love, you will certainly break that folder."

"Do you know, Miss Temple, that I have heard *your* name on his lips so familiarly, that one would deem him a much more intimate friend than I perceive he is, by his very different manner to you when in your presence."

Flora turned a little pale; it was barely perceptible, but Clairmont's keen eye detected it.

"I should regret," said she, "to hear any thing serious against Mr. Leslie's reputation. His sister Julia and his father are almost faultless, and they are perfectly bound up in him. I think I never knew a family in the domestic circle so really and unostentatiously affectionate and happy."

"He will certainly marry Miss Romain; and I think *she* will tame him," said Mrs. Temple, with a cool smile.

"It is said that she has already more than once refused him," rejoined Clairmont.

"How singular!" exclaimed Flora, but blushed as she finished the sentence.

"And pray why, my love?" said Mrs. Temple, smiling again; "because this Mr. Leslie is so interesting?"

"No."

"Because he is so gay and lively?" interrupted the count, with a sneer.

"Miss Romain makes no secret," said Flora, "of her intention to marry him, and yet I have heard her boast openly of having rejected him!"

"And do you think," said the count, with something of marked meaning in his manner, "that a lover should never strive against the first harsh sentence?"

"I do," said Flora, gravely; and, changing the conversation, she continued—"Mamma, did you hear of the accident which—"

But mamma had disappeared, and Flora found herself alone with the count. She half-started, as if with an impulse to fly; but recollecting herself, remained with a most graceful air of forced composure, not less becoming from the fact, that through it any one might have detected no ordinary degree of agitation. She dropped her eyes upon the volume, whose damp leaves she had been carefully separating with a pearl folder. A glow of hope and triumph gleamed over the face of her companion as he approached; and, with the most guarded gentleness and delicacy, laying his fingers upon the book, slowly lowered it from her gaze.

"Flora!"

There was a moment's silence.

"*Dear* Flora!" He took her hand. She attempted to withdraw it; but, alas for his suit, neither turned away, nor blushed, nor trembled. Her face was slightly pale; but on her sunny brow there was a shadow; and the smile which usually played about her beautiful mouth was gone utterly.

"You forget, Count Clairmont," she said, "I have already told you that this is language I will not hear."

"My beloved Flora!" he cried, apparently much affected, and dropping on his knee, "once more—once more let me—"

She rose. Never had she seemed so tall.

"You misjudge me, Count Clairmont," she said, "most strangely. I am no silly girl, withdrawing to be wooed, and speaking to be contradicted. Your language is displeasing and painful. Having already expressed my sentiments decidedly, I trusted the subject was at rest. I beg you to rise. I will ring for my mother."

There was a firmness in her voice and manner that would have rung the death-knell to hope in any bosom but that of Count Clairmont.

"No, no, angelic girl," and he retained her hand, while a flush of emotion crossed his handsome face, "you must not, you shall not stir, till I have again poured into your ear all that I feel and suffer. Flora, I love you!"

"Count Clairmont—"

"I have loved you always. From the first, your mother knew and approved my addresses. I threw myself at your feet. You, enchanting girl, turned coldly, cruelly away. Never shall I forget the anguish, the agony of that moment. I would have fled the country, nay, I would have buried myself for ever from the world, but your generous mother soothed my distress, checked my despair, and gradually re-awakened my hope. It is now by her permission, and that of your honourable father, that I enjoy this interview, which I have been so anxious to procure."

"And *I* to avoid," said Flora.

"Miss Temple," added the count, rising, and still holding her hand, "am I so unhappy as to have offended you?"

"Detention by physical force, sir," said Flora,

coldly, "is the least plausible method either to awaken affection or to preserve esteem."

He released her hand. She walked to the bell, and was about to ring.

"Flora," he said, earnestly, "as a *friend*, I *entreat* you to hear me."

She paused, and he continued:—

"Miss Temple, if I am so unfortunate as to have yet made no progress in your esteem, I cannot abandon the hope of being more favoured hereafter. So deeply am I interested in the success of this suit, that my happiness, my very reason, is utterly at stake. Your parents have assured me that your affections are disengaged; let me add, that their strongest wishes are enlisted in my behalf. My present almost unlimited fortune, my immense expectations in Europe, the advantages which my title afford me of showing you the most exclusive circles of foreign society, in their most favourable aspect—"

He paused before a look so calmly cold as to embarrass even him.

"Count Clairmont," she said, "has but poorly improved his intercourse with our sex, if he suspects a woman's heart to be influenced by such considerations. I am not ambitious either of wealth or title. Upon this subject I have already spoken decisively: let me repeat my sentiments now. They are confirmed by reflection. I have feared this interview, and done every thing in my power to prevent it. Your first suggestions of partiality I was contented simply to decline. I meet your present solicitations with a firmness not unmingled with both surprise and displeasure. Permit me, sir, to add, that any future renewal will be received either as ridicule or insult."

"Must I then despair," said the count, deeply

mortified, "of permission to prosecute my addresses with the aid of time?"

"My sentiments," rejoined Flora, "nothing on earth can alter. I have never felt, I never *can* feel for you the slightest love. I would not now permit this painful interview to be so prolonged, but in order to satisfy you that a repetition must be utterly impossible."

"One more prayer," said he, again kneeling, in a voice husky with emotion; "I cannot, I will not abandon all hope, till I know whether I yield only to your abstract preference for a single life, or to the happier star of some favoured rival."

"Count Clairmont!" said Flora, a flush of indignation rising to her cheek.

"Nay, cold and cruel girl—"

Before he had finished the sentence, he was alone.

Stung with disappointment and rage, he withdrew and left the house. He had not walked many minutes when he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and a woman in a thick veil stood before him. Bewildered and off his guard, his first thought was of Flora; but the veil slowly drawn aside revealed the large black eyes of the young female who has slightly and somewhat mysteriously appeared on the stage of our drama in the second chapter. She now stood confronting him most haughtily. For a moment they regarded each other in silence, the light of a lamp falling strongly on their features.

"Clairmont," at length cried the intruder, "your time has expired. I have yielded to your request. I will yield no longer."

"Louise!" he answered; "not here—not here'!"

"Yes, *here!*" echoed she, vehemently; "*here* or anywhere, wherever you may be. I claim my promise. Your time has expired."

"By the holy mother! girl, but—damnation!"

The last exclamation was called forth by the appearance of Morton, who, accidentally passing at the time, distinctly recognised both individuals, and paused in surprise to gaze on their faces. Louise drew down her veil. Clairmont stepped up sternly, and addressed to him some casual but angry remark. The young gentleman replied awkwardly, bowing and shuffling back, and declaring that he was not aware of being an intruder.

"See, girl," said Clairmont, "see what you have done! Would you betray, would you ruin me?"

"Yes," she replied; "if it brought your head to the block—your neck to the gibbet—your flesh to the worms! I would betray—I would ruin you—unless—"

A livid paleness overspread his features, which were transformed by the convulsions of hideous passion. He spoke in an under voice and close to her ear,—

"Silence, woman—if you would *live*—silence!"

"*Live!*" echoed she, scornfully; "hark in your ear." She whispered. He started, and stamped his foot.

"No," he replied, "it is impossible yet. But this is no place. Meet me at the hotel again. But stay; not in this dress."

"I understand you," said the female; "I will. But—"

She bent her keen bright eyes full on his, with a power which almost made him quail.

"If you deceive—"

"No, no, no, no," returned he, "I will not—I will not. To-morrow—to-morrow!"

The voice of a passing pedestrian, chanting a barcarole of the reigning opera, announced some new intruder. The speakers broke off, and separated abruptly.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Chapter mostly of digressions, which the Reader is entreated to excuse, as the Author could not help it. Yet should it not be altogether skipped.

"Quench, Corydon, thy long unanswered fire!
Mind what the common wants of life require:
On willow twigs employ thy weaving care;
And find an easier love, though not so fair."

DRYDEN'S *Virgil.*

BEAUTIFUL Spring! We do love to watch thy coming. Only the other day we were dilating upon the cold; now, away with the appendages of the frowning old Winter! Our habits are gradually undergoing a change. The fire sinks in the grate, and burns dimly and unnoticed; the heavy cloak hangs unregarded in the hall; people come in from the open air with noses of a natural colour; the earth is brightening everywhere; and our very soul melts on discovering a dash of tender new grass on the sunny side of some old wall. A hundred—a thousand sunny reminiscences rise up warmly in our tired, chilled heart; we enjoy all a school-boy's simple delight at thy first footstep. Dear Spring! thou art a companion endeared to us by innumerable tender and unworldly recollections.

The season now, over the country, began to exhibit itself in a thousand agreeable forms. A shade of lovely verdure enlivened the fields; the buds were breaking beautifully out from the juicy

branches: in the gardens, the simple snowdrop, the crocus, sprinkling the brown earth with many colours, the yellow daffodil, the fragrant mezereon, with its flower before the leaf, already appeared—graceful harbingers of the most welcome of seasons; and soon to be followed by the modest violet, the lowly heart's ease, the golden Adonis, the crimson pæony, hyacinths, tulips, and all the beautiful and variegated children of nature.

In the barnyard now the cattle rested themselves with ardent gratification. The contented hen dug a hole in the gravel, and laid, in enviable and luxurious idleness, in the general sunshine; and the cock swaggered and strutted about in his fine regimentals with superadded dignity, his great soul shining through every look and action, lifting his feet as if the very earth were not good enough for him to tread on, and ever and anon slapping his martial sides triumphantly with his wings, and challenging all the world with high-sounding exclamation. Ah, happy fellow! he is your only philosopher. He enjoys life truly. He has no books to balance; no notes to pay; no duns to meet; no bills in chancery to draw; no romances to write; no proofs to read: nothing but to rove about all day, withersoever he pleaseth; free from trouble, debts, labour, fear, dyspepsia, laws, bonds, house-rent, and all the fiends engendered to haunt the citizen of a civilized community. Happy fellow! even now we hear thy voice—the outbreakings of a great, independent, happy heart. Peace be with thee! gay sultan, amid thy seraglio of dames. Elegant courtier! Proud herald of the morn!

In the city, the evidences of the season were numerous, although of a different description. The shopkeepers flung open their doors, and displayed their goods in the air. The windows of

the wealthy were also unclosed, and the breathing and blossoming plants placed in the sun. Dirty-faced chubby children, ragged, barefoot, and hatless, came forth in troops by the cellar-doors, and in all the sunshiny places: and the poor generally wore cheerful countenances; for they were already enjoying existence more with less expense. But of all the places where these revolutionary proceedings in the weather were perceptible, the west side of Broadway, perhaps, exhibited the most changes in the dresses of the promenaders, masculine and feminine, black and white. It seemed that no experience could enlighten certain classes upon the fickleness of Spring; and every accidental gleam of warm weather was sure to elicit divers pieces of apparel, more peculiarly appropriate to the heat of summer. The cumbersome cloak was left behind. Then the thin shoe appeared in place of the boot. In a little while a parasol went gayly along through the sunshine; and, by-and-by, straw hats and white pantaloons prematurely displayed themselves upon odd-looking persons. We are apt to regard with some curiosity, if not suspicion, your fellow who puts on thin pantaloons so early in the season, hoping thereby to force on the summer. He is like the first swallow. His reasoning powers cannot be much cultivated; or else he is only striving after notoriety; or, perhaps, he may have a better reason, viz. his thin pantaloons may be thicker than his thick ones! Whatever may be the origin of so extraordinary a proceeding, we humbly warn our readers against being led too easily away by the alluring promises, and tender but deceitful solicitations of Spring. Let not the expanding buds, the new grass, the peeping flowerets; the broad, still, universal sunshine; the fresh, fragrant, and bland zephyr, delude you into any of these fashionable eccentricities in apparel.

Believe not the appearance of the earth; trust not the seducing smiles of heaven. The whole season resembles a lively coquette, full of smiles, airs, and affections; and much more ready to make promises than to keep them. We have now in our memory an unhappy wretch, whom we once met in the course of an afternoon peregrination. He was hastening homeward, shivering in a pair of white trousers, pumps, and thin silk stockings; his nose turned blue; and his coat buttoned, desperately, every button, to the very throat. Do not, we entreat, be too rash in taking down stoves, and abandoning thick stockings. Remember the words of the friar in Romeo and Juliet—"Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast."

Yes, the spring was here; and the gay world of fashion was as busy as the blossoms on the trees, or the birds in the groves. Flora Temple continued to bloom with the modest sweetness of a wild rose. Her striking beauty, which each day seemed to unfold some lovelier charm; her accomplished education; her clear, bright mind, and gentle nature—to say nothing of her immense fortune, and yet more immense expectations—rendered her an object of universal attraction, and enchained the particular attentions of a host of gentlemen, who, from various considerations, wrote themselves her admirers. The world, always peculiarly shrewd upon these matters, exhausted its curiosity and its conjectures upon the subject of her union; and gave her away, unceremoniously, to many a claimant, who, however charmed with the honour, knew too well at heart that it could be enjoyed but in imagination. Poor Morton, after his first storm of disappointment and wounded vanity, had swallowed his regrets with a resignation which springs sometimes from philosophy, and sometimes from folly; and, if rumour

spoke truth (which, by-the-way, that slandered divinity often does), he had no reason to be ashamed of the names associated with his own on the long list of rejected suitors. Lieutenant Halford of the navy, after beating about for some time against baffling breezes, bore down gallantly towards the prize, but suddenly veered upon a new tack, and shortly after struck his colours beneath a heavy fire from the eyes—oh woman! woman!—of Miss Maria Morton. Captain Forbes of the army besieged the fortress; but upon a short parley from the walls, he turned at once to the right-about, and obliqued off to the left, double-quick step, upon some more feasible expedition. An eloquent young lawyer, who had been a good deal in the papers, and was supposed to possess a weighty influence in the first ward, rose to advance a motion, which the public, like a court of inferior jurisdiction, immediately decided in his favour: but love and law have both their uncertainties; for, upon an appeal to the highest tribunal, the opinion was reversed. A club of *literati*—a street of young merchants—a board of brokers—and a whole medical college were reported to have suffered a veto in regular succession; while penniless poets, promising editors, law-students, and young men of talent were declined *ad infinitum* with sweet condescension, gracious regret, and a world of kind wishes for their future welfare, and that their subsequent paths might be "strewn with flowers!" It was asserted by Howard, that Miss Temple was obliged to keep a confidential clerk; and that the dismissals were issued in the form of printed blanks, filled up, according to circumstances, with name and date, without any further trouble or knowledge of the young lady herself than a careless weekly perusal of the list of suitors' names,

alphabetically arranged. But Morton declared this to be a bouncer; as his own had been carefully written in her own hand, on rose paper, sealed with a cameo cupid, and composed, evidently, at the express command of her mother, who was mad after that d——d French count.

"Why don't she marry?" said the world. "Time flies; and she must be eighteen at least."

"Why don't she marry?" said Mrs. Hamilton, one morning, to her husband.

"Because she is not a *fool*, my dear," growled the happy husband. "She is young, rich, free, and admired. Why *should* she marry? Like others I could mention, she better becomes the station of a belle than of a wife. Women nowadays are only made to look at."

"And men to fret and scold," said Mrs. Hamilton, with a scowl.

"Come, come, my love," rejoined the husband, "no pouting. What's *done*, you know, my angel, can't be undone."

"Mr. Hamilton, you are a—"

"A *what*, my dear?"

The lady was silent. The husband thrust his hands into his pantaloons pocket, kicked his *robe de chambre* from the middle of the floor into a corner (this dialogue matrimonial is presumed to have taken place in what the French call the *chambre à coucher*), muttered an oath, shrugged his shoulders, and made his exit, whistling "The Campbells are coming."

"There he goes," said Mrs. Hamilton to herself, as the front-door slammed heavily after her retreating lord, and his choleric step died away on the pavement—"there he goes, and it will be midnight, now, ere I see him again. Who could have believed it before we married! Then—

"Miss Temple, too," murmured the neglected wife, as she continued her revery, sighing the while, and glancing her eyes upon the still lovely image, presented by a large mirror. "Happy girl!" (she rang the bell) "she will win the count yet" (another sigh). "Well—as Hamilton says—what's done—"

The maid entered, and the complicated machinery of a small family went on with its operations.

To say that Norman Leslie had not visited at Mrs. Temple's, after the occurrences related in the foregoing chapters, would not be to say the truth; nor, indeed, that he never visited at Mr. Romain's. On the contrary, he had occasionally beguiled an evening with each family; and at both—a young and refined man, with a leaning to poetry, without a wife, and with an intuitive delicacy which preserved him from the grosser pleasures of a mighty city—he found much to attract and gratify him. There were music, charming society, and the gayest spirits; in which, when the mood was on him, he was fully competent to share, and even to enliven. He had observed, during his infrequent visits to Miss Romain, that her character had undergone a change, which sometimes induced the opinion that he had wronged her; and there was in his bosom ever a generous yearning to excuse and to acquit. The once lively girl had now become more staid and grave, sometimes even unhappy. Norman could not be ignorant that he had once excited the love of a bosom which, however light and inconstant, was full of womanly feelings. In the fervour of boyhood, her brilliant charms and accomplishments had certainly impressed him with a too warm sense of her loveliness; but then, his loftily sentimental character might have started aside too suddenly, and mistaken the really care-

less folly and unguarded thoughtlessness of a giddy girl for inherent affectation and heartlessness. He was no fop; but we shall not undertake to say whether he could entirely exclude from his mind a vague surmise, which, however forcibly dismissed, returned again and again, that this permanent sadness, the pensive reserve of manner, might result from a half-revived affection for *him*. Love her he could not; but youths of his caliber can stretch their hearts to a wonderful complacency in regarding the favour of a sweet girl, even when that favour finds affections already flown. Her manner towards him had been soft and alluring, particularly so in the company of other ladies, and most particularly in that of Miss Temple, who was struck at the undisguised partiality which she often exhibited for him. Whether this was really re-awakened passion, or incorrigible coquetry, or a desire to reclaim a half-freed captive, and display him before the world a double conquest—or whether the keen eye of a heartless flirt had detected in the mind of her late lover deeper thoughts than he chose to acknowledge of Flora Temple, whom she envied, and whose envy she triumphed in the thought of exciting—must yet be left to conjecture. She continued by turns sad and gay, sentimental, fond, and peevish, playing off the airs of a capricious, spoiled, and impassioned woman; while Flora moved calmly in her orbit, as the moon mounts steadily up the heavens, veiled sometimes in a silver cloud, from which even the shadow is beautiful; or pouring her soft light from an azure sky, whose utmost clearness is not freed from a touch of melancholy. Norman Leslie and she appeared farther separated in destiny than ever; yet he still secretly nourished for her an absorbing and increasing passion, which he sometimes half-imagined, for such dreams come soon, was not

unrequited: yet, while he more frequently and familiarly visited the dwelling of Mr. Romain, he called on the Temples but rarely; and always during his stay was uninteresting, cold, or embarrassed. He generally met the count there, which by no means diminished his disquietude, particularly as it seemed to be understood that he was certainly and speedily to marry Flora Temple.

CHAPTER XV.

An Insight into the Character of an old but slight Acquaintance—A tender Revery interrupted.

"Than whom a better senator ne'er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repell'd
The fierce Epirot and the African bold;
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow States, hard to be spell'd."
Milton to Sir Henry Vane the Younger.

Mr. Mordaunt Leslie sat alone in his study. Hitherto Norman, instead of his father, has occupied our reader; let me now call his attention to the latter. Perhaps the United States held no character more striking and remarkable, more peculiarly the growth of a mighty and stern republic, where talent and eloquence make themselves felt. Early in life he had entered the field of politics. Being the son of a man who had figured brilliantly in the Revolution, in the companionship of Washington, Kosciusko, Hamilton, and Lafayette; and belonging to one of the old, wealthy, and influential (for they could not be called *aristocratic*) fam-

ilies of the country, he commenced his career with numerous and powerful advantages. Long and deeply had he struggled in the mighty game, and always had he been the winner. Stronger and stronger grew his sway—louder and louder his voice was heard; and more and more reverently it was listened to in every exciting emergency. At the time of our story he stood among the highest of American statesmen: profound and grave, learned, eloquent, and persevering, he had risen through the intermediate grades between the obscurity of a private citizen and his present rank in the Senate of the United States. From that commanding summit, his dignified but never sleeping ambition formed new plans, beheld higher, nobler eminences; few had climbed so loftily with a character so unsullied: a foreign ministry to Paris or London was talked of by his friends. In the secret conclave of his confidential circle, an ascent yet more audacious had fixed their eyes; nor did their aspiring hopes pause lower than the highest seat in the republic. Many candidates had striven openly for the presidential chair with fewer claims, and more slender hopes, than might be advanced and cherished by Mordaunt Leslie.

Late on the night to which we allude, business of paramount importance having called him, for a few days, from his duties at Washington to New-York, he sat in his library, earnestly engaged in studying a subject of deep interest about to come under the consideration of the Senate. A rival statesman, from the South, had attempted the passage of a bill which Mr. Leslie deemed, not only striking at the foundation of the interests of the republic, but at the same time calculated to shake, and perhaps tumble to the dust, the whole fabric of his own private views, which he had been so long and so successfully building up. Should this bill

succeed, it would produce the most material and the most unpleasant influences upon his life and happiness. It was, indeed, one of those questions wherein the whole strength of two mighty parties come to be thrown, for the moment, into the hands of two individuals, as ancient armies occasionally confided their quarrel to the puissance of two single combatants. Thousands anxiously waited the result; and the exciting sensation produced through the country had already crowded the city of Washington with strangers, eager for the coming on of the conflict.

On the succeeding day Mr. Leslie, with his son and daughter, were to set out for the capital; and it was understood that a large party from New-York intended also to be present, to hear the eloquence, and probably witness the triumph, of their celebrated representative. Mr. and Mrs. Temple were enthusiastically enlisted in the interests of the party opposed to Mr. Leslie; they had also prepared to proceed to Washington, and were to start early on the morrow.

As the statesman sat in the silent seclusion of his study, while his son was wandering alone, indulging blissful visions of Flora Temple, he was merged in dreams of stern and grasping ambition; not the ambition of Cæsar, Napoleon, or Cromwell, but that of Brutus and of Washington. At least, this was the exalted sentiment with which he had stepped upon the arena; this was the motive which he had set up before his own heart; but, as he grew nearer and yet more near to the issue of the game, as the bright reward of his daring mind shone almost within his reach, who can say what changes went on in his character? Who can note the degree in which, while his hopes strengthened, his ambition also deepened? As he now bent over masses of heavy documents; as he sought a passage in a

ponderous tome; now elucidating a point of history; now illustrating a question of law; now noting down a classical quotation; now pausing to examine, enlarge, imbody in words, and commit to memory a new and more fiery thought; now turning over the leaves of Shakspeare for some wondrous phrase, with which to link and send down the tide of popular feeling a modern opinion;—as he pondered over all the various arts by which a great orator steeps and imbues himself with his theme, hour after hour of the silent night rolled unheededly away.

Few men find their hearts trembling with a more eager anxiety upon the result of an event or an action, than that of the soaring statesman as he looked forward to this struggle on the floor of Congress. The lover, waiting the word from the lips of his mistress; the mother, watching the leech as he feels the pulse of her dying child; the gambler, his all pledged, pausing ere he uncovers the dice; the culprit, bending to hear the verdict on his life—perhaps none of these are stirred with thoughts much more deep and absorbing than those which rolled through the mind of the ambitious, the haughty, the eloquent, and the indignant senator. He felt in this crisis like Leonidas at Thermopylæ; he stood within the narrow gorge which he was to defend with his own arm, and fearful he saw were the odds against him. He was eloquent, and he knew it. His heart swelled with the grandeur of conscious power; he longed, he yearned for the moment of action. He sat like Jove above the Titans, aware of the forces against him, but still knowing himself to be Jove, still grasping the thunder; and, though they might pile up mountains on mountains, still calmly and majestically awaiting the time to launch the immortal bolt.

He had closed a volume of Montesquieu, after

some hours of severe application; and as he laid down his pencil, and put aside the volume, he breathed as one whose attention relaxes from a long and fatiguing task; and a smile slowly, and just perceptibly, softened and lighted his majestic face. The effect of the light, throwing its subdued stream upon his noble features, formed a superb subject for the pencil. It had the warm splendour and the high character of a Titian. The imposing person which we have admired in Norman appeared even more dignified in the father: he was taller, and his demeanour more uniformly and calmly commanding; his manners were remarkable for a bland and smooth courtliness. Intercourse with the world had imparted to his address high-tempered polish and elegance, which fitted him admirably for the diplomatic station to which it was said the country would soon call him. By Norman that fascinating ease and self-possession were not yet fully possessed; they flashed through him only at intervals. At one hour they would hallow his society so, that *woman* yielded to the delusive and dangerous influence; and at the next, it would pass away as if the flame had been withdrawn from the vase; and others would wonder what people could find in him to admire. Mr. Mordaunt Leslie would have been instantly received with delight at the most fastidious and polished court of Europe; but his son would have remained a time in the shadow, and been compelled to rise by degrees, unless some sudden crisis brought his talent into notice. Both were of the same rich material: the former was perfected from the hands of the artist; the latter, yet partly unwrought.

In Mr. Leslie only one passion coped with his ambition: it was paternal love. He had married, at the early age of twenty, a woman whose rare

charms and excellences neither poet nor painter can too highly depict. She was the only one he ever had loved. Mutually endeared by the reciprocal influences of genius and romance, by remarkable beauty of person and gentleness of character, they had dwelt together contentedly—happy; nay, blessed beyond common mortals. While she lived his life had been a sunshiny romance—a fairy dream—nothing but sunshine, poetry, and love. But a rapid malady—which, even while it cut off her life, had beautified and etherealized both her mind and person—deprived him of this beloved being. From the whole ardour and very romance of love, his mind had rolled gradually into a new channel. Never, subsequently, had women been to him more than sisters: all the tenderness of his nature had centred upon Julia and Norman; in the former he found a fair copy of his wife—in the latter, of himself. For a year after his bereavement, in the loneliest hours of the night, he had visited the turf beneath which, cold to his anguish and his love, slept the bosom of the beautiful and vanished object of his early worship. And then the lover, the quiet, shrinking, world-despising lover—the haunter of brooks, the feeder of birds; the modest, unpresuming youth, who had murmured the very breath of poetry to the ear of beauty; who had pored over the hues of a flower, or the shape of a cloud; who had sought to master the art of music, that he might, in a new language, tell to *her* how he loved her footmarks, and how he was enraptured beneath her gaze; he, to whom mankind had been but the actors in a gory tragedy or a grotesque farce, from both of which he turned, in the fulness of his bliss, still to linger and murmur his passion to one modest rose in the wild wood;—he reappeared among his fellow-creatures the resolute votary of ambition—forgetting music, woman, na-

ture—the midnight student, the severe satirist, the haranguer of mobs, the candidate for office, the foremost in the jar, dust, tumult, and sinewy struggle of brawling and smoky cities. Thus are men's characters formed. What now was the wife of his boyhood?—a flower he had watched years ago, as it faded by the road-side—a laughing brook, whose channel was dusty—a lyre, whose strings were broken—a sylvan dell, once fringed with foliage and scented with sweet roses, but whose green and silent depths, where his boyish foot had trod when the world was all new, he could never —never visit again. He had ceased to be a lover; he had ceased to be a husband. He was now only the father and the statesman.

As he saw at length the close of his studies for the night, he closed the volume; and the smile which stole across his features announced the pleasure of anticipated triumph.

He rose, lighted a fragrant cigar, and sat down again, rather to muse than to study; for he had arrived at that age when but little sleep is requisite, and he who would gain and preserve ascendency over his fellow-men must learn to waste but few hours in slumber.

Thus ran the midnight musings of the statesman:—

"Oh that this battle were fought and won! Oh that it were! But it will be—it *shall!* Cunning and ambitious as he is, I will meet him front to front, breast to breast. He shall find me no recoiling boy. I will make him feel and fear me. Let it come. Perhaps best it should: I will attack him in his fortress; I will scale his impregnable walls. Why, what but personal ambition can lead him to such audacious designs? And yet, he has no young eagle, as I have, ready to launch upon

the tempest; if he had, I could fancy the ground of his ambition."

He paused; and then continued—

"That boy is already a man. I mark his mind mature. I mark his energies unfold—his person develop—his character broaden and deepen. All that I have been, he shall be—and more, much more. He shall commence when I rest. But he must travel—and study. Of late he has idled his hours in indolent city pleasures:—Right—he is of the true metal. He will sicken of them as I did. Let him see what a heartless thing it is. Already his better, his higher, his hereditary nature breaks forth. He reads much. He mopes. He thinks. Perhaps it is love—well, be it so! If he escape that enchanted island—if some Calypso do not persuade him to linger for ever in her perennial bowers—then will he mount on the wind, and gaze on the very sun unblinded, as I do.

"My sweet Julia, too—was ever man so blessed in son and daughter? who might not be proud to ask her hand? That young Howard is well enough, too—fire and genius in him—rich, bold, eloquent: and then she loves him; I see it in all her looks, words, and actions. Yes—happy, happy beings!—they love each other. Blessings on them! blessings on them! I would not shadow one ray of their bright hearts—no, not even for ambition.

"My old friend Judge Howard, too, is no mean ally; a proud, firm old man. Yes, yes, I am happy—too, too happy, considering that *she* is not of our circle. Beloved, beautiful, sanctified Julia, art thou a spirit?—dost thou lean from the wind to gaze on, and bless us, dearest, most adored? Dost thou watch the heart which has been none but thine? Dost thou still behold, still know, still love me, sweet, sweet spirit of my

gone days? Speak, speak—give me some sign, some token—"

A shriek of such intense and piercing horror broke in upon his meditations, that the dreamer, already half-lost in unearthly visions, started as if some pale ghost had indeed replied. The next moment there stood before him an image—to his disturbed imagination strangely resembling the being then uppermost in his fancy. It was an instant before he recognised his daughter Julia, in a loose night-dress of white, her face deadly pale, and a spot of blood on her cheek.

Such are the discords which break upon the music of hope's enchanted strain.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Dreams of the Young as contrasted with those of the Old in the foregoing Chapter, and an Interruption more awkward than the last.

"*Manoah.* Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do, stay here, or run and see?"
Samson Agonistes.

The reader has already classed Norman Leslie among those characters so frequent at the present day, thoughtful, ardent, contemplative, and inactive young men, viewing all things through the medium of a strong imagination, much swayed by impulse, and accustomed to exaggerate all that befalls them. A vein of poetry and romance ran through his character, which active and laborious occupation had never broken up. Reared in the lap of wealth and luxury, he lacked the stimulus

to action which forces most men, for the support of life, amid the harsh realities and homely conflicts of business. Full of musing melancholy, sensitive to every passing impression, much of boyish illusion yet lingered about his steps; and love, when once kindled by a worthy object, became immediately the absorbing principle of his nature and of his existence. The shock which his young confidence had received from Miss Romain had both sharpened his observation and deepened his character. For a time his soul recoiled, not only from the giddy and frivolous girl who had so deceived him, but from the very passion into which he had been deceived. Then Flora Temple's image rose before him with a new, a more delicious, and bewildering power. He repelled it; he even attempted to deride and undervalue it. Unable to banish it, he admitted it but only at first to scrutinize and condemn. He would not acknowledge to himself, that after having bent before the fascinations of one, he could so soon yield to those of another. Hence his almost bitter delineation of Flora's character at Mrs. Temple's to Moreland; hence his frequent coldness of manner towards herself. He struggled against the fetters which her every action, look, and smile wove around his soul. He strove to force his mind into the conviction that she was less perfect than she appeared. There was a time when Rosalie Romain had just so spell-bound him; so once at the sound of her step, at the tone of her voice, his pulse had leaped, his heart had trembled. He would break away from the enchantress—he would fly from the effeminate allurements of all women. Broad and noble paths were opened to his pride and his ambition. Deep in his heart, although yet not fully awakened, lay a thousand high aspirations. The yearning after the world's

applause, the quiet but never-ceasing thirst for the scholar's lore, philanthropy, and the hope of being one day useful to his race—all these without ostentation mingled in the material of Norman Leslie's character. And there were moments when he resolved to turn away even from love, even from the love of Flora Temple, as from a selfish passion that would enervate and entangle his mind. But these were only moments; and from undervaluing her, he swept to the other extreme. Nothing vacillates more widely and frequently than the mind of a youthful lover. The idea of her union with Clairmont clothed her with new attractions, by that strange principle of our nature which renders things more precious when beyond our reach. He had already learned to regard her as one too angelic to share his human path.

These were his reflections as, silent and alone, on the evening designated in the preceding chapter, he wended his way by the uncertain light of the stars from a gay revel, where he had again lingered, enchanted, by the side of Flora. All the tenderness of his love descended upon him. The hushed solitude around, the broad heavens above, contributed to soften his mind into one of those romantic reveries with which imaginative men often repay themselves in their secret hours for the harsh disappointments of the dull inexorable world. Around him rose a creation of his own fancy, peopled with his fondest dreams—his most secret and tender aspirations. Thus lost in meditation, and insensibly charmed by the quiet beauty of the night, he paced slowly onward, he scarcely knew whither, but in a direction opposite to that of his own dwelling.

Oh, the dreams of a young lover in a solitary night ramble! Where else does the world brighten into such an elysium?

"Then, indeed," continued the musing youth, as the current of his thoughts flowed silently and sweetly on—thoughts which took their tinge of happiness from the grace and innocent loveliness of their beautiful subject—"then, indeed, what an Eden would be the earth! what a blissful dream would be existence! what a sunny joy, what a golden radiance would steal across my path!—Flora Temple should confess she loved me. To sit alone by her side, steeped in the rapture of fully requited affection—to thrill with the grace of her bashful confidence, of her timid and yielding love—to wind my arm unreproved around her graceful form—to feel her breath on my cheek, to linger beneath the touch of those young and loving lips, to hear them pour out the breathings of that pure and exalted soul, to sit hours and hours, looking into the beauty which floats in her eyes—now murmuring my impassioned worship—now listening to her fond return; my hand clasped in hers as I noted the rise and passing away of some wandering blush, as a happy feeling stirred in her breast. With such a being for my wife, existence would fleet away like an exhalation. What joy to read to her all that poetry has reared of golden enchantment! to wander with her through the magnificent realms built so superbly up by the hand of fiction—to ride forth in the summer morning amid the fragrant woods; or, in the mellow, deep sunset-hour, from the portico of some dear and sylvan abode, to note the tinges fade from the clouds, to bend and admire together the floweret by the roadside, to trace the wanderings of the humming-bee; or to look together up to the hushed and holy heavens, our characters and affections, as our thoughts, purified and elevated!—thus, with that dear angel ever by my side, to choose out our favourite stars among

those ever-burning myriads. Yon kindling orb should be hers; and that faint spark close to its side should teach her how dim and yet how near my soul was to her own.

"Then, travel—I would take her over the world; we would study together the history and languages of the mighty Europe; we would wander, still hand-in-hand, over its traces of dazzling splendour and solemn desolation—the wrecks of time and history, the sublime footmarks of the great of old.

"And wherefore should I doubt? Mystery hangs around her, but it is not in *her*. Has not her manner melted, has not her voice trembled to me? And yet they tell me that she is the affianced bride of Clairmont!"

He had now rambled on unknowingly far out of his way to a remote and solitary part of the town, and was threading a dark and narrow lane, where only a distant lamp shed any beam of light. Perceiving that he had lost his way, he paused; and at that moment received a heavy blow, staggered several paces back, and fell to the earth nearly senseless. In an instant, however, recovering from the shock, he felt a powerful hand, and trembling with intense eagerness, busy at his throat, while the murderer seemed feeling with the other in his bosom. Something fell to the pavement, ringing like the blade of a dagger, and was instantly grasped up again. With the vehement fury of despair, the prostrate victim suddenly clutched the throat of his assailant, and a fierce, rapid, and tremendous struggle ensued, such as swells the veins of men striving for life and death. For a moment the profound silence was disturbed only by the stamping and trampling of heavy and desperate feet. Roused to the full exertion of his athletic form, Leslie had acquired

a slight advantage over his opponent, and, with an exclamation of deep triumph, was about to dash him to the earth, when a cold and thrilling sensation in his side for a moment checked his breath, and shot through his soul the terrible sense of death. His voice rose, and rang far and wide on the air, startling the solemn silence with the cry, so blood-curdling when heard through the night, of "Murder! murder!"

"Ha!—hell!" cried a voice. With each exclamation Leslie felt the desperate plunge of his assailant's arm, and scarcely knew whether or not the blade drank his life.

The cry, however, alarmed the neighbourhood. A watchman awoke and struck his club upon the pavement; windows were slammed open, and nightcaps emerged into the air. But ere assistance reached him, Leslie grew deadly sick. His eyes swam, his brain reeled; unnatural figures, ghastly faces, and lurid lights glided and glared around him. With an intensely clear conception that he was floating into the realms of death, all grew gradually dark, cold, and silent; then sensation passed utterly away.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Family Picture—The discriminating Delicacy of Party Politicians.

"There is one piece of sophistry practised by both sides, and that is, the taking any scandalous story that has been ever whispered or invented of a private man for a known undoubted truth, and raising suitable speculations upon it."

The Spectator.

The gray light of dawn stole into the chamber. Norman lay stretched upon his back on the couch, his features settled into a livid and ghastly hue, as if death had already struck him: cold—passionless—senseless—rigid; the eyes closed, the cheeks, forehead, and mouth sharpened. Recall him as he moved a few hours before in the flush of strength and health, or wandered in blissful reveries beneath the stars, weaving visions of future joy. How strange that all, even when they least dream of it, may have run to the edge of the abyss. What a happy constitution of our nature which *can* ever forget this frightful truth—which *can* lose itself in the dance and the song; which can watch the melting cloud, the fading rainbow, the withering flower; and never tremble—never remember that we ourselves are as fleeting.

Over the prostrate and almost unbreathing form of the youth bent four figures. The first was a surgeon, eminent both in Europe and America for his extraordinary skill, and the success with which

he had for many years performed most difficult and daring operations. Long habit had rendered him callous to every sign of distress, either in the patient or the bleeding hearts of the circle around. He could take you off a limb with a quiet smile, and draw the glittering and fearful instrument through the shrinking convulsive flesh of the living, with the same accustomed composure with which he laid open the mysteries of God's mightiest machine in death. He stood over Norman calmly, and with that slight air of professional importance which few, if any, can separate from their exertions of skill. The patient breathed with a momentarily lengthened respiration, and a low faint moan broke from his pallid lips. The half-smiling practitioner had just dressed the wounds, with as much apparent solicitude to preserve his own wristbands unstained, as to secure the life which ebbed so low in the youth's veins. You would have imagined Dr. Wetmore, from his bland and pleasant air, superintending some pretty chymical operation, rather than striving to reunite those half-severed ties which held a human soul from its flight into eternity.

By his side Dr. Melbourne, the first physician of the city, watched the face, and ever and anon felt the pulse, of the object of their solicitude. His prepossessing features were, although in but a slight degree, more touched with solemnity; and if calm and deliberate in every motion, still he did not *smile*. He exhibited undivided attention in the suffering of the patient. Perhaps, being more familiar with pain in a less bloody form, and in a sphere immediately comprehended within his own circle of skill, the sight now before him struck upon those sympathies undulled by use. On the other side—kneeling, her hair dishevelled, her dress thrown hastily on, pale, agitated with suspense,

anguish, and horror—the light shone faintly on the features of Miss Leslie. Lastly, the noble form of the father—in that majestic and almost proud attitude unconsciously assumed by those exercising a strong power over passion or feeling. His face was pale indeed; his lips compressed; but the muscles of his features moved not—there was not a start, a stir, a tear—when the two learned gentlemen raised themselves as the task was finished. Norman still lay insensible, and the picture of death. Indeed, for a moment both father and sister thought the spirit fled.

"Is he gone? is it over?" asked Mr. Leslie, his paleness increasing, as his medical advisers slowly withdrew from the bed. He followed them; Miss Leslie did so likewise, with a faint and choked sob, her hands clasped, and her eyes streaming with tears.

One or two significant looks passed between the doctors, and then the surgeon replied in a low whisper,—

"Why, Mr. Leslie, as *yet*—"

A scarcely perceptible convulsion flitted across the face of the father.

"As yet he lives, *but*—"

Miss Leslie sank back in a chair in agony, bent down her head, and covered her face with her hands—

"My brother—my brother—oh, my brother!"

Mr. Leslie drew his companion yet farther away, where their voices might not disturb the invalid. Melbourne returned to the bedside.

"Dr. Wetmore," said the father, "speak the worst. *Must* he die?"

"Impossible to say, my good sir. The scales hang even. A moment—a breath—a hair may decide; but the danger is certainly not immediate."

"He *may* then recover?"

"Possibly," replied the surgeon, passing his fingers over the sleeve of his coat to brush away a thread.

Night again arrived. The most gloomy forebodings were entertained of the patient. Norman remained weak and in great pain. All conversation was forbidden him. It was the day of their intended visit to Washington; Julia had forgotten it. The gayeties of fashionable life had occupied but little of her thoughts; she enjoyed, but never abandoned herself to them. Her anticipations of the seat of government were largely made up of the expected triumph of her father in the long looked for debate. Never beat a more tender and affectionate heart than hers. Whatever she loved, she loved enthusiastically, romantically. Although her young soul had learned to yield itself to the solicitations of Howard, she found no diminution of her affection for her brother and father. The attachment was not like other attachments; there were in its progress no doubts, no dislikes, no heart-burnings, no oppositions. It was the growth of a kind and gentle climate, shooting up and blossoming richly in perpetual sunshine. Her nature was all love. Terrible were the thoughts which broke upon her young dreams, while she watched Norman's pillow. She had never before suffered a misfortune; had never even seen sickness; and *death*—it seemed to her the calamity of some lower world. The ghastly and frightful spectre had scarcely ever entered even the sunny circle of her thoughts. She had never lost a friend. Her mother had passed away long before her memory; and she pictured her, not in the startling and awful vestments of the grave, but as an angel in heaven. Happy girl! happy girl! she had never seen her heart's dearest adored struck

by the sudden shaft from smiling health to the dark and hushed bed of agony. She had never seen the form the most doted on wasted, palsied, and strengthless; the voice, interwoven with years of love, changed, till it met her with a strange and unnatural tone; the lips shrunken to an expression never seen before; the eyes gleaming with a solemnity new and appalling, as if some demon had entered the body; the form so hallowed, so tenderly dear, racked with all the tremendous engines of disease and death.

Mr. Leslie's emotions were for a time equally undivided. He forgot his lofty schemes; his haughty ambition—all the statesman passed from his bosom, and left him exposed to the agony of a father's solicitude. But as the second night wore away, other thoughts began to mingle with those to which he had at first been a prey. The habits of thirty years are deep and obstinate. This dreadful calamity had occurred at a moment when his presence at Washington was pledged, not only to his own hopes, but to the hopes of a mighty portion of his country. Not only would he by his absence suffer a blow from which, probably, he would never be able to recover, but his constituents would never retrieve the loss. Perhaps these thoughts would have had less influence over his mind, perhaps they would not even have gained entrance there at all, but for an occurrence which, although he might have done so, he had not in the least foreseen. Party spirit in the United States sometimes rages with unlimited fury; sometimes (shame to those among my countrymen who countenance such violations of decency!) descends to the most unjustifiable means to put up or put down a powerful politician. The misfortunes or accidents of private life are by a certain class seized upon with indiscriminating avidity. Per-

sonal feelings, even domestic casualties of the most sacred nature, are not unfrequently dragged forth to feed the thirst for ridicule and slander which these thoughtless agents, tools of political leaders, think it not beneath them to resort to. I am not here speaking of my country; I allude but to those (and they are very often foreigners) who by this licentiousness disgrace and insult it. On the present occasion, the fond father, while overwhelmed in unutterable anxiety and anguish, found a certain set of daily journals ridiculing his distress, and endeavouring to link it with fabrications dishonourable to him. One organ of the opposite party observed—"The report, so currently circulated to-day, of the robbery and assassination of Mr. Norman Leslie, son of the celebrated Mr. Mordaunt Leslie, proves to be but a trick. Mr. Norman Leslie was hurt, as our respectable contemporary the 'Democratic Journal' has it, in a fray. If young gentlemen will sow, they must expect to reap. The wounds, however, we are credibly informed, are altogether unimportant; but the eloquent statesman is happy to avail himself of any excuse for not meeting the thunders of Mr. B——, which he well knows would burst upon him were he to show himself at this period in the Senate of the United States."

These and other paragraphs forced the subject of his political affairs upon his attention in a new light; and as he hung over the pillow of his son, his mind was torn with contending emotions.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The American Capitol—The President's Levee, a Trifle which may chance to be of more Importance than the Reader thinks.

"'Tis slander:
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting wind, and doth belie
All corners of the world; kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters."

Cymbeline.

NEVER had there been a gayer season at Washington. The session of Congress was one of the most interesting since that which had issued the Declaration of Independence. Of course, the crowd was immense. The city, as everybody knows, or ought to know, although the plan of a leviathan town, of unequalled splendour, is as yet but a mere sprinkling of houses over a large plain and two or three abrupt hills, in location not unlike ancient Rome. There is but one street, Pennsylvania Avenue, worthy of the name; which, from its length and breadth, and the fact that it is the grand thoroughfare, assumes an air of importance, without presenting any particular claims to attention. The private residences of the great are away off in this direction and in that, at such inordinate distances from each other as to render boot-making and hackney-coach driving more than usually profitable trades. The citizens themselves

live comfortably and snugly together, with no marked difference to distinguish them from the inhabitants of other large villages, except a somewhat arrogant demeanour on account of the Capitol, and peradventure a contemptuous smile in the face of a New-Yorker or Philadelphian, who should praise the City Hall or the United States Bank of their respective cities. There is a small theatre, some pretty churches, and several immense hotels. The President's house would pass for a palace in Europe; and the Capitol, a structure of white marble, situated on a high and lofty eminence, is at once magnificent and stupendous. You can scarcely tire of perusing its imposing and gigantic proportions. You may ride round it again and again, view it from every position, at every period of the day, it continues to grow upon the imagination. Its ponderous dome reminds you of St. Peter's. Both the interior and exterior views are full of grandeur. The Rotunda is lofty and superb. Then, how alive it is with echoes! Every accidental sound is repeated and magnified; reverberating strange noises, that mingle into moans and wailings like the grieving of spirits in the air. Men and women, too, look so little on the broad floor and beneath that soaring vault.

The finest prospect is from the terrace. It is really remarkable and beautiful. The hill is abrupt, and sufficiently high to command a panoramic view of the city and surrounding country, the residence of the chief of the republic showing finely from a distant hill; and the Potomac sweeping on with its broad current, to which the Seine and the Thames are but rivulets.

It was a mild and pleasant afternoon towards the end of March, and a few evenings after the singular attempt upon young Leslie's life. The sun had gone down radiantly, leaving all the west

a wall of golden light, and the earth lay beneath steeped in purple softness and tranquil beauty. Congress had adjourned for the day, and hundreds were pouring, all in the same direction (and all busily engaged in commenting upon the occurrences of the debate just concluded), from the steep Capitol-hill and into the broad Pennsylvania Avenue. Many members were dashing down on horseback, and a train of carriages conducted others to their hotels or houses.

We have said that the crisis was an interesting one. At this period it had reached its acme. The next day was that fixed for the long expected and much talked of speech of Mr. Leslie. The news of the catastrophe which at this unfortunate moment had happened to his son had reached Washington, with many various modifications and exaggerations. His strong attachment to his family was well known. It was doubted whether young Mr. Leslie was not dying—nay, was not dead. Flying reports glanced from lip to lip. The question of the great statesman's arrival became one of general conversation and interest; and, perhaps, of the throngs who now issued from that immense and most beautiful edifice, nearly all were either speaking or thinking of the accomplished and soul-stirring orator, who had already flung down his gauntlet fiercely to the most eloquent leader of the opposite party; and whose absence now, while it deprived the concourse of the conflict, perhaps as interesting as that of the two last gladiators on a Roman amphitheatre, left also a strong disappointment upon his excited and expecting party.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the European reader that, in a republic like the United States, eloquence is an art peculiarly important, and consequently peculiarly cultivated. Questions of the

deepest weight have agitated her councils, fully betraying the fiery energies and outbreaks of a youthful people; and her legislative floor has already trembled beneath bursts of passionate and lofty eloquence, such as shook the Roman Forum when Rome was free. These periods, however, thus far have only illustrated the strength of the political fabric, and fully confirmed the confidence of her people. Like every other human bark, she floats upon an ocean, and beneath a sky, where danger sometimes yawns in her path and thunders above her head; but she has ridden securely and majestically the elemental war. The fury of political zeal, and the clash and fluctuations of commercial interests, have sometimes shrouded her in alarm and darkness; but the clouds soon broke away, and instead of discovering but the scattered fragments of a wreck, we find her swollen canvass still lofty in the sun, and her star-spangled banner streaming on the wind. Her only object is the freedom and happiness of the human race; and the experience of past ages furnishes her a chart by which she may hope to avoid the quicksands of treachery and the rocks of foreign and domestic ambition. Other nations boast of their country; why should not the American be proud of his? Conceit is a charge most commonly and sneeringly urged against us. What other nation does not equally merit it? Who so arrogant, so overbearing, so uncompromisingly exacting in his claims to national superiority, as the Englishman? Who so ludicrously tenacious, so likely to run you through the body in the defence of the grand glory of his country, as a Frenchman? It is a very honourable, happy, and useful feeling. Why shall not we also regard the future with hope? Who can so justly point to the past and the present with exultation?

The crowd passed away. The sun went down soft as the eyes of a widowed wife; full and melancholy rose the moon. It was the night of the President's *levee*—and all the world were to be there. This is the American *court*. Here gathers into a focus the flower of American talent, although necessarily blended with dashes of more homely material.

At nine, Howard and his father drove to the large and palace-like building of the President; and making their way with some difficulty through the throng of equipages, they drove in beneath the arch, and soon found themselves in the brilliantly lighted and crowded apartments. The *coup d'œil*, indeed, was dazzling: so many rooms were thrown open—so much gay company had already assembled—nymphs and sylphs floating all over in groups—officers in glittering uniforms—and a heterogeneous mixture of the great and the lovely—tributes from town and country—exquisites from Philadelphia, New-York, and Boston—dashing élégants from Charleston and Baltimore. The sturdy planter from the South, master, peradventure, of a hundred or two slaves—plain grave men from the Western settlements—the culled for talent from the sparse population—belles from the meridian of city fashion, with the true Parisian air and elegance. Indeed, the classes meeting here are strikingly opposite and picturesque—the gleanings of a country comprising an area of two millions square miles.

"Come, my son," said the judge, "our first duty is to the President."

"I do not see him, sir," said Howard, looking around.

"Yonder, Hal, at the lower end of the room; that plain old gentleman standing to receive the presentations. Look, Governor L—— is taking

up Mrs. and Miss Temple. See how kindly and simply familiar he is with all alike. He chats as gracefully and easily now as a young beau. It is a fine sight, Hal."

"It is interesting from its perfect simplicity and absence of ostentation," replied Howard.

They made their way up to the first man of the republic, and the judge introduced his son. The President was surrounded by a circle of ladies and gentlemen, and a light and agreeable conversation was going on; in which, for a few moments, young Howard bore his part with ready address. There was perceptible in the whole circle nothing more than an intelligent and hospitable host welcoming his guests. But the numbers of introductions prevented of course any prolonged conversation.

"Look around you, my son," said the judge, who, in the exercise of his duties a cold, firm, astute, and devoted labourer, yet nurtured, as such men even when least suspected very often do, a green spot in his heart, where affection and poetic feeling were as fresh and verdant as in the bosom of a boy, and who watched over the education of his son with the fondest and tenderest care—"look around you, Hal; you are in a spot which should put your meditations in motion. Few on the globe are more worthy your observation. Here is the palace, court, and throne of your country—the highest ornament, its moral glory. Here learn to love simplicity and national freedom. Here you breathe the pure atmosphere of liberty and reason. You *are* the *equal* of him whom you have chosen your *chief*. Guard your actions, improve your mind, and you may one day stand in his place."

"There are two persons here," said Howard, who was accustomed to reason with his father—"there are two persons here to-night who jar

somewhat on the pleasure which the scene affords."

"Who, my son?"

"Yonder broad-shouldered man, sir, has been pointed out to me in the street as the master of two hundred slaves—"

"A-hem!" said the judge; "and the other?"

"Look there," rejoined Howard.

His father, following the direction of his eyes, beheld the tall, startling, and majestic figure of an Indian chief. He was in full costume, with his guide, and stepped about the rooms—cold, stern, erect—with his dark piercing eyes, straight hair, and copper complexion; a pipe and fan, however, he held in his hand instead of a weapon, as an evidence that he considered his nation no longer at war with the United States. While he stood, a painter, who had just obtained from him a promise to sit for a portrait, observed to him,—

"But, instead of your pipe and fan, you must hold your spear."

"No," said the dark warrior; "no spear for me; I have done with spears for ever."

"Did you hear that proud and melancholy reply?" continued Howard. "I could wish the slave-master and the Indian out of the picture."

"You are yet unstudied in these matters, Hal. Your feeling is noble, romantic, and natural. The ardent and susceptible do not understand how these things, being entailed on us by others, over whom we had no control, now remain, and must remain, till gradually cleansed from our political system by time and wisdom. You are right in supposing them evils; but wrong in the belief that they are to be ascribed to *us*, or that we even have the power of immediately disentangling ourselves from them. But come, I see you are anxious to get to the ladies; and yonder is Miss Temple, look-

ing as sad, and casting her eyes as often at you, as if—"

"I promised to let her know the intelligence in my letter from the Leslies," said Howard.

"Well, well; let me present you to one or two of *my* intimates, and then you shall be at liberty to seek out your own."

So saying, after selecting a dozen of the first men in the rooms, and formally presenting his son, he entered himself into their circle; where he was hailed as one of the most enlightened, profound, and gifted members of their party.

Thus at leisure, Howard made his way through scores of his acquaintance, and endeavoured to gain the arm of Miss Temple; but he was assailed by Miss Romain, who, half-giddy with the flatteries of gentlemen who, struck by her conspicuous charms, had pressed successfully for an introduction to the beautiful belle from New-York, now sprang upon him with that half-hoyden familiarity with which she often covered her coquettish designs. The young man found it impossible to escape.

"Oh, Mr. Howard, so glad to see you! I am quite tired of governors, generals, and commodores, and a plain *mister* is quite a relief. Ha! Count Clairmont!—good evening, sir. Why you are quite a stranger: do you remember me? or shall we be introduced again? I am 'Miss Romain, from *New-York*;'" and she playfully (and very well, too) mimicked the phrase which had been that evening so often repeated.

"Beautiful being!" whispered the count; "shall I ever forget—"

"Nonsense, disagreeable creature!" said she, bending her mouth towards Howard. "Don't you *hate* that Count Clairmont?"

"Yes," said Howard, "with all my heart."

Miss Romain looked surprised a moment.

"O Lord!" she continued, "here is that horrid Indian; I shall be tomahawked, I am sure. What can bring such people here? And there is Mr. D——, the great editor; and here, see this tall gentleman, Colonel E——, who, this very morning, had his vest-button shot off by Mr. K——; and—O dear! my charming Mrs. Hamilton, how do you do? Are you not delighted here? And why were you not at the Secretary D——'s last night?"

It was with some difficulty that Howard disengaged himself from Miss Romain; who, knowing that he was affianced to Miss Leslie, thought it a pretty triumph for herself, could that young lady be told, by some officious friend, that the lover had flirted all the evening with her. At length, however, a young Englishman carried her off to eat an ice; and Howard found himself with Flora and her mother.

"Come, Mrs. Temple," said Clairmont, "let us make the tour."

"And shall I be so bold," asked Howard, "as to offer my arm to one of the ladies, Miss Temple?"

Flora knew well Miss Leslie's engagement to Howard, and availed herself of his invitation with secret joy.

"And pray, Mr. Howard," asked she, as they glided away in a direction opposite to that taken by her mother and Clairmont—"pray, how is Miss Leslie? I have suffered to learn how she bears her terrible misfortune."

Howard related all he knew, which was in truth little, and much conversation ensued between them. They had wandered into a distant room, and came, without perceiving it, near the spot where stood Mrs. Temple and Clairmont, with their backs towards them, so as to be quite unaware of their proximity.

A distinguished southerner had just asked a question—the last words were audible to Flora—

respecting Norman's accident, and the probability of Mr. Mordaunt Leslie's reaching Washington in time for the next day's debate.

"It would be a glorious thing," said Mrs. Temple, "were he to be away; though, in good truth, I pity him for his domestic calamity."

"For his *son*," said the cold voice of Clairmont, "*he* is not worthy of pity; he was hurt in some drunken brawl; he is a mere dissipated roué. I know him to be a—" The count's voice sank to a lower tone; but Flora could not help detecting the words, "dishonest at cards," and "Miss Morton's ring."

"Good God!" said the gentleman.

"True, true," said Mrs. Temple; "perfectly true, I am sorry to say."

Howard had not heeded this extraordinary conversation. He had been, for the moment, absorbed in contemplating the intelligent countenance of a young politician, already reported to be a Catiline.

"Did you hear *that?*" asked Flora, paler than she had yet been.

"No, I beg your pardon," replied Howard; "what was it?"

"Nothing," said Flora, faintly, and in a short time rejoined her mother.

"Bless me, my dear love!" said the latter, "why, you look ill! how unlucky!"

Howard remained till late; but he was abstracted, and in no mood to enjoy society. Around him gathered groups of interesting and most distinguished men, both foreigners and natives,—orators, members, senators, secretaries, office-holders, and office-seekers; but his thoughts were occupied with his friend Norman's perilous situation, and the distress of Julia. At length he retired, with a resolution to attend the debates one day more, and, if then Mr. Leslie did not arrive, to set off himself for New-York.

CHAPTER XIX.

The American Senate—Two or three popular Statesmen—Sketches, whose Originals may be as well found at the present Day as at a former Period.

——"On the contrary, I commend Demosthenes for leaving the tears, and other instances of mourning which his domestic misfortunes might claim, to the women, and going about such actions as he thought conducive to the welfare of his country: for, I think, a man of such firmness and other abilities as a statesman ought to possess, should always have the common concern in view, and look upon his private accidents or business as a consideration much inferior to the public."

PLUTARCH.

On the subsequent morning the Senate assembled at eleven. With great difficulty Howard procured a seat. An immense crowd had thronged to hear the interesting debate; to witness the struggle upon an arena where, in the full and fierce conflict of intellect and genius, met the men in whose hands the destinies of the republic were reposed. B——, the great opponent of Mr. Leslie, was present; and a sudden sensation ran round the room as Mr. Leslie himself entered and took his seat. Among the multitudes in the apartment, a majority were ladies. The section allotted to the auditors is on the same floor with the speakers; and the fair daughters of Columbia were accommodated with seats by the politeness of the learned senators, to the utter discomfiture of whole benches of dandies and others of the male kind, who, by a more early attendance, had fancied themselves

secure. After much pressure and toiling, much rustling of silk, nodding of feathers, and glancing of jewels, the mass at length settled into unmoving silence, each one convinced that, however abominably uncomfortable the situation he occupied, it was useless to strive after a better. A speaker rose. Heads were turned—necks stretched—mouths (women's and all) closed—to hear Mr. R—— address the Senate. Few in our country have ever excited such universal and irrepressible curiosity as this extraordinary man. He could never even pass along the street without attracting all eyes. It has been said that, "While he was a bitter opponent, he was an unserviceable friend;" and that, "with all his brilliant talents, he never made a proselyte or gained a vote;" yet his appearance in the halls of legislation ever created a murmur of interest. And as his tall and gaunt form rose, it seemed to strike his opponents with a feeling of dismay, as if some being of a different nature had alighted on the earth to take part in the battle. On this day, he divided the floor with two other speakers, Mr. Leslie and his great opponent Mr. B——. The former possessed a heavy and vehement power, which struck down opposition with the deliberate strength and self-possession of a giant; and from the lips of the latter flowed persuasion in an ever-deepening stream, bearing the soul onward as if through fairy-land. But the favourite weapon of Mr. R—— was sarcasm. He differed from Mr. Leslie as Saladin did from Richard: the British monarch cleaving a helmet with his ponderous blade, while his agile rival severed a piece of silk with his sabre. Nobody could hear the Virginian orator without being fascinated. His voice was of a feminine sweetness and pliancy, singularly expressive as he warmed in debate. His speech was full of classical and

poetical imagery; but, in consequence of his numerous and curious digressions, it was, at times, difficult to determine what was the subject of his discourse. Every bosom, however, seemed alive to the impressions of wonder and delight which he created. Howard, if not instructed, was at least charmed. The orator's exquisite and original wit —his strange sweet flow of poetic thought and musical language—the matchless beauty of many passages—his keen hints and hits—his critiques on matters in general; and, more than all, his biting, withering, and relentless satire can never be forgotten by those familiar with him as a speaker. That strange and lofty form—the oft-extended long finger of that skeleton hand—the snakish intensity of those piercing black eyes—the fiendishness of his sneer—the winning softness of his smile—the silver melody of his high voice!—they had much to regret who were prevented from hearing him by the pressure of the crowd on that memorable day. As he seated himself, Mr. Leslie arose with all the talent of his predecessor, but much more carefully directed. His sole object at first to convince the reason. He had the argumentative power of the practised lawyer. He deliberately related his opinions. He demonstrated it with the force of a problem; and only gradually as he proceeded rose into a more elevated strain, and at length burst forth into enthusiasm that fired every soul. His subject led him to touch upon the nature and permanency of the Union. He deepened into feeling and poetry; splendid passages flashed from him with fiery vehemence, stricken fiercely out by conflict with men who arraigned his political opinions, shocked his associations of country, and approached, with the brand lighted and raised, to fire the temple of American glory. Nothing could be more dazzling than his deep and strong

pictures. They should be hung up before every eye. He was triumphant and irresistible. He bore down all before him: not only the heart of his auditors, but of all the country, of every lover of freedom and humanity throughout the globe, seemed swelling in his bosom and thundering from his lips. One might have imagined that the spirits of Washington and Hamilton, of Jefferson and Franklin, of a whole crowd of the departed heroes and statesmen of the republic, were leaning from the walls and cheering him on. For several hours he calmly and forcibly assailed the bill introduced by Mr. B——, which had occasioned so much excitement in the public mind. It was seen by the friends of the measure that he was no common assailant. His powerful and heavy appeals were deeply felt in the quarter where they were directed; like the blows of a battle-axe wielded by the arm of a giant, while the gates shook and the fortress trembled to its base. He resembled the black knight at the storming of Front de Bœuf's castle, whose ponderous and fatal strokes were heard above all the din of the battle. At length he rested—the work seemed done; when his mortal opponent Mr. B—— sprang suddenly on the floor with an eagerness which showed very plainly that it was *not* done. The auditors who had been sitting, standing, stretching—some hanging by a toe to a chair, some leaning on a shoulder against a pillar, sqeezing, squeezed, and distorted into all sorts of unnatural and distressing attitudes and situations—prepared to go. At the sight of Mr. B——'s tall, peculiar, and commanding person, at the sound of his low deep voice, at the thoughts of his known genius, and the anticipation of the reply which appeared to have been some time burning in his bosom, the motion of the crowd was checked.

The relaxed toe was again braced—the relieved shoulder again put in requisition—the fatigued ear once more erect—the fair neck stretched—the seal of silence again set upon the pretty mouths. Every thing again was still and unmoving. His qualifications were numerous and of nearly the highest kind, both physical and mental. A fountain of fervid feeling at his heart enabled him to inspire, to enchant—threw his hearers off their guard by sudden and passionate appeals to the poetry of their natures—an ever-ready and lavish flow of words furnished a vehicle which never failed. He had all the poetry of thought, aided by all the art and melody of language. His sentences fell on the ear and the heart, at once gratifying the intellect and rousing the soul; and often, after a burst of eloquence, which rolled over the heads of the crowd, leaving a deep silence, like that which succeeds thunder, his voice was lulled to a low sweet tone, his vehement manner was softened, and his words

> "Drew audience and attention still as night,
> Or summer's noontide air."

A deep and powerful voice was one of Mr. B——'s peculiarities. It was at times what opera goers call a sweet bass, and was heard distinctly in every modulation. Indeed, in any stranger it would have been by itself all-sufficient to arrest every ear. His pronunciation was also of a singular kind, and will never be forgotten by those in whose minds it was associated with his eloquence. His face and head were more peculiar than all. No one would call them handsome. Did they belong to anybody else—to a lower intellect—to an obscurer man—they might induce the opposite term. But he who has stood all day on one leg to listen, who has felt his seducing poetry steal into

the soul, and his voice bursting on his ear like a war-trumpet, till the blood now mounted to the temple, then left the cheek colourless, till the flesh creeped upon his shoulder, and the heart leaped in his bosom, will never hear a pronunciation, or see a head, or a face, or an expression like B——'s without peculiar pleasure. His countenance was rugged and rough-hewn. None of the smoothness of youth, and health, and simple content was there; on the contrary, it was marked with time, thought, and care. He resembled one of Milton's great orators—

> "Deep on his front engraven,
> Deliberation sat and public care;
> And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
> Majestic though in ruin."

While they under his influence confessed he was not handsome, they at the same time felt that the beauty of Apollo would detract from his identity, and diminish the interest with which he was then regarded. There were times when the expression of his face was nearly savage. His eyes glared and flashed, and his glances fell on his opponent with the fierceness of a tiger.

But with all this power he failed. The bill, so heavily opposed by Mr. Leslie, it was understood, as subsequently proved the case, would not pass. That day elevated Mordaunt Leslie yet higher in the public opinion; advanced him yet nearer the ultimate object of his ambition.

As Howard passed home from the inspiring conflict, he heard from many a lip words of praise and prophecy linked with the name of the father of his affianced bride, that roused in his young imagination many a dream of honour and happiness.

CHAPTER XX.

A new Link in the Chain.

"By Astaroth! ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries."

Samson Agonistes.

Several months elapsed. Leslie recovered from his wounds, but was still pale, when accident brought to his ear the atrocious slander circulated against him. The same charge of gambling and dishonesty at cards, magnified by other insinuations urged by Clairmont at Washington, in the hearing of Miss Temple, had been subsequently reiterated, and at last began to gain credit. So popular was the count, that his ill word was sufficient to inflict a serious injury. Not that any one who *knew* Leslie lent it an ear—but one is not *known* even by all one's acquaintance; and there is a large class always ready, not only to believe calumnies, but to speed them on their way with a secret and eager hand. The affair burst upon Leslie suddenly. He happened to be one day in company with a number of ladies and gentlemen, among whom was Miss Romain. He had just invited the young lady to ride with him on the subsequent day.

"Do you know, Leslie," said Moreland, a few moments afterward, "I this morning heard of a most extraordinary allegation against you from the lips of this same Miss Romain whom you are so civil to."

"Allegation!—name it."

Moreland repeated, though rather incoherently, as he had not distinctly understood it, what Miss Romain was said to have spoken. It referred to a certain mysterious incident at cards reported to have been charged upon Mr. Leslie, and never to have been refuted, or even noticed.

"Take care," continued Moreland, "of that beautiful syren—she is really dangerous; she flatters you in your presence, and loves to behold you in her train, but makes free with your name the moment you withdraw."

"Indeed!" said Norman, gravely.

"It was my intention," said Moreland, "to let you know the moment I ascertained precisely the nature of this report. You should know it, not only that you may refute it, but that you may hereafter beware of *her*. I will endeavour to discover at once its precise nature."

"When will you see me?"

"To-morrow."

"This bodes trouble," said Norman, as if forgetting that he was not alone.

The next morning Moreland called on Leslie, and made him acquainted with the particulars of the calumny. He had also traced it directly to Clairmont. Miss Romain was ascertained to have been more wantonly mischievous than could have been supposed. Whether she really believed it, or whether she was stung by jealousy at finding that Norman had totally laid aside the character of her lover, it was certain that to the charge in question she had given a most marked emphasis.

"And will you still *ride* with her," demanded Moreland, "after such a singular evidence of her disposition?"

"Yes," said Norman, dryly—"I have already invited her to accompany me this afternoon, and

I will not retreat. It is too tempting an opportunity to let her know my surprise. From this time, however, she shall learn how utterly a friend may be thrown away. As for Clairmont, he is a scoundrel; I shall publicly chastise him the instant we meet. The thing is scarcely worth noticing, but the manner in which this man is received here gives his words an importance which they would not otherwise deserve."

At four he called for Miss Romain according to appointment.

* * * * * *

The next morning Clairmont stood on the steps of his hotel in Broadway, surrounded by a number of gentlemen. He was in a riding-dress, with whip and spurs; and after a careless leave of his companions, was in the act of mounting his horse. At that moment Leslie approached, and the two enemies stood face to face. Clairmont turned a little pale upon the sight of one he had so deeply wronged advancing with determined step and air and contracted brow, whose meaning could not be mistaken. A small circle of spectators closed around them. The accusation of Clairmont had been publicly made during Leslie's illness, and his great skill with the pistol was known. The resolution, the high-wrought temper, and lofty character of Leslie were also well understood, and the interview was regarded with strong signs of interest. The nobleman paused, with a glistening eye, and a shade of white increasing on his lip. Leslie's air was high and stern, but calm and noble. As the two thus stood, their prominent characteristics might be detected in their very appearance: the one so frank, fearlessly open-hearted, and yet so quietly resolved; the other, deep, malignant, and dangerous—the one frowning with the fiery firmness of a

lion; the spirit of the other coiled up with the stillness of a snake which lifts its crest against the foot that would crush it in the grass.

"I have been given to understand," said Leslie, very composedly, "that *you*, sir, who *call yourself* Count Clairmont, have made use of certain expressions derogatory to my character."

"Well, sir."

"Your silence implies assent. I give you one moment to deny them—to confess them wilful, base falsehoods."

"Mr. Leslie," said Clairmont, "if you are a gentleman you have a remedy."

"I have once told you the only terms on which I will consent to meet you. Though I believe you no gentleman, yet my belief of your cowardice at heart is so strong that I again dare you to accede to them. Those terms, gentlemen—"

But the wary Clairmont, with great cunning, had already adopted his plan: it was his object to escape even hearing terms which most probably he might not be anxious to accept, but if possible to provoke Leslie to attack him on the spot. Accordingly, first placing a hand in his bosom, he interrupted the speaker—

"Mr. Leslie," he said, "you desire to know whether the assertions to which you allude were made by me, and whether they are persisted in. Know, that I never speak that in a man's absence which I fear to repeat in his presence. I avow, then, that I detected you in such a trick at cards as *ought* to, and *must* exclude you for ever from the society of gentlemen."

Without further reply, Leslie stepped forward, and at the same moment produced from behind him a riding-whip, with the evident intention of applying it to immediate use.

Pale, but with the most determined and delibe-

rate composure, Clairmont drew forth a pistol, which he coolly cocked.

"No—no, sir," he said, in a low tone—"I am on my guard *now*—the attacks of a ruffian I am taught how to meet. Take care, sir—take care—approach me not—one step, one inch, one motion, and I swear by the God of heaven I lay you dead at my feet!"

Leslie paused—Clairmont smiled—the crisis was interesting, and considerable curiosity prevailed to witness the event. But the inactivity of Leslie was only momentary. With a leap, swift as the tiger when he darts upon a startled steed, he sprang to the throat of his foe. The pistol was discharged; but so rapid and unexpected had been the assault, that the aim, never before known to miss, now failed at the moment of utmost need. The ball passed through the lapel of Norman's coat; and the baffled possessor of a now useless weapon had thrown away his sole chance, and with it the sympathies of every spectator. Unarmed—of a livid whiteness—he stood in mute and impotent hate; first, aghast with the certainty that he had launched the death-bolt, and afterward, to find himself utterly in the power of a man so deeply resolute and indignant, and against whom he had just given such a dire evidence of malice.

"I shall now proceed," said Leslie, without exhibiting the slightest astonishment or alarm, but laying an iron hand on the bosom of his foe, "to inflict upon you, my friend, the chastisement you so richly merit. You are a coward—you are an impostor—*you* are guilty of the baseness which your rancorous tongue has charged on me—*you* have swindled at cards—and you, to the best of my observation, stole—*stole, Count* Clairmont, the valuable diamond ring of Miss Morton. Hereafter, sir count, never show your face in the society of gen-

tlemen; but, lest you *should*, I mark you for what you are—a *craven* and a scoundrel!"

He raised the whip.

"Leslie," said Clairmont, almost inaudibly, "do not—do not, for your *own* sake, mark me—I warn—I warn you, Leslie—do not—"

Rage, fear, and intense emotion had so transformed his countenance, that, with his ashy face, and a ring of black beneath each eye, he looked more like a devil than a man.

"Carry your warnings, sir, to those who regard them," said Leslie.

Deliberately, and with a powerful hold on his throat, he applied the long whip to his writhing and quivering foe with all the strength which his athletic and indignant arm could command. No one interfered. For several minutes the determined youth continued the application of his blows, till, foaming at the mouth, covered with dust, struggling, trembling, and ever and anon uttering a half-suffocated groan of anguish and revenge, his exhausted victim hung, with drooping body and unbraced limbs, apparently senseless on his arm.

"I have castigated this man, gentlemen," said Leslie, with a voice actually gentle in its tone—so calm is true passion—"I have castigated this man for no ordinary personal pique, no mere common hatred. I hold him up to you, not only for a swindler and a scoundrel—I have good reason to believe him a midnight *assassin*."

In the scuffle Clairmont's hat had fallen—his valet now appearing, picked it up, and lent an arm to the support of his master, who, finding himself released, lifted his head, gazed wildly around, gnashed his teeth, half incoherently uttered, "God! oh God!" and striking his face deliriously with his hands, rushed mad and foaming into the hotel.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Plot opens.

"Old men and beldams, in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously;
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths;
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear:
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist;
While he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes."
King John.

The Americans are called great travellers. They early imbibe the taste in their own country; whose extent and innumerable beauties may well lure mutual visiters from her remotest parts. At present, too, the facilities for travel are so extraordinary, that it would be madness to stay at home. If the country is gigantic, so are its curiosities—so are the means of viewing them. The springs, the falls, the lakes, the rivers, the mountains, Quebec and her fortifications (a tour to the Canadas, by-the-way, in the abrupt transition of manners and customs, is, to an American, very like a tour to Europe), the stupendous mountain-scenery in New-York and New-England, where nature may be viewed in all her sublime and awful grandeur. European scenery is different from that of America, but not more strikingly magnificent; and the tourist of the Western Continent—let itinerant scribblers say what they will—finds accommodations,

ease, honesty, and comfort infinitely superior to that met with on the great continental routes of Europe. In the commercial cities they may command luxuries and refinements equal to those of Paris and London; railroads, canals, and steamboats convey them in every direction. During the months of August and September these temptations are found irresistible by the fashionable world, who take wing from the dusty town, and sweep in gay flocks through scenery splendid beyond description. Less than twelve hours suffice to land the passengers at Albany from New-York, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles; thence, a succession of dazzling views attracts each votary of health and pleasure: and when he has been drenched by the terrible Niagara, floated on the St. Lawrence, wandered by Lake George, mused in the natural amphitheatre of Trenton Falls, soared to the Pine Mountain House, on the Catskill—where, from the edge of a precipice three thousand feet perpendicular, he looks down upon the lower earth, hills and vales, towns and forests, and the broad and glorious Hudson, meandering on its course of light like a silver snake;—when these excursions are over, the *beau ton* and the *beaux esprits* rest their pinions a few weeks at the Saratoga Springs, about thirty-six miles above Albany. Perhaps there is no spot which gathers a greater focus of beauty, fashion, wealth, and genius than Congress Hall.

After all, the greatest amusement of those who abandon a city is, to watch for and devour every item of intelligence from their deserted homes.

A party of ladies and gentlemen were seated on the long portico one day, when Judge Howard received a package of papers.

"Well," said Mrs. Hamilton, "we shall hear from town again, *at* last. They say Americans

are fond of news; I do not think it peculiar to them, but to human nature. I never received a letter in my life without *trembling;* and a newspaper, when far from home, is really an agitation."

"Let us share the benefit of your courier, judge," said a wealthy southern planter, as the judge unfolded one of the sheets.

"Oh dear, yes; a newspaper is as good as a play!" exclaimed Miss Morton.

"Well, then, let us see, let us see," said the judge, passing his finger over his lip as he ran through the contents; "we must select for the ladies. Here is a long report from the Secretary of the Navy."

"Oh, never mind the navy," cried Miss Morton.

"Well, then, we have an inquiry into the effects of the late rise of cotton."

"Worse and worse!"

"Fire, and lives lost; a fireman killed."

"Oh, poor fellow! Where was it?" asked a fop, yawning.

"Nothing about the theatres?" demanded Morton.

"Read the marriages," said his sister.

"And the deaths," mumbled an old gentleman, who took the waters for his health.

"Bless me! bless my soul!" said the judge, in a tone of sudden and extreme interest.

"Oh, now we shall have it!" said several, laughing; "out with it, judge."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the kind old gentleman, with real distress.

"Oh, judge, how can you keep us all in the dark, in this way!" said Mrs. Hamilton.

The judge read,—

"'Most mysterious and terrible incident.'"

"Dear me!" cried one, laughing; "that promises well, indeed."

"I was fearful the colonel was going to be stupid to-day," said another.

"'Our readers are perhaps aware,'" continued the judge, reading, "'that a most mysterious circumstance has, within three days, occurred in this city. The daughter of one of our most wealthy and respectable townsmen, whose name will probably be too soon before the public, has suddenly disappeared, under circumstances of the most incredible and inexplicable mystery; leading to the conjecture that death has closed her career on earth. She was young, of most excelling beauty, and distinguished in the higher circles as one of the most remarkable and charming ladies of the day. We cannot add more at present.'"

"Well, that *is* extraordinary and mysterious enough," said one; "what can it mean?"

"Who can it be?" added another.

"There is a postscript," said the judge; and the extremest interest was now exhibited to learn if it conveyed more information upon the affair.

"Yes, here is a second paragraph," and he read the following:—

"'Since the above was in type, it has become our painful duty to state, that the name of the young lady alluded to above, as having so mysteriously disappeared, is Miss Rosalie Romain. A committee of investigation, immediately formed, have fully sanctioned the general opinion that she must have been *murdered*. The liveliest, nay, the deepest sensation prevails through all circles upon this subject; which, perhaps, for intense interest, is without a parallel in the history of our country or age. Dark suspicions are entertained respecting an individual attached to a most distinguished family. We withhold the name, partly because, however loud and deep may be the public suspicion, no tribunal of justice has, *as yet*, taken any step to war-

rant them. Nothing has been spoken of to-day but this most singular and terrible event. The police are on the track, and, it is said, have made discoveries of a most appalling description; tending to confirm the worst conjectures, and to fix the odium on one wealthy, high, and hitherto unsuspected. This is an event of peculiar interest. Its awful mystery—the agonizing circumstances by which it has been marked—the extreme youth, beauty, and innocence of the guileless victim—the anguish of the bereaved and broken-hearted parent—the rank of *him* to whom the public finger points as the *murderer*—the great respect in which his family have been held—all tend to create violent excitement. We never saw the public mind in a greater ferment. From the lofty political standing of the father of the accused (at least accused by the general voice), in any other country he would possess *power* among those before whom this question will be probably tried; and if the criminal were guilty beyond a doubt, yet, with his influence, he would find means to escape. Let the admiring world now look on the administration of justice in a *republic*. Let them see the laws enforced with equal severity and promptitude against the rich and poor—the strong and weak—the high and low. We would not forestall the opinions of those who are yet undecided what to think; nor do we take it upon ourselves to say that *he* who has been selected as the perpetrator is really guilty; but *if he be guilty*, there is no possibility of his escape. Let every apprehension be quelled. If he were the head of our nation, on this proof he would be tried—an impartial jury would decide upon his innocence; and if a verdict be pronounced against him, he must die the death of a felon.'"

The utmost contrariety of opinion prevailed as to the person against whom these terrible inuendoes

were directed; but an arrival from the city brought the fearful intelligence in all its blistering and naked details. It struck the gay circle with a feeling of dismay and horror.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Tempest gathers.

"Can this be haughty Marmion?"—Scott.

As the last peal of St. Paul's Church, on a morning in the early part of autumn, about this period of our story, announced the hour of nine, the usually desultory occupants of Broadway and Chatham-street gradually gave place to a more eager and uniform crowd; and hundreds of persons appeared hastening with quickened step out of the adjoining streets, and bending their course towards the pretty and palace-like looking building which lifted its white front in the centre of the Park. Two large and sombre structures, on either side of the just-mentioned edifice, obtruded themselves on the gaze; and, from their gloomy appearance, might be recognised at once as dismal abodes of guilt. Few, in a philosophical and disinterested mood, can behold a prison without feeling that their horror of the crime yields for the moment to compassion for the criminals: it is the dreary tomb of so many a hope; within its walls have been endured such nameless and unimaginable anguish. The enlightened tenderness of modern legislation prohibits the wheel, the rack, or death in darkness and solitude, by the cord, the axe, the dagger, or the bowl; yet

here the wretched, whose guilt is sometimes the infirmity of nature, and sometimes the error of education, have writhed under the prolonged torments of remorse and fear: and what are the axe and the wheel to them? The massy portals, too, may—nay, when we consider the mischances of human affairs, *must* have sometimes closed upon the innocent, and returned them to the scaffold, or disgorged them upon a world whose unthinking selfishness as often pursues unfortunate virtue, as it sanctions for a time the triumphs of successful guilt. Even the sight of vice itself, thus baffled and chained, without the support of hope or the consolations of conscience, shrinking from the aspect of an external world, all threatening and dark, to the communion of a heart lost in the turbulence of yet more gloomy horror, and awaiting, in impotent and illimitable despair, its dismissal from a dreadful existence to a state yet more thrillingly appalling, is, perhaps, of all spectacles the most fearful and ghastly.

The black and revolting buildings, so conspicuously placed in the heart and gay centre of the city, had long jarred upon the minds of the inhabitants; and one, indeed, at the present day, under the wand of some cunning architect, has assumed a more lively and lovely shape, and been converted to other purposes; but at the time of which we write, the authorities found a certain appropriateness in their proximity to their graceful neighbour. The latter is familiar to the New-York reader as the City Hall, the seat of many public offices, but particularly of the courts of justice; and at that time both the civil and criminal courts were held within it. The black and ugly buildings which flanked it on either side were used, the one for a jail, where, with the stupid and useless cruelty of a pagan sacrifice, the unfortunate debtor was con-

demned to perpetual idleness and wo; while that one on the west received the criminals against the State, who there awaited their arraignment or their execution, within a minute's walk of their place of trial.

On the present day, the avidity with which all classes hastened towards the City Hall rendered it evident that it was about to become the scene of some interesting judicial proceeding; and the pressure to procure seats in the criminal court-room proved that the circumstances of some dark crime were about to be investigated; probably some reckless enemy to society exposed to general execration, and consigned to just punishment, perhaps a weary and toilsome imprisonment—perhaps to death. It has been long a custom in America, as in England, to conduct the convict condemned to expiate his crime on the scaffold, in broad daylight, and in full view of the people, to some open spot in the suburbs of the town, affording space for the accommodation of the immense multitude generally drawn together by the occasion; and thus, with the deliberate pomp of law, and the solemn ceremonies of religion, to consummate upon the bound and trembling wretch the tremendous doom. After all, the spirit which drew the Romans to the amphitheatre still holds its place in the human breast. Far, very far, are we yet from true *civilization*.

Few crimes in the United States are visited with the punishment of death; and, while older nations often launch the bolt against the feeble head of ignorance or poverty for the most trivial errors of judgment, or sometimes for the cravings of hunger, let it be recorded to the honour of American legislators, that the power which society has lodged in their hands is wielded with more caution.

But in proportion to the infrequency of these

spectacles is the excitement they produce. The guilty wretch, arrested on a charge of murder, and thrown into prison to await his trial, becomes at once a topic of universal and, among the lower orders, of intense interest. To feed this appetite for scenes of carnage, blood, and distress—the peculiar attribute of human nature—the public press is prolific of facts, true or false; and in all their harrowing features, and too often with the exaggeration of accident, prejudice, or passion, retail the incidents of the deed, and conjecture the motives of the perpetrator.

It was on the event of one of these long-expected trials that an immense crowd assembled. Such violent anxiety had been produced by rumour, and the recitals of the public journals, that before the doors of the court-room were thrown open, large throngs had collected on the outside, and, pressing for entrance, filled the avenues and corridors to overflowing. At an early hour, when the public were admitted, the spacious chamber was immediately crowded almost to suffocation. The space within the bar, usually allotted only to gentlemen of the profession, witnesses, jurors in attendance, and persons connected with the proceedings of the hour, was also densely filled; and when the judges assumed their seats, and the cry of "Silence—hats off!" announced that the court were about to enter upon the interesting examination, the multitude presented a slope of heads, back to the farthest reach of the ample hall, such as had rarely before been assembled in the apartment.

Among the individuals within the bar were several who drew peculiar attention and remark from the auditory. The entrance of Mr. Barton, the district attorney, occasioned some interest. He was a young but distinguished and eloquent man, celebrated for the force and fire of his appeals, and

whose powers were said to be rarely awakened in vain. With him came his associate, Mr. Germain, also a profound, sagacious, and eminent counsellor, employed, it was said, by those whom the prisoner's crime had most bereaved, to render his destruction doubly sure. A more dangerous opponent could scarcely have appeared against the unhappy object of all this solicitude; for, a shrewd and practised lawyer, watchful to avail himself of every accident and subterfuge, skilful to lead away attention from a bad point, or to invent a construction favourable to his views—of a deep foresight, an insidious cunning, a ready wit, and a presence of mind never at fault in the examination of witnesses—Germain knew well how to rise from a defeat or to press the moment of triumph. In a just cause, his talents and acquirements were always sure of delighting. The wily votary of falsehood, on the witness' stand, found his mask torn off, and his arts baffled. Betrayed by ingenious artifices into the disproval of his own testimony, and bewildered and startled by the clashing contradictions of his own statement, he at length yielded the conflict, abashed and in despair; confessed the truth, and was dismissed, writhing under the lash of ridicule and rebuke.

But the same power, exerted on the wrong side, was equally fierce, watchful, and uncompromising; and it must be allowed that the eager lawyer, absorbed in the excitement of his cause, did not always stop to inquire into its justice, but used the same weapons alike on all occasions; bewildered the honest witness in wiles laid for the deceitful, and frequently woke all his energies to attack the innocent or defend the guilty. By their side sat Mr. Loring, also one of the most remarkable counsellors of the day; grave, learned, and eloquent; his fine head, partly bald, was expressively clothed with the "silver livery of advised age." He was the only one who as yet appeared for the defence.

The three counsel conversed together across the table with the cool courtesy of the profession; who, while property, reputation, and life are committed to their hands with trembling solicitude, find the exercise of their respective powers but the struggle of a game which, however tremendously important to the parties concerned, is by them played with but transient personal feeling, and to-morrow forgotten.

A gentleman of prepossessing form and appearance was pointed out to each other by the crowd, with symptoms of curiosity, as a foreigner of high rank and unbounded wealth; a casual visiter to this country, whom accident had rendered necessary in the present case as one of the witnesses. This was Count Clairmont. Near him, and frequently exchanging the sentiments of a brief conversation, sat a white-headed old man, whose care-worn and grief-stricken countenance was perused by every eye with extreme interest: he was the father of the young and lovely girl whose murder, by a brutal and unparalleled assassin, was the subject of the present indictment. The hearts of the more enlightened upon the circumstances of the case were shocked and agitated with deep and powerful sympathy on recognising, in the tall and noble figure of a gentleman—who, though somewhat advanced in life, was erect, and almost haughty in his air—the father of the culprit. He stood in a recess within the bar, calm, but pale; and around him waited, with the most evident marks of respect and commiseration, a train of the most wealthy and distinguished inhabitants of the town. These interesting objects had places reserved for them in the midst of the uncommon throng of miscellaneous individuals—lawyers lounging from idleness and curiosity, witnesses and jurors attending on

subpœnas, and law-students inured to scenes of iniquity and distress, who made themselves merry with the various rumours of the case, wagered with each other on the fate of the accused, and advanced jests against the sheriff on his approaching duty.

The outside of the bar was occupied by the middling classes,—sailors, butchers, bakers, and other honest tradesmen and good citizens, whose minds had been highly inflamed by the reports of the case, without being much instructed as to its merits; and who were eagerly anxious to behold the extraordinary ruffian—the cold-blooded seducer and assassin of an innocent and beautiful girl. Concerning the manners and appearance, the character, family, and demeanour of the accused, the most contradictory rumours were rife. Some declared him a ferocious and black-browed giant, with a cruel and malignant countenance, a harsh voice, and relentless heart. Others asserted that he had been the most reckless profligate of the day; that the influence of a wealthy family had already several times screened him from merited punishment; that he had once or twice nearly effected his escape, by the attempted massacre of the officers who had arrested him; and that the authorities were obliged to secure his confinement by means of heavy irons.

A circumstance was observed, too, of a very rare occurrence in this country—a disposition among the lower classes to predetermine the guilt of the accused, and to distrust the integrity of the court. Several journals had given publicity to articles darkly intimating the difficulty of finding a jury sufficiently firm and disinterested to render a true verdict against a man acknowledged to belong to so high a circle of society. Some spoke aloud of the power of wealth and influence; others turned

the affair into a political question; and many (for such clamorous demagogues did not pass away with the days of Greece and Rome) openly proclaimed that, even if the guilty wretch were condemned by the judge, he would be pardoned by the governor. As the trial-day approached, these disturbing influences seemed agitated and fomented by some secret hand. Singular inuendoes lurked in the paragraphs of the daily journals, engendering among the population a fierce and ferocious spirit. The friends of the prisoner beheld, with feelings of the deepest alarm, these clouds gathering around the head of one who had hitherto known only the balmy pleasures of life's sunniest hours. The district attorney had moved in the same circle with the accused in the gay precincts of fashion. Would *he* follow to the death his associate? The very judge on the bench, it was whispered, loved him like a father, and was endeared to him by family relations of the most tender nature. Would *he* too—thus murmured the thousands, nay, the millions (for the event had already swept like fire in the wind), who allowed themselves to be excited by the absorbing question—would this judge, *could* he preside at a trial, thus linked with his own feelings, with cool and impartial deliberation?

There were not wanting third and fourth rate journals which grasped the subject with the sole view of rendering it a party question. The father of the unhappy criminal was spoken of at the period for an important office in the gift of the people. So tempting an engine could not remain unworked, and the astounded statesman heard denunciations and anathemas of the most bitter malignity thundered against him by those who could oppose his political success with no other means than those furnished by this domestic tragedy.

On the other hand, a party of his townsmen, and

indeed the most discreet and intelligent, while they regarded the indictment with wonder, seemed assured that a trial would establish the innocence of the accused. All their sympathies and their fears were now awakened in his behalf, for the public excitement grew more and more dark and threatening, and a trial for life and death, even to the innocent, was not without its perils. Accident might incline the scales against him. The very trial itself was a withering anguish; the very suspicion a gangrene to the heart.

The public indignation and expressions of distrust exercised too upon the interests of the unhappy defendant a most unfavourable influence. Those who really knew Judge Howard, knew that if it had been his own son instead of his friend's, he would construe the law, and preside at the trial, with the sternness of a Roman; and it was feared that he, as well as the district-attorney, might be insensibly led, by the open charges against their integrity, to pass to the opposite extreme, and suffer impartiality to strengthen into severity.

In the thousands that filled the room—stood waiting on the outside and strove vainly for entrance—what a variety of opposite emotions! from the simple curiosity of the indifferent stranger, stimulated by the mere desire to behold a human being tried for his life, to the astonishment and anxiety, the conjectures of the future and the memories of the past, felt by his acquaintance, and to the whirl and tempest, the anguish and agony, in the breasts of those who knew and loved him! Across the minds even of the most rational glanced the thought—"Is not the prisoner indeed *guilty?*" The very apparent impossibility, by a kind of paradox, rendered it probable. What but the glaring and blistering truth of the charge would select *him*, so far beyond the reach of ordinary suspicion,

as the perpetrator of the deed? If not *he*, who *was* the culprit?

Notwithstanding the immense pressure, perfect order prevailed, and all seemed settling themselves in their places, as they best might, like the audience at the commencement of a celebrated tragedy, and with the composed satisfaction of listening to the investigation, and perhaps of soon beholding the doom, of one of the most black, remarkable, and harrowing crimes that had ever occupied the attention of a court of justice.

"Place the prisoner at the bar!" exclaimed the crier, in a loud voice, at an order from the judge.

There was an instantaneous sensation perceptible through the mass of people, but it immediately subsided into a breathless silence, as the side-doors within the bar were flung open, and the officers entered in front of the crowd with the prisoner between them. An impulse of surprise ran again through the multitude, now also accompanied by an evident murmur of sympathy, elicited by the appearance of a very handsome young man, considerably above the middling size, of an erect and commanding form, who, with a firm and rather haughty air, walked to his seat within the prisoner's box. A single glance discovered that he wore the dress and possessed the manners of a gentleman; that his features were mild, intelligent, and uncommonly prepossessing, but that his face was of a deadly paleness, and his lips compressed with the action of one who is the victim of a powerful and unnatural excitement.

To many of the spectators he was personally known; and more than one voice murmured, in tones of the deepest commiseration, "Poor, poor Leslie!"

On entering the box and seating himself, the prisoner looked around, and continued his gaze, as

if in search of some one within the bar, till he encountered the full and terrible glance of Mr. Romain, the father of her of whose death he was accused. For a moment he met and returned the fixed gaze of the old man, who actually shook with the tremours of his increasing emotion; but, as if the forced effort to bear up against his fate and his feelings exceeded his power, the unhappy youth suddenly bowed down his head, and covered his face with his hands.

The whole scene had been of such absorbing interest, that the court, as well as the prisoner and the spectators, appeared for the moment to have abandoned themselves to their feelings, and the young man was the centre of a thousand warm and bleeding sympathies. But the recollection of the heinous deed which he was called upon to answer, and the sight of the aged father of the murdered girl, awoke sterner thoughts. Nor were there wanting some who ascribed his emotion, not to the anguish of innocence, but to the remorseful agonies of guilt.

The court immediately ordered silence. The voice of the crier resounded through the hall. The crowd again arranged themselves on their seats; and though a few handkerchiefs, especially of females, still hid the faces of the softened owners, the cold ceremonials of a legal tribunal at once resumed their course.

With the numerous and tedious formalities preliminary to a great trial, incidental to the empannelling of a jury, &c., we will not detain the reader. They were, on this occasion, so multifarious and prolonged that, upon their final arrangement, the court dismissed the cause for the day, in order that it might be fairly commenced on the succeeding morning. The persons concerned were requested to be punctual in an early attendance; and the

vast and heterogeneous crowd separated, to carry into all quarters of the town their new impressions concerning the appearance of the unhappy prisoner, who, thus fearfully suspended over eternity, was remanded back to prison.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Adversity acquaints a Man with strange Fellows—A Friend wavers.

"And *you*, too, Brutus!"

The Bridewell, in which malefactors were confined, from its open and central situation, commanded one of the most cheerful scenes imaginable. The barred windows of the prisoners enabled them to behold the pleasing enclosure already mentioned, spread verdantly beneath them, overshadowed with rows of trees—a common thoroughfare for the busy citizens, a lounge for the meditative or the idle, and a resort for children, who there pursued their careless sports, yet happily ignorant of the dark world around them. A part of the gay and elegant Broadway rolled along its never-ceasing tide of human beings. The spire of St. Paul's Church appeared at a short distance above clumps of thick foliage; and, on the other side, to the poor captives a shocking contrast, rose the theatre, whose moving crowds and bright lights in the evening rendered it easily distinguishable as the haunt of fashion and pleasure.

One of those reverses of fortune which, however astounding to the individual victims, are common-

place to the general observer of human nature, had plunged Norman Leslie—the proud, the sentimental, the musing, the noble Leslie—into the common prison, upon a charge of murder. The crime was fixed upon him by such a concurrence of glaring and extraordinary facts, that each day had found more and more people ready to believe him guilty. Had any one in other times suggested the probability of his committing such a deed, they who knew him would have ascribed the suggestion to madness or malice; but now that he was actually accused in public, it appeared much less improbable. His high temper, his brooding mind, were well known. Eccentricities had been remembered of him, which before had never excited attention; and even those who had most depended upon his purity of character, now found in him a new illustration of the truth, that "It is not a year or so that shows a man." Covered with obloquy, execrated by the public, Norman Leslie sat in a lonely apartment of the prison above described, on the afternoon of the day of his arraignment, gazing upon the outward scene of joy and freedom. His meditations were suddenly interrupted by the clash and clank of chains, the springing of locks, and the withdrawal of bolts. The intruder was the keeper.

"There has been here," he said, "the Rev. Mr. Harcourt, sir; and he requested me to—to—"

"I do not know him," said Norman; "it must be a mistake."

"No mistake at all, sir. He came to request your leave to visit you, to converse with you."

"With me!" said Norman, as if endeavouring to recollect himself; "upon what subject?"

"Lord, lord, sir!" said the man, apparently unable to conceal a smile, "I thought by this time

you might wish to see gentlemen of his cloth without any request from them."

"God of heaven!" cried Leslie, starting up, so that the man stepped back in some alarm, and lifted his heavy bunch of keys in defence; but, perceiving that the abrupt action of his prisoner was simply the effect of agitation and astonishment, he resumed his first manner.

"Why, yes, sir. He bade me ask you, in short, if you felt yourself in a state of mind to speak with him upon your *situation*."

The rattling of the heavy chain appropriately hung at the outer door of the prison, to signify to the keeper the wish of some applicant for admission, broke off the discourse.

The new comer was Mr. Grey, a counsellor, belonging to the lower ranks of the profession. He motioned the keeper to withdraw. When they were alone, he approached his seat close to that of Norman, and looking around cautiously, said,—

"You do not know me, Mr. Leslie?"

"I have had the pleasure, I think," replied Norman, "of seeing you before in the courts. You are Mr. Grey?"

"Ah! that is well; if you *know* me," said Mr. Grey; "we shall have less difficulty in coming to an understanding."

He passed the palm of his hand across his mouth, as if preparing to open a discourse in the commencement of which he experienced some embarrassment.

"You are aware, then, Mr. Leslie, that you stand indicted for—"

The listener raised his hand with deprecatory gesture—

"Spare me the repetition of that word."

"But you are not fully aware of the evidence accumulated against you."

"I shall learn it soon enough," said the youth, bitterly.

"You do not quite understand me," continued the lawyer, in a conciliatory tone; "*soon enough* can only be in time to counteract it."

"I am in the hands of God," said Norman, with a look that betrayed a heart sick and wearied—"He created—he can destroy—he can rescue me."

"Ay, ay," answered Mr. Grey, hitching his chair yet a few inches closer, again looking round, as if to assure himself that they were alone, and reducing his tone to a yet more confidential key—"but Providence, my young friend, works by human means. It would be rather dangerous to trust to Him alone in *your* case. You must have another lawyer. His aid may be invoked, but it must be by active exertion, not by idle prayers."

"What can I do?" asked the prisoner, with moody calmness; "I am a prisoner; I cannot break through stone walls and iron bars."

"There is one thing which you *can* do," cried the lawyer.

"To free me from this dilemma?" said Norman.

"Ay, to put you forth as unrestrained as the bird that flies at will."

"What can I do?"

"You can *confess*," said Grey, in a close whisper.

Norman started again, with lively signs of agitation and anger.

"Am I to understand that you believe me guilty?" he demanded.

"Mr. Leslie," said the lawyer, "what you say to *me* is secret as if whispered only to your own heart. I am not here to accuse, but to defend you. Confess to me as your lawyer, as your friend, that in a moment of wild delirium, perhaps maddened by wine, you perpetrated a deed foreign from

your nature, which the moment before you did not dream of, and which now you cannot look back upon without regret and horror. It will contribute greatly towards your defence. It may save your life, my young friend, which now stands in imminent danger."

"And what good can my confession do?" asked Norman, in an under-tone of forced composure.

"Much, much," cried the wily lawyer. "The sailor who would navigate a dangerous sea must know the quicksands and rocks which lie in his path. To cure a wound—and the more loathsome, the more need of examination—it must be probed, young man, with a firm and friendly hand, though you shudder and faint under the operation. I am your friend, your pilot, your surgeon. I come to save you. Say you are guilty. The law has its accidents, its shifts, its subterfuges; the clerk's pen may mistake; the jury's mind may be embarrassed, if it cannot be satisfied. Embarrassment is doubt, and doubt is acquittal. You are young, life is sweet; sweeter than wealth, power, reputation. You have been under the influence of a moment's temptation; you have been touched with *lunacy;* you have committed a crime. Well, thousands of good men have sinned; it is the lot of mortals. You are but a boy yet. You must live and repent. The world is broad. Time heals every wound; and repentance converts even sin into joy. Dismiss romantic sensibility. Perhaps you have resolved to abandon the world, either guilty or innocent. If guilty, you imagine death alone can expiate your deed; if innocent, calumny and unjust accusation have at once stripped life of its charms and death of its terrors. Think better of it. Let not the idea of guilt prostrate your moral character too much. It is a physical thing, and depends on the nerves and the blood. Any man,

when the lightning of passion darts through his veins, and when reason reels—any man may yield. The very apostle sinned. The saints in heaven have felt the pollution of this earthly evil. It is a fever, a plague; the best of us may catch it. Come, confess without shame the whole truth. Your life, your reputation commit to my hand. Your father's life, your sister's, their happiness, their fame, are all connected with your fate. You have no right to yield to an unmanly despair. In the sacrifice of yourself, you drag others with you to the altar."

Norman heard him to the end, as if partly with wonder at the terror of his discourse, and partly with a resolution not to interrupt him; at length he said,—

"And if I *do* confess that I deliberately murdered that unfortunate girl, goaded by interest and revenge, can you save me?"

"While there's life there's hope," said the lawyer. "You have money. Money is a god. It commands the strength, the genius, the knowledge, the souls of men."

"And how may money stead me in this extremity?"

"It is to be considered," replied the lawyer—"it is to be considered. Have you never a friend, bound to you by obligations, poor and needy, yet honest in the world's eyes, who could confirm a story on *oath?*"

Mr. Grey smiled, meaningly, and rubbed his palm over his mouth and cheek.

"As you say," replied Norman, "I have *money;* but if I procure such a one, can you use him to your purpose? Can you bend aside the flow of public justice? Can you leave the blood of the innocent unavenged? Can you set the guilty free, unannealed, and high among his friends? If

I give you money for this redemption from wo, ignominy, and the scaffold, can you effect it?"

"Can I?" said the counsellor, with slow and emphatic deliberation, and a glance of pleased and sly assent—"can I not?"

"And will you?" cried the youth, grasping the arm of his disinterested friend with the iron power of one clinging for life; "knowing me to be guilty, deeply, damnably guilty, will you?"

"To-morrow," said the lawyer, rubbing his hands, "you shall be free as air. I shall but want something to satisfy expenses—a hundred dollars or so."

"And I," said Norman, with a countenance of bitter contempt, and flinging from him, with an expression of disgust, the arm of his cunning adviser, "if I had a thousand lives, would rather lose them all on the scaffold than share in the corruption of such a base scoundrel. Begone, sir! or I may really *be* what you, and such as you, think me."

The astounded personage to whom this was addressed started from his seat with mingled anger and fright, but immediately recovering himself, said,—

"Your only hope, young man. You are young and romantic. Imprisonment and misfortune have shattered your nerves, and violent repentance, perhaps, inflamed your imagination. If one hundred is too much, say fifty."

"I would be alone," cried Norman.

"I may, at least, entreat of you a pledge," said the lawyer, "that what I have offered in kindness will never be betrayed. My only object, sir, I give you my sacred word of honour, was to do you service."

"You have nothing to fear from me," returned Norman, "if you will take yourself away."

"Then, farewell. You may have carried my

intimations further than I intended, Mr. Leslie; but, remember, should you think *better* of my means of serving you, I am ready to do my *utmost*. I can save you from death. Without a free understanding between counsellor and client, the case is hopeless. To-morrow you will tremble at the array of proof against you. We may have no opportunity of meeting again in private. Your counsel, at present, have nothing to urge in your defence. I have taken the pains to inquire; they have literally *nothing*. Innocent or guilty, die you must, unless you adopt *means*. In twenty-four hours, perhaps, the verdict may be rendered. As the case stands now, it *must* be fatal. The form of your own scaffold may well start your reason. I can save you. I am your only hope. Good-morning, sir; good-morning. I rest satisfied, sir, with your word of honour, that what has passed between us will go no further. Let me leave my card. Good-morning, sir."

At the door Grey met another learned member of the profession, whose eloquence and talents placed him already in its front ranks. They were but slightly acquainted; for Mr. Grey belonged to those base pettifoggers and hangers-on of the profession who at once disgrace it and human nature.

"Ah, Mr. Moreland," he said, "are you too bent to this wretched man?"

Moreland signified the affirmative.

"A strange fellow!" continued Mr. Grey, with a significant smile; "guilty, I fear, and reckless of death. He is like a baited bull, ready to gore alike friend and foe."

"Does he confess?" asked Moreland, with agitation.

"No," replied the other, "he confesses nothing. He still affects ignorance and perfect innocence,

assumes the lofty moralist, and vainly hopes with this brazen hypocrisy to elude his fate, or cast a doubt over his crime. His father and sister are evidently dear to him, and rend his thoughts more than his own misery. He seems ready to die, rather than compromise their good name by confessing his guilt. He is a noble but a desperate being, and requires watchfulness and care, or he may give the impatient mob the slip after the high Roman fashion."

Moreland is already partly known to the reader. He differed in many respects from his more aged and experienced associates; and rather sought excuses for undoubted sin, than invented selfish motives for apparent virtue. As he pictured the cheerful aspect of his own home, which he had that instant left,—the elegant gayety ever presiding at his domestic circle—the innocent love and arch vivacity of his sweet wife, the voices of his beautiful children, and his own bright prospects of future wealth, fame, and happiness,—as he compared these blessings with the miseries of his once pure and noble friend, now a prisoner, perhaps about to be sacrificed on the scaffold—these dismal walls, this desolate cold solitude, and the reflections which must rend the mind of the accused,—his heart softened yet more tenderly towards him; he mourned over the bleak vicissitudes of life, and trembled at the inscrutable decrees of Providence. His soul yearned to believe him guiltless; but such an astounding array of proof had been elicited against him that even he wavered, and knew not what to think.

As the lawyer entered the cell of the captive, he turned actually pale at the sight which met his view. It was not that his friend suffered any of those dismal privations of food, light, and air, so commonly identified with the idea of a prison;—

indeed, he occupied a room tolerably furnished for his use; and the care of his affectionate and heart-broken family had supplied him with all the luxuries of life compatible with his situation;—but he himself was so changed and faded—so haggard and ghastly with the gnawings of a haughty and proud spirit—that, for the moment, in that dim light, he was scarcely recognised. Still, however, around him gathered that beauty which had rendered him remarkable in better days, a reflection of the manly graces of his father, and which now seemed even heightened by the subduing and chastening hand of thought and sorrow. His handsome hair now fell over a forehead which seemed, from its whiteness, yet more broad and high; his eyes wore an expression more pensive and touching; the smile had gained in winning grace all that it had lost in spirit; and his whole manner announced a character deepened, purified, and elevated.

He raised his hand calmly to his friend, who seized it with silent anguish; and Moreland fell on his neck and wept, while the prisoner soothed and rebuked him, though with a tremulous voice.

"Dear, dear Norman!" muttered Moreland, his words broken by sobs; "pardon me—forgive me!"

"God bless you, Moreland," replied Norman, as his friend grew more composed; "how I have wished for you!"

"Your father and Julia, Norman, and Howard?"

"They are all with me hours every day, but their grief agonizes me."

"And your counsel, Mr. Loring?"

"Oh, he talks to me, but racks and excruciates me also. I have told him I know nothing whatever of this charge. It must fall by itself; I can-

not stoop to confute it, nor have I the means. But *you*, Moreland, you will join yourself with Loring, and clear me from so ridiculous, so absurd an accusation? I have had hard thoughts of you, too," he continued, still holding his friend's hand in his own firmly and affectionately. "That the world at large should desert me, as I am told they do, was to me a theme neither of much grief nor wonder; but *you*, Albert, *you* and Mary!"

"We were far, far away, and flew to town the very moment we heard of this inexplicable—this terrible—this—"

"Ay, Albert," said Norman, a cloud darkening over his face, "pause and seek for words, as I have done. But how is Mary?"

"Well in health, but shocked, agitated, and thunderstruck at your present situation, and at the startling evidence against you. It is astounding, it is stunning to hear the array of facts; but Mary would be your defender were they ten thousand times more appalling."

"And yet—confess it, Albert—even *you* have been staggered?"

"Norman, I have been stunned; but I come to you, not only as a friend, but as a counsel. I shall add myself to the gentleman already employed by your father. But, before we proceed, let me ask one question. If any extraordinary circumstance—any horrid dilemma—any sudden intoxication of love, or passion, or despair, or madness, has hurried you to—"

Norman started once more to his feet. It was no longer with agitation. Deep despair had thrown around him a character of mysterious and unearthly coldness, of passionless solemnity and calmness, like that which invests a statue gazed on by moonlight, in which there is ever a thrilling and spectral power.

"It is enough!" he said; "my cup is full. I drink it to the dregs without a murmur. Leave me, Moreland."

He was obeyed. We shall not intrude upon his meditations.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Storm increases.

"They have tied me to the stake, I cannot fly."
Macbeth.

The morning came—the hour of trial arrived. The human tide had already rolled into the court-room, and, amid shuffling and pushing, and the frequent interference of the police-officers, and all the agitation and clamour of a mob much excited, the crowd at length once more occupied, not only every seat, but every spot where a foot or a shoulder could be braced, or a hand could cling.

The judges assumed their seats; the jury were called; silence was ordered by the criers; the agitated mass at length settled into quiet; the prisoner again entered, and was placed at the bar; and all the customary forms and preliminaries being at length accomplished, the indictment was regularly read, and the district attorney rose to open the case, and to explain the circumstances which he expected to prove. The public were thus put in possession of all the authentic facts which the industrious investigations of the State attorney had elicited. The speaker's youthful zeal and his pro-

fessional ambition, the interest which hurries along an ardent lawyer for the time to make the cause of his client his own—which warms with its progress and strengthens by opposition, and which at length renders the desire of success an absorbing and exclusive passion, almost resembling the desperate anxiety of the gambler—combined to inspire him with enthusiastic eloquence. His recital of the circumstances which he *hoped* to prove was conducted with the art of rhetoric, and coloured with the hues of imagination. It was a fearful and soul-stirring narrative, that chilled the blood of the coldest auditor. With what awful force must it have fallen upon the ears of the prisoner! The orator did not express the wary suggestions of one seeking *truth*, but the excited and exciting denunciations of a mind fully predetermined, and highly inflamed with a mere one-sided view of the case; placing upon every interest the deepest and guiltiest construction; supposing the basest motives for every action; disavowing a belief of whatever tended to exculpate; magnifying, through the medium of a heated fancy, every damning proof; overlooking, thrusting aside, explaining away, or ridiculing, every palliating circumstance; sketching, with a bold pencil of vindictive hate, a picture of unparalleled, irredeemable iniquity, and shedding upon it a glare of poetic light, calculated to startle and to appal every heart. How far such a course is conformable to the elucidation of truth, the interests of society, and the spirit of a court of justice, and how far a more merciful principle might be incompatible with the safe and beneficial operation of the legal machinery, I leave to the determination of the profession itself and of the world. It is certain, however, that long before the eloquent counsel had closed his opening speech, the prisoner, whose doomed head was the single

and unsheltered mark for bolt after bolt, launched from the hand of one he had never injured, and against whose fiery assaults he could rear no defence, found himself the centre of all eyes, and evidently the object of universal and unmingled horror. Alone, writhing in unspeakable agony —compelled to hear himself, his character, his thoughts, words, and actions, misrepresented, blackened, and denounced—forbidden the privilege of explaining, of denying—without the power either to resist or to fly,—he lay like Prometheus chained on the cold rock, his heart pierced by the beak of a fierce foe, and with all the thunders of heaven rolling over his head.

"You have seen, gentlemen," continued the orator, with excited voice and flashing eyes, and, ever and anon, a glance of lofty and pitiless scorn on the ghastly face of his victim—"you have seen, in the perpetrator of this dreadful deed, the aspect of youth, the outbreak of feeling, a mild and gentle demeanour, patience, modest silence on the lip, and cheeks blanched by suffering. You are moved. Your bosoms soften. You relent. You think of his heart-broken father: you are fathers yourselves; you cannot credit the accusation. That gentle face never glared over the agonies himself had occasioned; those hands never accomplished the deed of death. Beneath that youthful bosom, now heaving with emotion, never lurked the gloomy fierceness of an assassin. Alas! gentlemen, that my painful duty should break your dreams of mercy. Human nature teems with contrasts and paradoxes like these, and the cunning devices of Satan are formed at once to delude the criminal and his fellow-creatures. It is even in such a form that he too often pours his poison. It is in such a bosom that he plants his wildest passions. He secretes the coiled serpent under

a bed of flowers. Sin often lies where men least suspect its existence. Look not only among the rude, the uncouth, the deformed, the poor, or the ignorant, for the perpetrators of crime. The very passions we most admire lead us astray. Love, the tenderest of human sentiments, sometimes guides the dagger and drugs the bowl. It is in one like the accused that this passion, with all its frightful consequences, springs with the greatest facility and attains the most monstrous power. It is in the specious form of grace, knowledge, and virtue that the tempter steals upon his victim. A rich and luxuriant soil, gentlemen, teeming with fruit and flowers, yields also the most poisonous plants, in the most remarkable vigour. Has the prisoner's former life been pure and amiable? has his character been marked by no atrocity? has he rather been compassionate and tender, and would my able opponents thence conclude the impossibility of his having committed this deed? They who know human nature will not be deceived by their eloquent sophistry. Your experience, your observation, your reading, have already taught you the fallacy of such reasoning. Nero, one of the bloodiest tyrants that ever darkened the historic page, was, like this man, once a youthful votary of tenderness and refinement; and his heart, which, when more fully developed, could never sufficiently sate itself with human sacrifice, melted and recoiled from attaching his signature to a just death-warrant. I refer to this well-known inconsistency in human nature, gentlemen, to guard your minds against the attempts, on the part of my ingenious opponents, to excite your sympathies in favour of the *character* of the accused. Gentlemen, when God gave the garden of Eden to the beings he had created, on one condition—the golden fruit was forbidden to man and beast—*who* was it that

disobeyed the command? It was none of the lower class of beings; it was not even man himself. It was *Eve* who reached forth her hand, plucked, and ate—*Eve*, the fairest, the purest; but the penalty of crime must fall upon the guilty, however surrounded with earthly beauty. The golden tresses of the mother of mankind did not shield her head from the anger of Heaven; neither must your hearts be turned away from justice and your oath, by the eloquence or the subterfuges of my legal opposers. It is the lot of guilt to suffer; and in yielding on this occasion to the weakness of personal feeling, you must remember that you not only betray the great interests of society, but you violate your own oaths."

As the speaker closed, the sudden bustle of the auditory announced their release from the spell which he had exercised over them; and the universal change of position, and the general freedom of respiration, betrayed that he had held them almost breathless and motionless.

It may be necessary to inform the reader unacquainted with the forms of judicial proceedings, that the counsel for the prosecution possess the right to open the case; that the witnesses in the support of the indictment are then examined. The counsel for the defendant then produce their testimony, and address the jury in his behalf; and, by a rule of law, which at first appears contrary to its general maxims of mercy, the prosecution exercise the important privilege of advancing the last appeal to the reason and feelings of the jury. The prisoner sits, with such suspense as may be best imagined by the intelligent reader, the silent spectator of the fiercely-contested conflict, upon the issue of which he depends for security from death upon the scaffold.

It was with the calmness of desperate anguish

that the accused turned on his seat, after the address of the prosecuting attorney, to listen to the evidence by which it had been elicited, and which was deemed so abundantly sufficient, in the eyes of a sagacious lawyer, to stamp upon him the undoubted odium of this heinous crime.

The limits of the story will not permit us to detail the extraordinary mass of evidence now brought forward in support of the indictment; but we briefly relate the leading facts, sworn to by many unimpeachable witnesses.

It appeared that the prisoner was of a sanguine and passionate temperament, prone to act upon impulse—of liberal education and uncommon talents,—his family wealthy, and his father one of the most eminent of American statesmen. Notwithstanding, however, the graceful and gentle manners and the apparently kind heart of the prisoner, he had several times exhibited a high-wrought temper, a total disregard of morality and religion, and an inherent ferocity—which, argued the counsel, might fully sanction the probable truth of the present charge. Count Clairmont was the witness called upon to describe the difference which formerly took place between himself and the prisoner; and the extraordinary barbarity or madness of the latter, who insisted on either not fighting at all, or else with the muzzles against each other's breast: in this state the affair was pending, when arranged by the accidental interference of friends. He related also the recent fracas between them, with singular and artful malice.

It appeared, by other witnesses, that the prisoner had conceived an affection for Miss Romain: it could not be distinctly sworn how far his love was requited, but plausible and terrible surmises were entertained on the subject; and the prosecution attempted to produce evidence leading to the dark-

est conjectures; but, as it depended upon hearsay, the witnesses were either prohibited from answering, or their answers were set aside by the court, as not legal proof. They doubtless, however, were not without effect upon the jury.

It was next proved that a change of sentiments had taken place between Miss Romain and the prisoner; after which she expressed herself in bitter terms against him—spoke of her wrongs, and her folly in submitting to them; and exhibited, before a confidential female domestic, keen disappointment and anguish, great anxiety, and a mysterious agitation: sometimes bursting forth into anger, and sometimes settling down into long fits of melancholy. At length she appeared free from all embarrassment; and the prisoner, in common with many other gentlemen, visited the house as usual. During several days, however, previous to the afternoon of the murder, she let fall, before Jenny, frequent expressions by which the faithful maid's curiosity was greatly awakened, and her affection alarmed. She commenced several times as if to reveal an important secret; then suddenly turning pale, stopped, and on being interrogated, refused any explanation, sometimes replying with sighs. Once, when she thought herself alone, she was heard to exclaim, "If he but prove honest—if he but mean well;" and other similar sentences. Witness, Jenny, slept in a small room immediately adjoining that of Miss Romain. On the morning of the fatal day, she was awakened before light by the sound of her mistress's voice, apparently speaking to some one below. Her mistress stood at a window leading out upon a little balcony. Witness was alarmed, rose, asked what was the matter, and came to the window—saw the shadow of a man stealing away. In great alarm and astonishment asked who it was, and whether it was Mr. Leslie? The other re-

plied, eagerly, "Yes—yes, it *was* Mr. Leslie. He came to tell me something;" and then added, "but, Jenny, if you ever breathe a word of this to anybody, I will never forgive you while I live; and, when I am dead, I will haunt you."

A crowd of witnesses testified that the prisoner had called for the deceased in a gig, on the afternoon of the murder: from that moment she had never been seen or heard of. The prisoner was seen returning in the evening alone. One testified that, aware of his having driven out with Miss Romain, he asked why he had left his companion? that the prisoner exhibited strong signs of embarrassment; and made a confused and unintelligible reply. The hat and feathers of the deceased were found floating upon the East River, near the spot where she was last traced with the prisoner; an extraordinary appearance of a scuffle was discernible; and a handkerchief, stained with blood, marked with the initials R. R., and pronounced to be that of Miss Romain, was picked up near the river-bank.

The circumstance most forcible against the prisoner was the subsequent discovery of a human body, which had floated far down with the tide, upon the shores of Long Island, in a state to preclude the possibility of identifying it; but in which, notwithstanding, many undertook to recognise the remains of the unfortunate Miss Romain. One individual swore to it positively.

An appalling array of other evidence was adduced, tending to establish all the points necessary to the successful prosecution of the indictment; and, when the prosecuting attorney rested his case, it is probable that very few, amid the vast and various multitude who had listened with profound attention to the development of these deeply interesting incidents, entertained the slightest doubt that

the doomed culprit was about to meet a terrible and a just fate. All eyes regarded him without the softness of mercy, or even the interest of doubt. To all he seemed a victim bound for slaughter. The populace had long before lost all sense of pity in wonder and indignation. The broad gaze of cold curiosity, the exclamation of surprise, the murmur of horror, the smile of virtue triumphing in the downfall of a villain—all these were scarcely attempted to be concealed from the observation of him who had called them forth.

"Poor Mr. Leslie!" said Jenny, her eyes red with weeping, and after a long gaze upon his calm and noble features, till her pretty blue eyes could no longer see through her tears; "I shall never trust to man's face again. Oh, Mr. Leslie, forgive me, forgive me! If you are guilty there is no truth on earth. I cannot believe it."

It was now late in the afternoon, and the court adjourned, to meet again at six in the evening.

CHAPTER XXV.

A Letter, and Woman's Friendship.

"Even as men wrecked upon a sand, that look to be washed off the next tide."

Instead of immediately following the prisoner to his cell, we beg the reader's company to the mansion of Moreland. The young advocate had been in court at his station all the morning, and to his watchful care and acute genius the counsel, Mr. Loring, owed many valuable suggestions in

the course of his cross-examination of the witnesses. Sometimes his mind was staggered by the testimony, combined with what he had elsewhere heard. He remembered also the strong expressions of disgust and hatred which Norman had used respecting Rosalie Romain at Mrs. Temple's, when the deceased had so brilliantly displayed her charms and her talents. Again, the utter impossibility of Norman Leslie's having committed a *murder* flashed on his mind with the force of intuition; and his heart smote him for having ever, even in the weakness of a moment, doubted the invincible purity and innocence of his friend, whom he had so many reasons to admire and love. He had at length come to the conclusion, that either Norman was entirely guiltless, or that he had committed the deed under the impulse of some momentary delirium; or, perhaps, that it was the result of inexplicable accident; or, that the affair involved other secrets and mysteries, which honour, or a high-minded romantic sensibility forbade him to betray, even to save himself from an unjust fate.

"Dare I ask how it has gone with him to-day?" said Mrs. Moreland, as her husband reached his home.

"Badly, gloomily, desperately. His sky is black as midnight, and all the fiercest lightnings of heaven are leaping around his head. Mary, I fear the worst!"

"Oh, great Providence!—Albert, you will not let those cold and cruel lawyers sacrifice that gentle and noble being! Powers of heaven! if I were a man! You, dear Albert, have genius, eloquence, fire—Oh speak!—exclaim—denounce—*thunder*—deafen their ears—appal their hearts—make them blush—make them tremble! Oh, Albert, save your friend! save the reputation of your country! save

this cold-blooded court from committing the very crime that they pretend to punish!"

"Alas! my sweet wife," said he, pressing the animated girl to his bosom, and looking down mournfully on her beautiful and illumined face, "all the thunders of Demosthenes could not save poor Norman's head from this bolt. Mary, I fear, I fear our friend must die."

An hour brought a messenger with a letter. It was from Norman, and read thus:—

"My dearest Albert, excuse my warmth to you the other day. I have now seen sufficient reason why even *you* should be bewildered at the mystery in which I am lost. I beg your pardon sincerely. Visit me once more: I have requested my father and sister to meet me also, for the last time. This day must disentangle my mind from all earthly feelings and agitations. I am resigned to the fatal and inevitable termination of this trial: the verdict cannot but be Guilty. Come to me immediately, my dearest friend; I shall then have done with earth. I must say farewell for ever, to-night. Bid dear, dear Mary, for me, an everlasting adieu. I call down God's blessing on her head. I will not insult her by condescending to assert my innocence. Such declarations are useless: such as she do not require, and the rest of the world will not believe, them. I send her a little volume of 'Paradise Lost,' which I have pencilled somewhat freely, not thinking to part with it on so sad an occasion. Does she remember our ancient rambles on the banks of the Hudson? our famous quarrel when we were children, and when we did not speak for three days? Happy, happy years! How their tranquil light and beauty contrast with the present! But I must be a man. Come immediately; the court meet at six—it is now four.

Mary would have been astonished to hear what a *dreadful ruffian* I was *proved* to be! And that affair of the *duel*!! I could have smiled, but they would have ascribed *that* to my '*inherent ferocity of character*.' What a *farce*, after all, are often the best ceremonies of a human tribunal. Good-by, for a half-hour: be not longer. It may be my *last* request. God bless you, dear Mary! and a long farewell! Excuse this scrawl; and in great haste,

"Your ever affectionate friend,

"NORMAN LESLIE."

"Poor—poor fellow!" murmured both at once, their eyes streaming with tears.

"And see," said Mary, smiling, with that strange intrusion of transient mirth into the midst of grief, not uncommon in similar scenes; "Norman is sure to have that 'excuse this scrawl, and in great haste,' to all his letters."

"Good-by, dear wife."

"Fly, Albert, fly, and the great God of eloquence and justice attend your steps!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Prison Scenes—The Trial continued—A new Witness.

"Sable night involves the skies;
And heaven itself is ravished from their eyes.
* * * * *
The face of things a frightful image bears,
And present death in various forms appears."
DRYDEN'S *Virgil.*

MORELAND found the father and sister of Norman already in the prison, with his friend Howard. The sad scene had been witnessed but by the black walls alone; nor shall we attempt to describe the meeting of a father and sister with a beloved and only son and brother, but recently dragged from the bosom of a happy family, with all the refinement of education, all the sensitiveness of delicacy and feeling, and about to perish like a common ruffian upon a scaffold.

The clock tolled six. It was the hour appointed for the reopening of the court. At the earnest solicitations of the father and sister of Norman, he consented that the latter should be present during the whole of the trial. The request was also urged by Moreland, who conceived that her appearance would prepare the jury to receive with more liberality the arguments and proof of the defence.

"Well, father," said Norman, with a forced smile, "and dear, dear Julia, now we part, and *certainly* for ever; after the verdict, I cannot, I will not, trust

myself again within the sound of any human voice I love. No one, with my permission, shall look upon my face again. Farewell, farewell!—may Almighty God bless—protect—relieve you—nay, Julia, nay—father, support yourself—my sweet Julia—Howard, for God's sake—"

They were interrupted by a summons for the prisoner. The young lawyer, his own eyes bathed in tears, drew away with gentle violence the father, while Howard supported the shuddering and fainting sister, after an embrace more than twice repeated, which seemed to drain the life-blood from their lips and hearts. As they were thus led from the cell, Julia, with a shriek of agony, fell senseless in the arms of Howard.

Returning, to his surprise, Moreland found the countenance and demeanour of Norman calm—even cold.

"Thank God!—thank God!" he said, in a steady voice, "it is done. The bond is severed—the darkness, the bitterness of death is passed. It is *this*, dear Albert, that I most feared—not death itself, but these scenes of frightful grief and harrowing affection. But we, too, must part. I must meet my fate alone—without a friend—without a hope—to the bar—to the sentence—to the scaf—" A quivering agony shot across his features; then again all was calm and cold as marble.

"Gentlemen," he cried, after a moment's pause, to the officers in waiting to conduct him back to court, "may I beg one word in private with this my friend and counsellor?"

The permission was granted, and they were locked in the cell.

"Albert," cried Norman, in a voice as changed, wild, and hurried as if his senses were wavering, "Albert, hear me!—by your friendship—by your love—by the happiness of my family—by my life-

blood—by your own honour and peace of mind—by earth—by the God that made it—grant, grant my request!"

"Speak—speak, my injured, my noble friend!" said Moreland, partaking his agitation.

"You saw my poor father but now?"

"Well, Norman?"

"And my sweet sister?—a beautiful, blooming girl, with the bright world before her."

"Well, dear Norman?"

"That noble man's proud head, Albert—that dear girl's pure, fond, high heart, as susceptible to pride, Albert, as sensitive to grief and disgrace, as—"

He struck his hand upon his forehead; his bosom heaved and panted; and his nostril dilated with the hard-drawn breath.

"Well, Norman, hope for the best."

"Albert," said Norman, "trifle not with me. I must be crushed in this dreadful fate. Earth cannot save me, Heaven will not! To-night I shall be adjudged guilty; and in a few more days the crowd—the cord—the scaffold—end Norman Leslie. Death alone I do not fear. Oh God, how I have wished for it!—but I must die on the scaffold, before the mob—the shouting, laughing, reckless, jesting mob—a spectacle of horror and ignominy—a public proverb! Oh Albert, Albert!—my friend—my guardian—my saviour—my last—best—only—only hope—I wish—"

His paleness turned frightful.

"Norman," cried Moreland, in a tone of alarm, "in the name of mercy, what would you ask?"

"Think—my friend—think," said Norman.

"I am dizzy, dear Norman, I cannot think."

A new summons interrupted them.

"Albert—we *will* meet again. I must *die*—but not on the scaffold; forbid it, friendship—manly

honour! After this mummery is over—this farcical, ridiculous ceremony of a trial, where every word that is spoken is a black slander, an unholy lie, where falsehood and prejudice appear to testify, and where even truth herself comes only in a vile and monstrous disguise—when this stupid mockery is over, come to me, Albert, bring me the means of escape."

"Norman, I do not understand."

"Not from these dismal walls, Albert"—he approached, and whispered in his ear, with a look of wild meaning, and struck his hand upon his breast —"from *this!*"

"Great God!"

"Fail me, Albert, and I die—*despising;* assist me, and I bless you with my expiring breath. This thought has supported me; this cooled the scorching fever in my veins and bursting temples during the last two days."

A more imperative call now cut short the interview.

He smiled as the officers now entered; and, bearing up proudly and loftily under the gaze of crowds assembled outside the prison to see him pass, he stepped with a calm and thoughtful air through the passage opened for him by the throngs in the corridors of the Hall, and in the chamber of justice, and assumed his accustomed seat. His coolness created in some surprise, in others indignation, according as in their short-sighted and superficial observations they ascribed it to hackneyed villany, or impudent confidence in his connections and rank in society. Who shall read the heart in those ever-changing and accidental moods which chance upon the manners or countenance?

"He depends on a pardon," said one.

"Influence at court," cried another.

"Kissing goes by favour," exclaimed a third.

"But he'll swing for it yet," cried a fourth, "or my name aint Jemmy Jackson!"

"The blood-thirsty villain!" observed one; "how he glares at the prosecuting attorney!"

"That proud rascal yonder," said Jemmy Jackson, who, from some capricious association, had conceived an especial antipathy to the prisoner, "and that girl in the black veil—that's his father and sister, ye see."

"Poor people!" rejoined the person to whom was made this communication; "they must feel terrible, sure enough."

"Hoot, man, I'll warrant them as bad as he," returned the implacable Jemmy Jackson; "such fruit could spring from no good tree. In my opinion they ought to be all hanged together. I should not wonder if he paid his way through yet."

"Jemmy Jackson, you are an old fool," said a Marine Court lawyer, himself rather advanced in years.

"Then it's pot calling kettle black, I'm thinkin," said Jemmy, winking to his companions. "And why am I a fool, Mr. Oakum?"

"Because ye are, Jemmy; and that's a better reason than you can give for saying that anybody *pays his way*. Here no one pays his way; not even yourself, Jemmy, if you should be called on to be hanged one day, which is not unlikely."

"But there is such a thing as bribing a witness," said Jemmy, who, without the least cause but his own whim, had so dogmatically determined upon the guilt of the prisoner and all his relations, that if the murdered girl herself had made her appearance to disprove the charge of her death, he would have laid it to bribery. "You remember the gold snuff-box which one of you lawyers quietly passed to a juror, Mr. Oakum?"

"Not I, Jemmy; *I* never passed a gold snuff-box to a juror."

"No," said Jemmy, "the gold snuff-boxes *you* may have, friend Oakum, you are more likely to keep yourself; not on account of your conscience, but your pocket."

"Hoot, hist, silence!" cried Mr. Oakum, pretending not to hear the laugh which Jemmy Jackson's wit occasioned; "don't you see they're going to begin. Mr. Loring is going to open the defence. There are two sides to a stone wall, you know, Mr. Jemmy Jackson. Sit down there! no standing up within the bar! Silence!" and his whisper was echoed in an obstreperous tone by the crier.

The counsel for the prisoner, Mr. Loring, commenced his arduous and apparently hopeless duties.

We must here again express in a few lines what occupied the court a long time. It was admitted that Miss Romain disappeared the afternoon of her ride with the prisoner. That he had gone out with her and returned alone. His own explanation stated that Miss Romain had ridden with him upon a casual invitation; that on reaching an unfrequented place, they met a lady riding alone in a gig, and, what he considered very extraordinary, driving herself. The deceased entered the gig, and, after a few moments' private conversation with her, and with many apologies to the prisoner, expressed a wish to return with *her*. That prisoner had then gone back alone by a different route, and had not suspected her disappearance till some time after, when he immediately called on her father to explain what he knew of so extraordinary a circumstance.

Mr. Loring opened the defence by stating that the incident was plunged in doubt and mystery.

The idea that a man of the prisoner's character, even were he inclined to commit a murder, would select such a time and such means, was absurd. He might as well have perpetrated it in the city streets at noonday. It was evident that some unfathomable mystery was connected with it, with which the prisoner had nothing to do, and which the court had not yet approached. It was one of those inexplicable occurrences which, when genius, and acuteness, and professional learning had vainly endeavoured to solve, unfolded of itself in the course of time. "The explanation of the prisoner may appear a clumsy fabrication, too clumsy to believe; yet, gentlemen, beware how you admit that supposition. To me its very clumsiness and improbability furnish a reason for its truth. You smile. But do improbable things never happen? Are all the actions of the great, confused, clashing, mutable world probable? Must a man perish because an improbable fact had taken place? I say, gentlemen, the greater the improbability of this story, the more implicitly I believe it. Had he wished to invent a story, it would have been more cunningly devised."

The evidence for the prisoner was very limited. The officers swore to his horror and astonishment at being arrested; but, in the cross-examination, confessed that he betrayed extraordinary signs of confusion, strongly resembling guilt. Others had seen him on his return from the fatal ride, without observing any embarrassment or abstraction.

The evidence of Miss Leslie, although indirect, was received with lively marks of sympathy. She had met her brother, on his arrival from the afternoon ride, and had particularly remarked his health and cheerfulness. She described him as peculiarly gay, having been one of a party of ladies and gentlemen who walked on the Battery in the evening,

and discovering, in all the thousand offices of courtesy, a heart entirely at rest.

"Oh," continued the young and lovely girl, enthusiastic affection quite drowning every consideration of personal embarrassment, "they who believe Norman capable of committing that or any other crime, little know his character. Even supposing it possible in a moment of delirium, it is not possible that afterward he could be so natural and easy, so completely unembarrassed and happy. From boyhood, Norman has been remarkable for betraying in his countenance what was passing in his heart, and even for blushing when any thing confused him. But we saw no kind of agitation whatever; and I am certain that he could not have concealed from us, had any secret weighed upon—"

"This is all very well," said Mr. Germain, who had been particularly vehement and bitter during the whole trial against everybody and every thing tending to exculpate the prisoner—"this is all very well; but I ask the court if it is *evidence*. The young lady, I believe, comes here as *witness*, not as *counsel*."

This was received—as any levity that breaks the monotonous solemnity of a court of justice is sure to be received—with a slight general titter; although one of the jurors was observed to pass his fingers hastily over his glistening eyes. The prisoner smiled bitterly, and shook his head as if in wonder. Moreland rose for the first time.

"May it please the court," cried Moreland, in a voice low almost to a whisper, but so perceptibly tremulous that a general hush succeeded his first words—"may it please the court: we are a tribunal of justice. I am aware we are judges, jury, counsel, and spectators; and from such assemblies I know it is proper to exclude all feeling. But,

nevertheless, we are—we *ought* to be men. If the prisoner be guilty—though young, proud, beautiful, and noble, with other deep hearts wound convulsively around him, and bound up in him—yet, if he be guilty, let him die the death of violence and ignominy."

A shudder and a drawing in of the breath was heard from the sister, like that of the victim when the edge of the axe first glitters before his eyes. The spectators grew more profoundly motionless and silent, and Moreland, rising and warming with his emotions, went on :—

"I would not from private feeling, not even from private opinion, turn aside the sword of public justice. But I will not, I dare not, I cannot sit silently by, and behold the best emotions of nature outraged, ridiculed, trampled down, by the habitual coldness or hardened zeal of the profession to which I belong. If the sister of this unhappy man in her secret soul believes him *guilty*, still her trembling voice, her streaming eyes, her woman's heart raised in his behalf, demand the respect and attention of a civilized people. But if this amiable and lovely girl here plead for the life of a brother, on whose utter and complete innocence she relies as she has faith in her own existence and in her God,—if she possess knowledge, if she can advance arguments to rescue him from a dishonourable and untimely grave, or even to relieve her own broken heart with the outpourings of its swollen and agonized fulness,—let the hand that would stay her fall palsied—let the tongue that would deride her blister. The motive which now inspires this affectionate sister to throw herself—timid and trembling woman as she is—before a tribunal of justice, and before such a crowd as now hears me, to speak in defence of a beloved brother, is pure, exalted, unalloyed, and noble; and in the name of

every thing good and generous,—in the name of mercy, of charity,—in the name of *woman*, I claim for her protection from the derision and sneers which the learned gentlemen on the other side of the question have thought it not beneath them to express against the defence."

A burst of irrepressible applause, notwithstanding the solemnity of the place, followed this outflash of indignant feeling; but it was instantly and sternly silenced and rebuked by the court, who threatened to commit immediately to prison any one guilty of such a contempt in future, and directed the officers to be watchful.

The prosecuting counsel, Mr. Germain, against whose head this bolt had been evidently directed, rose, rubbing his hands with a distrustful smile, and a confidential look along the jury.

"May it please the court—but one word, your honour," he said; "the gentleman misunderstands me. My heart bleeds as well as his own at the sight of private suffering; but I know how necessary it is in matters of justice to guard against personal feeling. Virtue and domestic love are beautiful words; but there are also such words as law and justice. I perceive the artifice of the ingenious counsel in producing before the jury the father and sister of the prisoner, to soften our hearts and inflame our feelings. It is a trick of the profession. Legal questions should be discussed only by the light of reason. They require only a deliberate and unprejudiced examination of proof, and a cold knowledge of statutes—the colder and the more unfeeling, the better. Whatever may be the sufferings of the prisoner or his family, what bearing can they have, *ought* they to have, on the naked question, 'Is he or is he not guilty?' In respect to the evidence of Miss Leslie, whom, of course, we are bound to believe very

pure in her intentions, I wish only to restrict her within the legal limits of a witness. If sisters turn pleaders, stealing in under license of witnesses, a new and most dangerous era will be introduced into our jurisprudence. Private feeling, however harrowing, is but insignificant when compared with the public good. Neither should we forget to distinguish between the pain resulting directly from guilt in those connected with the guilty party, and that inflicted by him upon others. The parent and sister of the unhappy culprit are not the only bereaved victims of this crime now within hearing of my voice. The grief-stricken heart of that old man, whose only daughter fell beneath the prisoner's hand—have we no sympathy with *his* dark age, with *his* deserted hearth? Let the unfortunate man at the bar regard the wreck he has caused in his own circle with feelings of bitter anguish, and may Heaven support him under the trial! But we have nothing to see, nothing to feel, but whether, on the proof adduced, he be guilty or not guilty."

The court begged that nothing more might be said on the subject. They had heard the counsel for the defence, because they wished to extend towards the prisoner every possible clemency, and the prosecution had a certain right to reply; but the question respecting the evidence of the witness was unimportant. She must be allowed to relate her statements in her own way; and if, from her feelings or her inexperience, out of order, she would be restrained by the court.

"What else do you know respecting the case?" inquired Mr. Loring of the witness.

"Nothing," was the reply, and thus the long debate had been unnecessary.

After a confused mass of contradictory testimony, Mr. Loring announced his intention of pro-

ducing one more witness, who had voluntarily come forward in the cause of innocence, and to prevent the unjust effusion of human blood—one whose station and character were unimpeachably pure; whose motives could not be impugned or traduced; who was swayed neither by the power of domestic love, nor by any intimate acquaintance with the prisoner; a lady, the daughter of one of the most distinguished families in the city: her testimony, he added, would be conclusive. It had come to his knowledge by accident, and only this moment, and could not fail to acquit the prisoner.

This announcement produced much excitement. The judge turned to gaze with an eagerness almost incompatible with his dignity; the jury looked anxiously forward; the prosecuting counsel smiled shrewdly, and muttered aloud, "A new device of the enemy;" and the auditory at large stretched their necks to behold the new comer, whom more than one pronounced to be Miss Romain herself. Not among the least surprised was the prisoner, who leaned forward with evident curiosity. The side-doors being opened, a female enveloped in a close bonnet and veil entered, and took her seat on the witness's stand.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Hope dawns.

"But thou, oh Hope, with eyes so fair!"
COLLINS.

"THE gentleman appears peculiarly favoured by the fair sex," said Mr. Germain, half aloud.

"Is it another sister?" asked a juror.

"No," replied the counsel, quickly, and, in a voice too low to be distinctly heard, added something which occasioned a laugh among those immediately around him, and even from one or two of the jurors.

The witness was narrowly scrutinized by all eyes, and, though wrapped in her veil and bonnet, was observed to shrink at thus appearing before the public. Her step faltered, her voice, as she replied to the judge's question concerning her name, trembled, and was so low as to render her reply at first unintelligible. She made a gesture, too, of faintness, at the rude laugh directed apparently against herself.

"Sit down, madam," said Moreland, in a soothing tone; "you have nothing to fear."

"What is the young lady's name?" asked the judge.

"Miss Temple — Flora Temple," answered Moreland; thus kindly furnishing her time to recover her voice and composure.

An exclamation of surprise from the prisoner announced that to him her name brought astonishment. He stirred, changed his position, and leaned forward.

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Temple," said Mr. Loring; "take your own time to reply. You are a resident of New-York? You are daughter of Mr. Herman Temple? You are acquainted with the prisoner?"

These and one or two other similar interrogatories were put by the careful counsel in order to lead the witness from her embarrassment. They were answered, at first, in a voice almost inaudible.

"Louder, louder," said Mr. Germain. "If the young lady will have the kindness to speak louder, we may at least *hear* what this wonderful secret is."

"You are acquainted with the prisoner?" said Mr. Loring.

"I have known him for some years," was the reply, in a tone much more loud and distinct, but so soft and full of music that a murmur of interest was heard in her behalf.

"Are you related to him in any way?" asked Germain.

"Not in the least."

"Are you *likely*, or rather have you *ever been* likely to be?" added Germain, bluntly, and with another laugh.

"The witness is ours," said Moreland; "and I must again beg and entreat of the court protection from derision."

"Have you any interest in the result of this cause?" asked Loring.

"Oh yes, yes!" was the answer.

"Then, may it please the court," said Germain, starting up, "I move that—"

"She is interested only, as we are all interested, in the triumph of truth," said Moreland.

"You are putting words into the witness's mouth," interrupted Germain.

A brisk interchange of elocution here took place, too common in courts of justice, when every trivial point is attacked and defended with the thunder of battle-axe and the clash of swords, and the most unjust devices of *ingenuity* (in other transactions *what* would it be termed?) are not abandoned without a skirmish. Lawyers' tongues are sharp as soldiers' swords, and sometimes cut as deep; and wo betide the modest, the pure, the defenceless, who come between the "great opposites" in the keen excitement of an interesting case. It would not be fair to advance this charge against the whole American bar, but there is too much truth in it. Great is the praise, therefore, due to those who redeem the character of the profession by a more moderate and generous course, who pursue their client's interest only as far as sanctioned by propriety and honour; and who, in the most absorbing interest of their pursuit, preserve a reverence for truth, and never, never offend the delicacy due to woman. Yet the most honest witness in a court of justice frequently finds himself stung with sarcasms, attacked with the bitterness of malice, flatly charged with perjury, overwhelmed with odium, and dismissed with disgrace from a station to which the court has forced him, after delivering testimony, perhaps, the most repugnant to his own private feelings; and for this degradation, neither the law nor the customs of society offer redress.

"Have you any personal, any pecuniary interest in the event of this action?" asked the counsel.

"Oh no, no!" replied Miss Temple.

"And now," said Mr. Loring, "pray tell the

jury, in a distinct voice, what you know of the prisoner."

"I have met Mr. Leslie frequently in company, and at my father's house. His manners have been always gentle, and his character high and noble; *certainly* the character of a man quite, quite incapable of—"

Germain rose. Moreland rose also. The judge sternly commanded both to be seated.

"You say you know the prisoner's character to be good?"

"I do."

"Were you acquainted with Rosalie Romain?"

"I was."

"Familiarly?"

"Quite so."

"What was her character?"

Flora looked down at the unhappy father, and hesitated; but, remembering the imperative nature of her duty, continued,—

"She was light, and very eccentric."

"Do you believe her, from what you know, capable of so remarkable a measure as eloping?"

"I do. She wanted steadiness of mind, and was actuated by sudden impulses."

"Were you familiarly acquainted with her features?"

"Quite familiarly. Her appearance and face were very peculiar. She was tall, graceful, majestic, and very beautiful."

Mr. Romain, who had followed the testimony of this witness with mute and strained attention, now leaned his forehead on the table, wept, and murmured, "My child, my child!"

"Go on," said the judge.

"The afternoon on which she was said to have been murdered, I was one of a party walking rather late in the evening on the Battery. The

gentleman who happened to be my companion led me from the rest towards the water-side, to behold an effect of the light on the opposite shore."

"Tell who the gentleman was," said Mr. Germain.

"It was Mr. Leslie, the prisoner."

"Oh ho! I see through this!" muttered Germain, laughing and rubbing his hands knowingly.

"It was an uncommonly clear moonlight evening; and while we gazed at the light, I saw very distinctly Rosalie Romain."

"God of heaven!" cried Mr. Romain, rising suddenly; "this has crossed me before. My blessed young lady, are you sure?"

"Mr. Romain," said the court, affected evidently, but with an effort, "we must endeavour to suppress these sudden bursts of feeling; they greatly impede the proceedings."

But the contagion of surprise had passed through the whole audience. There was a general pause—a movement and agitated commotion, quelled not without some delay and difficulty. The prisoner had started on his feet.

"Proceed, Miss Temple," said Mr. Loring. "You saw Miss Romain?"

"Wrapped in a veil. She saw us, started, and turned away."

Mr. Loring rose. "I have produced this witness, may it please the court, to establish beyond the shadow of a doubt" (with that deliberate emphasis familiar to lawyers) "the innocence of the prisoner. She is an unimpeachable witness. We rest our defence. I yield her to the ingenuity of our learned opponents. They will, doubtless, endeavour to bewilder and distress her; but I *repose* with unshaken confidence in the result of this important testimony. Far from the prisoner's having been guilty of murder, it appears that no murder

has been committed at all. The witness, gentlemen, is yours."

It is a painfully interesting moment when the witness, whose testimony, if left as it has been delivered, would certainly acquit the being trembling with every tone of her voice for his life, is turned over to the destroying malignity of the other party. The fabric, apparently impregnable, in which the persecuted, hunted down prisoner has taken refuge, becomes the scene of a furious attack. Blow after blow, all the heavy machinery of wit, cunning, and learning are brought to play upon it, till, yielding to fate, its gates broken in, its foundations undermined, at length it falls to the ground.

"This is a ghost-story," said Germain, with an incredulous smile. "Let us see, miss, if we cannot unravel the mystery."

And the lively interest of all present, including Mr. Loring, notwithstanding his "unshaken confidence," acknowledged their strongly excited curiosity.

"You say," said Germain, with a taunting, sneering air, "that you were walking with the *prisoner* when you beheld this apparition?"

"I have not referred to any apparition," said the witness, quietly.

"Oh ho! we congratulate your reviving spirits. When you saw Rosalie Romain, then, if you prefer that form of expression?"

"I said so, sir."

"And pray what time was it?" with a look and almost a wink at the jury.

"The clock had struck nine."

"Ah, after nine at night! And the phantom was accompanied by whom?"

"By another female."

"You saw Rosalie Romain, after nine o'clock at night, with another female! Well, upon my word,

young lady, this is a probable story! What was she doing there? Riding on a broomstick?"

"She was doing nothing. She passed us."

"Veiled?"

"Yes, sir, thickly veiled."

"Your eyes, I presume," with another sly wink to the jury, "possess some extraordinary organic power above those of common mortals, not gifted with the privilege of seeing phantoms. So you recognised Rosalie Romain through the folds of a thick veil and in the darkness of night! More men in buckram, gentlemen."

"Passing a lamp, the glare fell on her face. She drew the veil aside a moment, as she came near; then covering herself again hastily, quickened her step, and was immediately out of sight."

"Oh, that was very kind in her, to let you see her face, was it not? You have told a probable and very interesting story—very romantic at least. What did the prisoner do all this time? Did he say nothing?"

The witness was silent.

"Ah! he said something you are unwilling to reveal. Come, what was it? Remember, you are on oath—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"He said," replied the witness, in a lower tone, "that he did not think the person we had seen was Miss Romain."

"Oh ho! *now* you are coming to the crisis. So the prisoner *did not think* the person you had seen was Rosalie Romain?"

"No, sir."

"And *you did?*"

"I did."

"And do?"

"And do."

"Who saw her first?"

"Mr. Leslie."

"Ah ha! And pointed her out to you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And *then* immediately *rejected* the idea, as if *he knew* the *impossibility* of *her* being there?"

"He exhibited no certainty; he said, indifferently, it could not possibly be her."

"Ah ha! so, so! As I said, you see, gentlemen. Pray, madam, have you ever been contracted in marriage?"

"No, sir."

"You must excuse me if I enter a little into particulars. Have you ever been under any engagement of matrimony?"

"Never."

"*Perfectly* free? Has Mr. Leslie never—"

Again Moreland interfered. Again Germain defended his question.

"What do the prosecution wish to prove?" asked the judge.

"That this worthy young lady," said Germain, "who may be honest enough in the ordinary affairs of life, comes here now, under the influence of strong feelings of love, to save a man whom—"

"I protest!" said Moreland.

"I insist!" said Germain.

"Do you wish to impeach the testimony of this witness?" asked the judge.

Flora trembled and shrank. The prisoner rose again; his eyes flashed upon Germain a look of such withering anger, that the lawyer quailed a moment beneath its fire.

Moreland begged the interference of the court.

"We wish to show, may it please the court," added Germain, "that the young lady is about as disinterested a witness as the learned gentleman is a counsel—the one testifying for her lover, the other pleading for his friend."

"Order, gentlemen!" cried the judge.

"And what," resumed Germain, "is this love-sick young lady and her affections, which the next breeze will bear away—what are her pretty sensibilities to the great cause and majesty of public justice, to the proper administration of laws, and to purging the commonwealth from the stain of black and hateful crimes! I do not mean, may it please your honour, to charge this young lady with *perjury;* but I do mean to suggest that a sentiment of love has existed, and still exists, between the witness and the prisoner; that her feelings warp her judgment, and have presented to her what she desires to have seen rather than what she saw. Some remote resemblance between a night-wandering female on the Battery and the deceased struck her eye, and is now remembered in this emergency. If there were probability in her conjecture, probability even to seize upon the memory of the wretched culprit himself, why has this witness been delayed so long? Why was it left to the discovery of accident? Why did not the prisoner call upon her to advance? Why was she not subpœnaed by the defence? A love-sick girl, with her head full of novels, and her heart—"

The prisoner once more rose and interrupted the speaker with a haughty and determined air, and, in a voice deep and rich, that sounded strangely impressive in the sudden hush, said,—

"Being here a defenceless man, I invoke the aid of the court against these attacks upon my friends. I solicit no sympathy or mercy on my own part. I yield my blood to the demands of fate and of mistaken justice. But, as the last request of a doomed, a dying, and an innocent man, I entreat that the malignity which animates the learned gentlemen of the prosecution may pour out its exclusive fury on my head. I entreat that those who

appear in my behalf be protected from unjust suspicion and wanton insult. There never has been any such sentiment as the learned gentleman has so frequently referred to exchanged between that young lady and myself. On the contrary, she has uniformly treated me with the utmost reserve, and I am most unwilling that she should now suffer for her magnanimity in appearing before a tribunal where the modesty of woman is so little respected, and in favour of one who to her has always been, and must ever be, less than nothing."

He sat down with flashing eyes, but a fierce and proud demeanour; and there had been such a fascination in the smooth, fierce, and indignant flow of his words, and in the deep vehemence, feeling, and solemnity of his face, voice, and manner, and such interest was universally experienced to hear what he had to say, that he was not interrupted. But immediately on his close, his interference was pronounced out of order, and the stir following his words was with some difficulty quieted. The witness drew her veil closer at the sound of his voice, but said nothing, and awaited motionless the next interrogation.

"I have only one or two more questions," said Mr. Germain. "Can you *swear*, Miss Temple—but," he added, abruptly, "I will thank you to put aside your veil. I cannot examine a witness properly without seeing her face."

Miss Temple, after a moment of hesitation, completely and, for the first time, fully revealed to the spectators the features of an exquisitely lovely young creature, beautiful beyond description. Her light auburn hair parted with simplicity on her forehead, a pair of large, tender blue eyes, drooping beneath the general gaze, and lifted only once, as if to glance reproachfully upon the countenance of the harsh querist. Modesty and sweetness

were expressed upon her face with the most graceful and feminine charm. All eyes regarded her with strong and new sympathy and admiration. Some surprise was manifested at her extreme paleness. The prisoner riveted his eyes on her a few moments with an expression of deep melancholy, and then leaned down his forehead upon his hand in silence.

Germain, who, by his rudeness, had given the unconsciously beautiful girl this decided advantage over him, found himself in the situation of a warrior, who, pressing his pursuit too eagerly, sinks into some snare of the enemy. He was himself slightly surprised and embarrassed at the sweetness and refinement of her towards whom he had exhibited so little tenderness, and it seemed that his conscience smote him.

"You will pardon my abruptness, my dear young lady," he said; "I am truly sorry that duty compels me to put painful questions. You must inform the jury whether you have been always entirely free from matrimonial engagements with the prisoner."

"The question is not painful to me," replied she, in a mild and slightly tremulous tone. "Nothing of the kind has ever taken place between Mr. Leslie and myself; on the contrary, it was always understood that Mr. Leslie was attached to Miss Romain."

"And do you believe it?"

"I do."

"One more question—and remember, young lady, you are on your oath, and that the Creator of all things sees your heart. Tell me now, solemnly, are you prepared to swear *actually*, *absolutely*, and *positively*, that the person you saw, on the night of the supposed murder, was Rosalie Romain? can *swear* to this, to a *certainty*?"

"I can swear to nothing," replied the witness, "with *actual certainty;* but—"

"She cannot swear *with certainty!*" cried Germain, triumphantly, turning to the jury.

"She cannot swear with certainty!" echoed one.

"She cannot swear with certainty!" reiterated another.

"But I clearly think so," cried the witness, with a faint attempt not to be borne down by the undiscriminating vehemence of her opponents.

"She only *thinks*—she only fancies," interrupted Germain; "it is precisely as I thought, a mere conjecture. You see, gentlemen, after all, this important witness is nothing—nothing whatever."

Some other questions were advanced in turn by either party, but nothing new was elicited. After the examination of two or three witnesses, to settle and define several minor points, the evidence was closed, and the counsel for the defence addressed the jury.

It rarely happens that two advocates upon the same evidence can frame appeals very different from each other. Yet perhaps few instances could be produced where speeches were made more opposite in their nature than those now heard from the two counsel for the prisoner. Mr. Loring was cool, technical, and wary. He examined the proof, item after item, with a cautious hand and a keen eye, but yet with a sophistry which his opponents knew how to counteract by similar weapons.

Moreland took a higher ground; and the contagious sympathy and confidence which he had now fully imbibed himself kindled a kindred fire in the bosoms of his hearers. He did not fail also to persuade reason by deliberate examination of the proof, but it was with the ardour of one who felt

and believed what he asserted. His able and eloquent discourse was listened to with the profoundest attention. The jurors sometimes nodded their heads in acquiescence, and sometimes, by their countenance, expressed surprise and pleasure at the unexpected inferences which, under his acute and ingenious intelligence, many points in proof were made to yield. Several facts, apparently most fatal to the prisoner, were now presented in a light so new as to elucidate his innocence; and long before he had finished with a technical consideration of the testimony, he had awakened in every breast a lively confidence in the innocence of the prisoner, and had thrown about him a kind of interest like the halo of a martyr.

Horse-racing, theatres, and gambling enchain men by their excitement; but it may be questioned whether any can exceed the interest with which a mind fully understanding the bearings of a case, and interested from affection, or even ordinary sympathy, follows the perpetual and sudden vicissitudes in the course of such a trial. It presents a continued and striking series of changes; rapid and shifting alternations of light and shadow, of tempest, calm, and sunshine—a vast, deep, wild ebb and flow of hope. The future changes, and brightens, and sinks in gloom, as facts break through the mist, and melt away again with the breath of the witness or the magic of the orator. The truth resembles a mountain-peak enveloped in clouds: now the billowy vapours bury its sharp outlines in gloom; again the breeze wafts them away, and leaves its airy and unbroken summit shining in the sun. Thus had the prospect of the prisoner, his character and his crime, appeared to the spectators and jury, till, under the transforming wand of Moreland, they beheld the darkness vanish. The prisoner himself was softened.

His noble and handsome face yielded to the illumination of hope and joy. Mr. Romain went up to him and spoke words of kindness; and the sister and father hung breathless and almost gasping upon the music and the magic of the speaker's lips.

"Gentlemen," continued the orator, "at length, at this late hour, exhausted as you must be with your arduous duties, perhaps I should desist from further trespassing on your time. But I remember with a shudder that mine are the last words of defence and of hope which the prisoner at the bar may ever hear. I start at the tremendous responsibility, and almost sink beneath it. But faith, hope, justice, and mercy whisper me to proceed. The life of an innocent human being, of an amiable and affectionate son, of a beloved brother, of a citizen of this republic, is at stake. It is my sacred duty to defend; it is your solemn province to judge. A word from your lips launches him into eternity. If he be guilty, I do not ask his life. Though his sister's heart will break at the blow,—though his father's silvery forehead will bend down to a dishonoured grave,—though a youth, invested with a thousand noble qualities, will be cut off from repentance and hope for ever,—yet, if he be guilty, I do not ask his life. But, by your own hopes as fathers, as friends, as men—by the peace which you love on your pillow and in your dying hour—by the sanctity of innocence and the rebuking anger of Heaven—I conjure you to pause and tremble ere you do find him guilty. It has been alleged against me this day that I am privately a friend to the prisoner. It has been charged upon me as an odium, in ridicule and scorn. I appeal to your own bosoms: who so well as a friend should be able to judge of his character? who so well know his ways of thinking and

acting? Is friendship to be a stigma—as we have this day beheld the heart-broken love of a sister—a jest, and a mockery?

"As for my own belief, I solemnly declare before you, and before Him who knows all hearts, that, after the most indefatigable examination of the circumstances during a much longer period of time than you have been able to devote, I believe the accused totally innocent. When you consider, gentlemen, the extraordinary facts of the case; the character of the prisoner; the accidental and public nature of the fatal and mysterious ride; his demeanour subsequently; the fact that Miss Temple saw Rosalie Romain in the evening;—you must acknowledge that his guilt is doubtful. The blackest doubt still hangs upon the whole affair. It is doubtful whether the murder has been committed; it is doubtful whether the prisoner is the perpetrator. Miss Romain might have fallen by another hand; she may have perished by her own; she may have fled. The law commands you only to find a verdict in case of *certainty;* are you *certain?* Are you even certain that Rosalie Romain is dead? Who has identified the body? Is there a single person who can prove her decease? Miss Romain, at some future time, may reappear before you. What horror would shade your future years! I call upon you now, while yet in your power, to save your souls from such a grievous burden. I warn you of the innocence of the prisoner. In a few moments you will be compelled to decide. The doom of death, gentlemen, is mighty, is tremendous, is irrevocable. You may extinguish a light which can never be relumed; you may, in one moment, perpetrate an action which all the years of your future life may be too short and too few to sufficiently regret. Before I yield the floor to my adversaries, let me also warn

you against their ardour and their sophistry. They possess the prerogative of directing against you the last appeal. I tremble lest the cunning of art and eloquence may baffle and blind the truth. I have already shuddered to hear the noblest virtues derided. They have already told you that education, refinement, a warm heart, and an unspotted character are the attributes of crime and the signals for suspicion. I watch the progress of their insidious attacks upon your reason with the most unalloyed and intolerable solicitude and distress. Error, gentlemen, may lurk on either side; but the error of one is ghastly and fatal, damning to yourselves and all concerned; while that of the other—if, indeed, error there be—would, even in its fallacy, approach the benign spirit of that Redeemer who looked with pity upon the woes of earth, and who said, even unto the most abandoned, 'Go, and sin no more.'"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Verdict—Midnight Scene in a Court of Justice.

"Hark! Hush! Be still! They come.
One moment, and 'tis o'er."

It is a mournful thing to turn from the last clinging hope and defence of the accused, to the cold, severe, exaggerating attacks of the prosecution. Perhaps there never was a case upon a capital offence, where the eloquence and ingenuity of the defendant's counsel did not strike out upon the

misery of the accused some bright sparks of hope. The mass of evidence cannot be borne in mind at once. A perception of the truth often requires a series of deliberate and abstruse arguments, which the audience never discover, or fail to retain amid the confusion of evidence and the instinct of mercy. The sight of a criminal, too, when his punishment seems certain, softens the heart to pity, and prepares it to magnify and dwell upon the grounds of hope. An ingenious orator, in an artful survey of the case, lingers with disproportionate force upon the favourable circumstances, and leaves the more unexplainable and condemnatory parts in the shade. For a moment the sky of the accused brightens; the roaring of the tempest is lulled; his half-wrecked mind rests as the surrounding sea of doubt and despair closes its yawning abysses, and he beholds again the green and sunny shore where safety and bliss await his weary steps. Ah, delusive calm! ah, treacherous hope! An awful pause succeeds the words of mercy and hope. Dreadful the task of him who has to dissolve this vision!

The prosecution commenced their duty. As their skilful batteries were opened against the victim, the brightness passed from his features; one after another his hopes melted away; the relentless tempest darkened over his head; the mad wind began to roar and thunder in the air; his broken hulk once more hung on the uplifted and giant wave; the distant shore receded from his despairing eyes, and he felt that ruin and death again yawned beneath his feet.

Two experienced, unfeeling, and sagacious lawyers exhausted their powers in demonstrating the guilt of the accused, in which they both fully and conscientiously believed. Germain wove around him the meshes of sophistry, and rendered it once

more a glaring *certainty;* and the district attorney closed with a startling eloquence.

The orator allowed the prisoner's apparent good character; allowed the horrid spectacle of a youth so formed to adorn society cut off and crushed beneath a fate so terrible. But these considerations, he said, severely, were not for the jury-box. Let them deepen the interest of a poem, or embellish the pages of a novel; but a tribunal of justice had a sterner task than the indulgence of feeling, however amiable. That the murder had been committed, every circumstance proclaimed. The ride; the disappearance; the blood-stained handkerchief; the hat floating abandoned on the stream; the body—as far as the testimony of credible witnesses go—identified as that of Rosalie Romain; the confusion of the assassin; his conduct on the arrest; the evidence of the female domestic, respecting the demeanour of the unfortunate victim; her clandestinely meeting the prisoner at that suspicious hour of the morning;—every thing, as far as human proof could, proclaimed the dreadful act, and the deep cunning of the prisoner. "What proof can you demand of murder? It is a deed which the perpetrator commits alone. He comes not into the broad streets, where positive evidence can be produced against him. He steals, with stealthy pace, in darkness and solitude; he disguises his intention under smiles and the mask of virtue; he plants the dagger in a moment unseen by all—by all but his avenging God. Murder rarely admits evidence stronger than that produced against this man. If you acquit him upon the principle of doubt, future assassins have only to stab in solitude and they will stab in safety. We shall behold shameless seducers and murderers walking among us unwhipped of justice. Leave crime unpunished, and you

open the floodgates through which devastation and despair rush in upon the retreats of domestic life. The pity which makes you tremble at inflicting a necessary penalty, which causes you to yield to the pleadings of compassion, and to melt at the sight of guilt bound on the altar—to forget law, society, the claims of the innocent, and the just indignation and agony of the bereaved, rather than speak the word and strike the blow to which you have pledged your oaths, and which great justice demands—is a weak, an idle, a pernicious feeling, full of danger and deceit, unworthy of fathers, citizens, men. You are the guardians of the community. To your hands she has committed her safety; and, with such a feeling in your bosoms, will you betray your trust? She has placed you as sentinels on her walls and at her gates; do not kneel and admit the foe which you are sent to overcome. Had the gaunt form of murder stalked in unabashed and unintimidated amid the gayety of *your own* festive board,—had your startled eyes suddenly beheld him vanish, and lo! the brightest seat at the banquet is left vacant,—had you beheld the demon who had thus bereaved and made you desolate for ever, stride unfearing and unabashed through the midday streets, triumphing in his deed, and, perhaps, grown bold by experience, meditating to repeat it, because, forsooth, the shrinking sensibilities of a too sentimental jury could not harden their hearts to arrest his career,—you would feel as you ought to feel on this solemn occasion. The hospitality of friendship, the rights of society, the laws of man and of God have been grossly violated by the unhappy criminal at the bar. The perpetration of the deed has been proven, and the guilt has been fastened upon him, as far as human proof can lead the human reason.

"The gentlemen on the other side harp much on the idea of *doubt*. It is *doubt* which is to bring off their wretched client. Their only hope is *doubt*. It is the last inevitable refuge of the defenders of a bad cause. If they can make you doubt, if they can entangle and cloud over, if they can envelop in mystery, if they can bewilder you in *doubt*, they fancy their triumph secure. But you must distinguish between the just doubt arising from a deficiency of evidence, and that confused sense of indistinctness which only those experience whose eyesight is failing—between the doubt of a firm and of a foolish mind. Doubt you might conceive on every subject. There are not wanting metaphysicians who assert that nothing ever was, is, or ever can be certain. You may doubt the evidence of your eyes and ears; you may bewilder your mind amid endless mazes and metaphysical conjectures; you may doubt that you sit there to judge, that I stand here to proclaim, a heinous and a hideous sin; all around us may be but the phantoms of a fever or the forms of a passing dream. But this species of doubt, so equally applicable to the most feeble and the most overpowering proof, is not the doubt which becomes your manly souls. The cunning of a persuasive tongue will not be able to betray your matured understandings into such childish, such fantastic vagaries. Such doubts would dispute all law, all justice. This court would be a mockery and an idle farce; vainly would wronged misery apply here for redress; justice would be but the theme of derision and scorn. The ruffian would smile at the uplifted sword of the goddess, which her degenerate hand durst never wield, till men, grown once more wild and savage, and knowing no other remedy for private injury, will assume again the reins of affairs, which the authorities are unworthy and unable to

hold. A Gothic spirit of revenge will displace the mildness of civilization; youth, innocence, and defenceless beauty will yield their breasts to the dagger, and the whole mass of society will be resolved into its original elements of anarchy and discord.

"No, gentlemen, in your characters as stern and unyielding sentinels of the public safety, I call upon you to speak the dreadful doom against yonder sinful man. He has sown, let him reap. If you would not have your wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters murdered before your faces, speak, promptly, fearlessly, and solemnly, the fatal verdict. However man may exclaim, and attempt to affright you from your duty, remember the Almighty himself has said, '*Blood for blood!*"

Again, as the counsel sat down, the silence was simultaneously broken by a wide peal of applause; from bench and floor, pedestal and column, wherever the mighty throng of human beings had clustered and pressed themselves densely in together, came the murmur and the shock of approbation, too plainly announcing the public sanction of the prisoner's doom. Several persons were committed for this breach of decorum.

The charge of the judge was short and lucid, and wholly confined to the evidence. He reviewed it calmly, and instructed the jury to find the fact of the murder according to their opinion on the testimony, with this reserve, that if they were "not fully satisfied, *beyond a doubt*, they must find for the prisoner."

With the necessary formalities, the jury were conducted into their private room; and an hour passed, during which curiosity kept together, probably, every individual of the vast multitude.

At length the court prepared to adjourn, and

the prisoner had been already ordered back to prison, when it was announced that the jury had agreed upon a verdict. There was a hum among the concourse—relaxed attention was again suddenly and fearfully roused. The jury entered, silent and solemn themselves, amid the silence and solemnity of all around. This is a moment of excruciating interest. The most light and careless spectator feels it drain his heart, and suspend his very being. What must it be to him whom one moment more is to plunge into eternity, or to give back in triumph to life and happiness! Many an eye turned upon the jurors to detect in their countenances, in their gait, in some casual action, a hint of that mighty secret locked in their bosoms. Many an eye was riveted upon the face of the prisoner, to study how he bore that tremendous moment, how humanity stood to gaze amid life full on the grim and spectral features of death.

The names of the jurymen were regularly called amid a profound silence. Not a motion, not a breath, disturbed the deep hush. The clerk requested the prisoner to rise.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look upon the prisoner. Prisoner, look upon the jury. Have you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We have."

"How say you, gentlemen? Do you find him guilty or not guilty?"

There was a pause, as if the very pulse of life stood still. It was thrilling and painful—all leaned forward, a shuddering sound of agony, short and checked, broke from the lips of Miss Leslie. All eyes dilated and fastened on the foreman, except one or two, who looked piercingly, and yet with horror, upon the face of the prisoner. At that moment the clock tolled three, with a heavy sweep of

sound that floated in quivering waves through the hall. Its last vibration died away, and the foreman spoke.

"Not guilty."

"God—God!" cried the sister, with a shriek of joy, while an electric shock darted through the crowd, and broke the spell of silence. The prosecuting counsel started up—the clerk repeated it aloud, with surprise. Moreland clasped his hands, with a report that echoed through the room. Mr. Romain covered his face. Mordaunt Leslie raised his hands and eyes to Heaven in silent prayer.

In the midst of this sudden universal jar and lively commotion, the accused stood in the same attitude, fixed and motionless—all eyes again centred upon him.

"Norman!" cried the sister, with an hysteric laugh, and springing towards him—"dear Norman, hear! You are acquitted—you are guiltless—you are free!"

But the youth neither stirred limb nor feature. At length a slight tremour, a quivering passed over his face, a shade of ghastlier white, a faint sob, a convulsive effort to laugh—and he fell back senseless into his father's arms.

END OF VOL. I.